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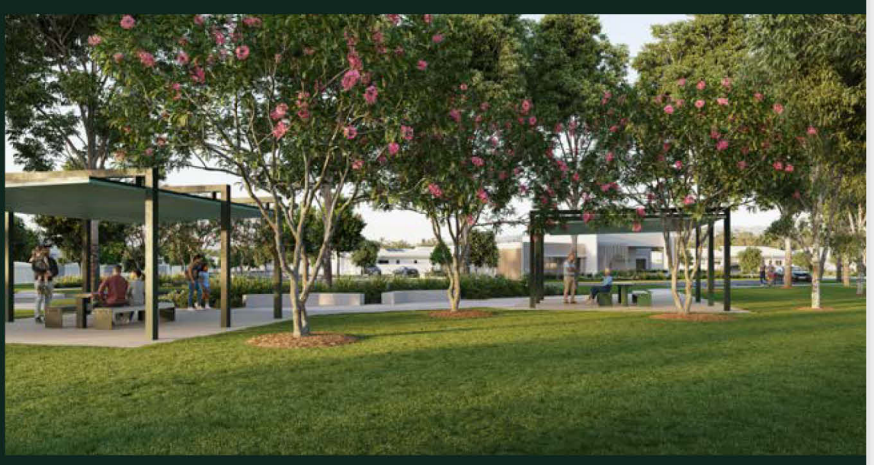
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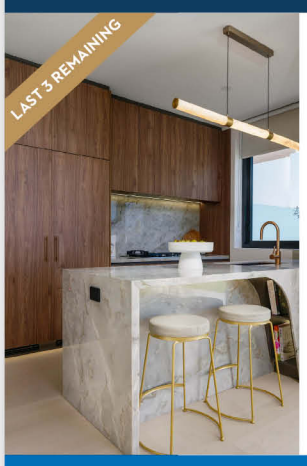


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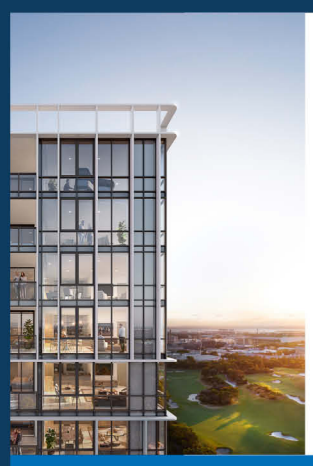


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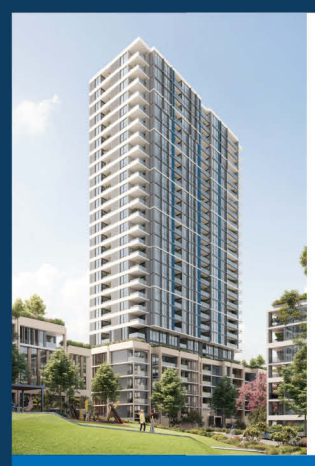


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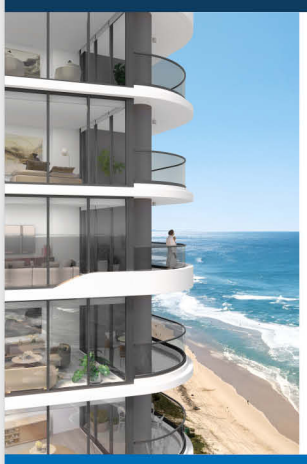


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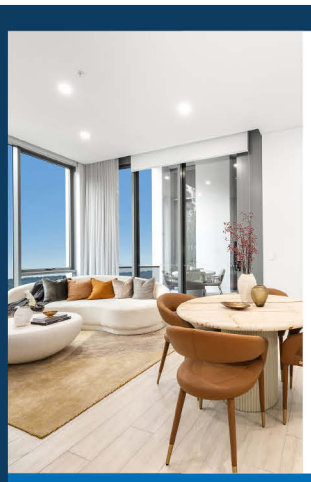
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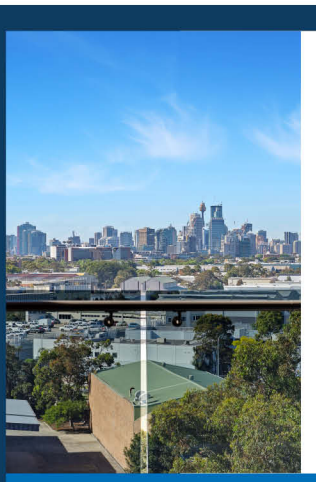


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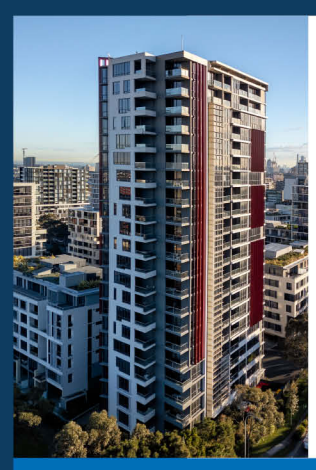


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EDITOR'S NOTE

Unity, Culture & Belonging Shine in Festivals, Art, and Community Across Brisbane

Dear Readers,



The Cairns Indian Festival 2025 lit up Fogarty Park with its largest turnout yet—over 10,000 people gathered for a day of music, dance, food, and cultural pride. Organised by GOPIO Cairns Inc., the festival showcased classical Indian dance, Bhangra, Bollywood, and live drumming. Families explored food stalls, bought saris and jewellery, and queued for henna, while children danced into the evening. With half of raffle proceeds donated to the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation, the event combined celebration with community spirit. GOPIO President Subash Chetry hailed it as proof of Cairns' "unity in diversity," praising volunteers, performers, and sponsors who made it possible.

In Townsville, Krishna Janmashtami 2025 brought devotion and joy to life with festivities hosted by the North Queensland Hindu Community Inc. Celebrations began with the lively Breaking of the Matki, followed by Gharbha dance, Bhajans, and Aarathi that deepened the spiritual mood. Children dressed as Krishna and Radha charmed audiences, embodying both innocence and tradition. The Gujarati community hosted a communal dinner, strengthening bonds of fellowship. With heartfelt thanks expressed by NQHC, the event stood as a testament to faith, unity, and cultural pride, leaving attendees with enduring memories.

Brisbane's Consulate General of India, in collaboration with ICCR, hosted a Rajasthani Folk Dance Workshop showcasing the Kalbelia and Sapera forms. With 20–25 participants, including children, the session offered a rare chance to learn intricate moves directly from visiting dancers. Attendees praised the interactive nature of the workshop, enjoying its fun, immersive experience that connected them with India's cultural heritage. The initiative exemplified cultural diplomacy at its best, enabling Brisbane's community to celebrate and engage with traditional art.

Roma Street Parklands in Brisbane became the heart of celebration for this year's Lord Ganesh Festival, organised by Brihan Maharashtra Mandal, Queensland Inc. Despite strong winds forcing last-minute adjustments, the festival's spirit remained high. From the sacred Shodashopachare Sri Ganesh Pooja to cultural performances and bustling stalls, the event blended devotion with community energy. Volunteers received recognition, echoing BRIMMQ's philosophy that management is accountable while volunteers drive success. With blessings from spiritual leaders and messages of support from civic authorities, the festival upheld its theme, "One Community, One Spirit," marking its place as a major multicultural gathering.

Amidst a national protest on immigration in Adelaide, artist Peter Drew's poster of Monga Khan offered a counter-narrative, reminding Australians of forgotten migrant histories. For Drew, Khan—a century-old Indian hawker labelled "Aussie"—symbolises inclusivity and challenges narrow definitions of identity. His decade-long Aussie project, spanning posters, galleries, and books, sparks empathy and conversation in public spaces. As Drew prepares to mark its tenth anniversary with new designs featuring Indian, Chinese, and Syrian figures, his work remains a reminder that belonging has always been central to Australia's story, despite cyclical fears of immigration.

Vidya Makan, acclaimed for roles in Hamilton and SIX, is reshaping Australian theatre with her debut musical *The Lucky Country*. Drawing on her Gujarati heritage and South African family history, Makan challenges the absence of diaspora voices on stage by joyfully exploring identity, nationhood, and belonging. With songs inspired by Baker Boy, Kylie Minogue, and Archie Roach, plus collaborations with First Nations creators, her musical radiates playfulness and strength.

Best wishes,
NICK ATTAM
Editor, The Indian Sun—Queensland

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Diwali brings Far North Queensland together at Cairns Mela

NICK ATTAM *CAIRNS*
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Cairns came alive with light and colour as more than 3,500 residents and visitors gathered at Fogarty Park for the **Cairns Diwali Mela 2025**, a celebration that brought together families, cultures, and traditions from across Far North Queensland.

Hosted by the Cairns Hindu Samaj, the open-air event showcased the energy and warmth of the Indian community through music, dance, and food. The park turned into a vibrant cultural hub, echoing with laughter, rhythm, and the scent of freshly 〈TURN TO #10〉





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CONTINUED FROM #8 cooked Indian delicacies.

The festivities began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Minister Fiona Simpson MP, Bree James MP, Mayor Amy Eden, Michael Healy MP, Terry James MP, and Matt Smith MP. Their presence reflected the spirit of unity and cultural inclusion that has become a hallmark of Cairns' growing multicultural identity.

Performers from across Queensland and beyond entertained the crowd with traditional and contemporary Indian dances, from classical Kathak to lively Bollywood routines. The stage remained a constant draw for families and visitors, while stalls filled with colourful crafts, jewellery, and clothes offered a slice of India to those wandering the grounds.

For many, the food was an event highlight. Visitors queued for spicy chaats, biryanis, and sweets, enjoying the full spectrum of Indian flavours under the tropical evening sky.

As dusk fell, a spectacular fireworks display lit up the night, symbolising the heart of Diwali—the triumph of light over darkness. The sight drew gasps and cheers, bringing the day to a glowing close.

Beyond the festivities, the Mela carried a purpose: to raise funds for the Hindu Temple and Cultural Precinct in Cairns. The precinct, currently in development, will serve as a spiritual and cultural hub for the region, offering a place of worship and learning for generations to come.

As dusk fell, a spectacular fireworks display lit up the night, symbolising the heart of Diwali—the triumph of light over darkness

This year's Diwali Mela reaffirmed what Cairns has long known—its community spirit shines brightest when people come together in celebration, connection, and shared joy.





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Brisbane's Diwali festival marks a new chapter for QLD's Indian community

NICK ATTAM *BRISBANE*
@the_indian_sun

King George Square shimmered with light and music as thousands gathered for the **Federation of Indian Communities of Queensland's annual Diwali Festival**, celebrating unity, renewal, and belonging.

The all-day event on 24 October began with a Citizenship Ceremony, symbolising the spirit of Diwali—welcoming new Australians into a community built on hope and togetherness. Later, a High Tea brought together dignitaries, community leaders, and cultural groups, setting the tone for an evening that blended celebration with purpose.

Opening the official program, FICQ President Dr Preethi Suraj described Diwali as "a festival of hope, renewal, and togetherness," paying tribute to the growing Indian diaspora that continues to shape Queensland's cultural and professional life. "Our community continues to grow and contribute vibrantly to every aspect of Australian life—from education and business to health, technology, and public service," she said. "Together, we are creating pathways for our next generation to thrive, stay connected, and feel proud to be Australians of Indian heritage."

Dr Suraj also announced the upcoming Stone Laying Ceremony of the House of India, set for November 2025. "The House of India will not just be a building, but a home for all multicultural communities—a symbol of unity, culture, 〈TURN TO #13〉











CONTINUED FROM #12 and pride for generations to come," she said.

Among those attending were Ms Madonna Jarrett MP (representing Prime Minister Anthony Albanese), Opposition Leader Susan Ley MP, Queensland's Minister for Women and Multiculturalism Fiona Simpson MP, Consul General of India Neetu Bhaagotia, Senator Paul Scarr, and Brisbane's Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner.

Sponsors including Leapmotor and Springfield City Group were recognised for their contributions, with Ms Ley launching the new B10 Leapmotor vehicle during the evening program.

Performances of traditional dance and music, alongside stalls featuring Indian food and crafts, highlighted the richness of India's artistic traditions while fostering cultural exchange.

The event concluded with thanks from FICQ Assistant Secretary Sunita Avadhani, who acknowledged the support of sponsors, volunteers, and the wider Brisbane community.





A joyful celebration of culture, unity, and tradition as Queensland's Telugu community came together for the Andhra Association of Queensland's Dasara and Diwali festivities. Photos supplied

QLD's Telugu community lights up Dasara & Diwali

***OUR REPORTER** BRISBANE*
@the_indian_sun

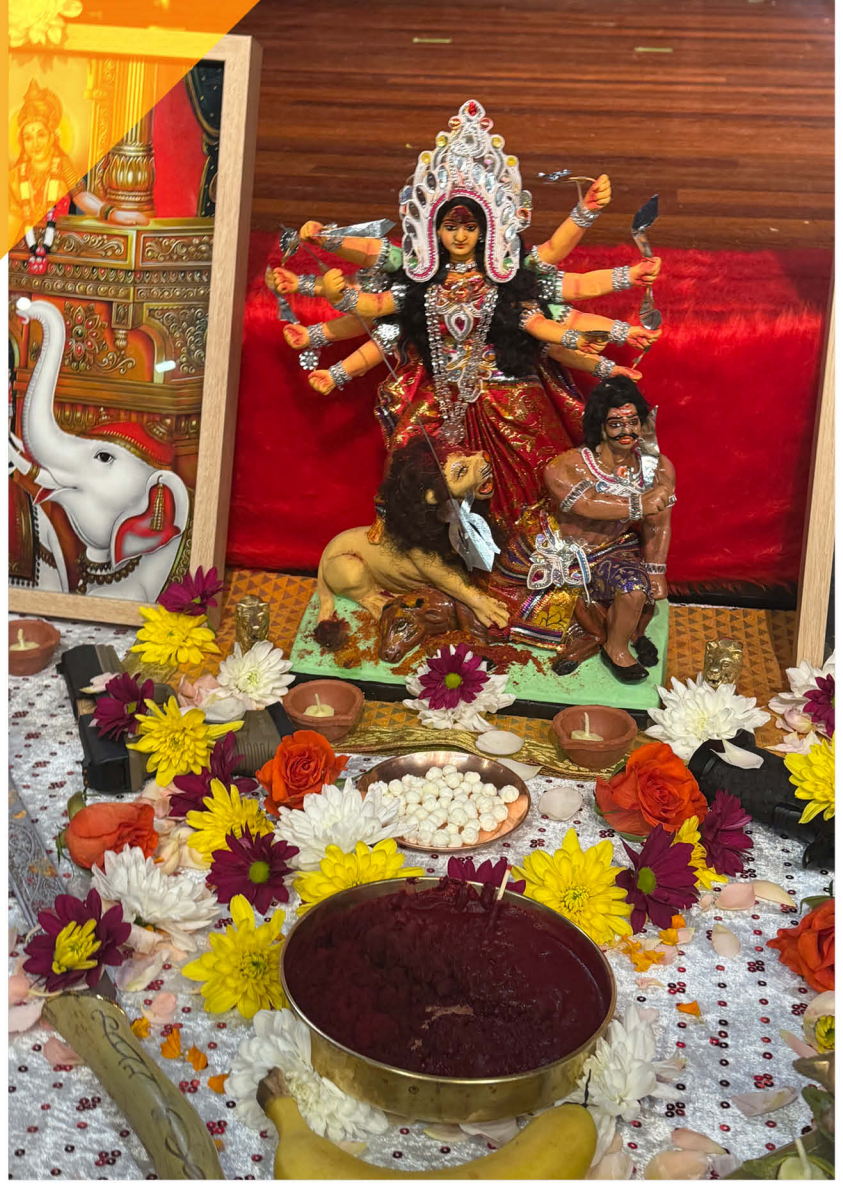
The **Andhra Association of Queensland (AAQ)** brought together hundreds of people for a joyful celebration of **Dasara** and **Diwali** on 11 October at Logan Community Hall, filling the venue with colour, music, and a strong sense of togetherness.

The day-long event was a milestone for Queensland's Telugu-speaking community, offering a mix of traditional rituals, cultural performances, and entertainment that reflected the rich heritage of Andhra Pradesh. From classical dance and devotional music to modern acts and children's showcases, the celebration captured the spirit of both festivals.

A variety of food stalls serving authentic South Indian dishes, sweets, and snacks, alongside jewellery and clothing stalls, added to the vibrant festive mood.

AAQ Founders Ram Junnuri and Uma Chilukoti thanked the management team, volunteers, sponsors, and community members for their continued ❮TURN TO #15❯

> From classical dance to modern acts and children's showcases, the celebration captured the spirit of both festivals



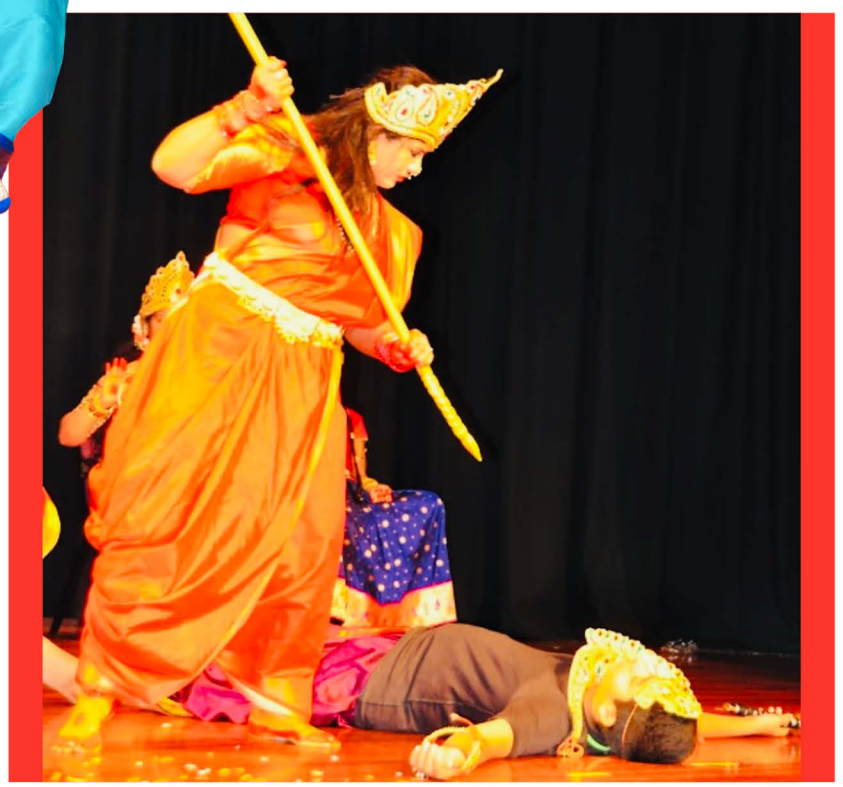
CONTINUED FROM #14 support. "This celebration reflects our unity, culture, and community spirit. Every volunteer, sponsor, and performer played a vital role in creating this joyful and meaningful occasion," said Mr Junnuri, calling it a cultural milestone for the Indian community.

Stretton MP James Martin joined the celebrations as a special guest. The event was supported by sponsors including CBA Bank, BYD Eagers Auto Mount Gravatt, and Raniga Lawyers.

A highlight of the evening was the devotional presentation "Nine Goddesses—Navadurga", creatively led by AAQ Spiritual Coordinator Mrs Sudha Shankar garu. The performance celebrated divine feminine energy and helped pass on cultural values to younger generations.

Cultural Coordinators Sunitha Jakkampudi garu TURN TO #16





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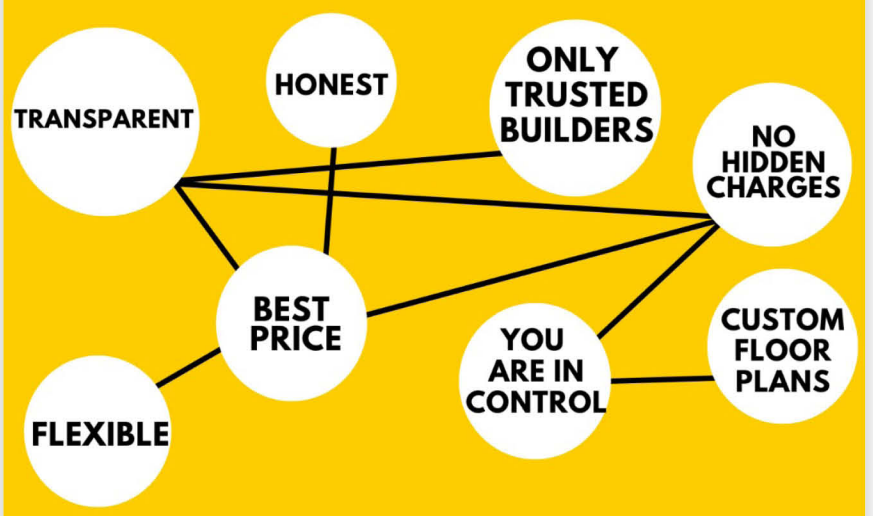
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CONTINUED FROM #15 and Janakiram Mannava garu curated a series of performances that kept audiences engaged throughout the event, while raffle winners received hampers sponsored by Mortgage Winner's Mrs Priyanka Sripathi and gift vouchers from Mr Rama Krishna of Robina 7 Days Doctors.

Special thanks were extended to MCs Arthi Jayaraj garu, Aswini, and Venugopal garu for their lively hosting, as well as to the Helping Hands team for their dedication behind the scenes. Food sponsors including Dosa Hut (Mount Gravatt, Aspley, and Gold Coast), Café Hyderabad, Hyderabad Flavours, and Siri's Food Paradise were acknowledged for their generosity.

The AAQ Executive Committee Team—Hema Naidu, Kuldeep Ganisetti, Sitaram Vangapandu, Priyanka Vadlamudi, Swamy Juluru, Satya Prakash, Raj Grandhi, and Jayanth Kuhaluri—provided crucial support throughout the planning and execution. Event Coordinator Dr Mrinal Madireddi oversaw the event with meticulous organisation, while background music and lighting, arranged by Bhanu Yapuri, added to the charm of the evening.

The celebration concluded with a strong sense of unity and cultural pride, reinforcing the importance of celebrating traditions while strengthening ties within the wider Australian community.

The Andhra Association of Queensland continues to promote Telugu culture and friendship under its guiding motto—"Together for a Better Future."















Queensland offers up to $5,000 for women returning to work

OUR REPORTER *BRISBANE*
@the_indian_sun

Applications are now open for Queensland's new **Women's Career Grants**, a $20 million initiative designed to help women re-enter the workforce by reducing financial barriers such as childcare, training and workwear costs.

The programme provides up to $5,000 in support for eligible women to assist with expenses including recertification, transport to job interviews, tools, technology or relocation costs. To qualify, applicants must be Queensland residents aged over 18 who have been unemployed for at least six months and are ready to return to work.

Minister for Women and Women's Economic Security Fiona Simpson said the grants aim to remove cost barriers that often prevent women from seeking work. "We are delivering more support for women returning to work with new grants to help cover the cost of employment essentials," she said. "The cost of childcare, technology, training or workwear shouldn't be employment barriers and the Women's Career Grants are helping remove them. This is important cost of living relief for women returning to work after children, illness or relationship breakdowns, because Queensland women shouldn't be locked out of a job because they can't afford the cost of job-seeking."

> "We are delivering more support for women returning to work with new grants to help cover the cost of employment essentials
>
> **FIONA SIMPSON, MINISTER FOR WOMEN & WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY**



Minister for Women and Women's Economic Security Fiona Simpson, who is leading Queensland's new Women's Career Grants initiative, pictured with Sunshine Coast artist Nikita Fitzpatrick of New Dreaming Art in October. Photo/Facebook

More than 3,300 Queensland women have already registered their interest since the programme's launch on 12 October. The grants will be delivered in partnership with Future Women, the organisation behind the Jobs Academy training initiative for women seeking employment.

One applicant, Evie, a mother of six who has been out of the workforce for more than 15 years, plans to use the grant to help her return to work as a makeup artist. "Returning to the workforce after being a stay-at-home mum presents many challenges—from finding reliable childcare to feeling out of touch with current industry trends—the transition can be overwhelming," she said. "This grant would help me regain confidence, sharpen my presentation, and invest in the tools and education needed to successfully re-enter the professional world. With support through the Women's Career Grants program, I can take meaningful steps toward rebuilding my career and creating a stable future for my family."

Future Women founder Helen McCabe said she was encouraged by the enthusiasm the programme had generated. "These grants will make a real, tangible difference to the lives of many Queenslanders," she said. "Future Women is excited to be partnering with the Queensland Government to support women returning to work. This is what we at Future Women do best—we know how to connect women with the support they need to get back to work and thrive."

Applications for the Women's Career Grants can be made online at ***womenscareergrants.com.au****.*



Hundreds of families — and Bluey — turned up in Petrie today to kick off Queensland's first-ever G'Day Little Queenslanders event. Premier David Crisafulli joined in the celebrations. Photo/Facebook

Families gather for 'G'day Little Queenslanders' launch in Petrie

OUR REPORTER *BRISBANE*
@the_indian_sun

The Queensland Government has launched a new initiative for parents and babies, hosting the first of its **'G'day Little Queenslanders'** community events at The Mill Parklands in Petrie on Sunday 26 October.

The program, designed for families with children aged up to two, aims to bring communities together while helping parents connect with local services and support networks. Over the coming weeks, the free outdoor events will be held in Townsville, Redlands and Cairns.

Each event will include stage performances featuring local talent, roving entertainment for children, and information stalls run by family and health services. Families who register on the day will receive a personalised certificate to welcome their "Little Queenslanders." Food stalls, picnic areas and shaded spaces have also been set up to make the day more relaxing for parents and carers.



QLD Premier David Crisafulli said the new program reflected his government's focus on community and early childhood wellbeing. "These events will be loads of fun for our littlest Queenslanders, and a great way of strengthening communities all over our State," he said.

"There's no greater responsibility than being a parent and it's important we let new families know what local and government services are available in their area. I'm confident that next year we will see more G'day Little Queenslanders events across the rest of our regions for more young families in those communities."

The Petrie event coincides with the end of Children's Week, which celebrates the right of children to enjoy their early years and grow up in nurturing environments.

The G'day Little Queenslanders series marks the beginning of a broader community engagement program aimed at connecting new families with resources and each other—one park, and one toddler giggle, at a time.

Queensland Government steps in to decide Dreamworld precinct plan

OUR REPORTER *CANBERRA*
@the_indian_sun

The Queensland Government has taken over assessment of Dreamworld's proposed 55.3-hectare mixed-use development on the northern Gold Coast, signalling its intent to fast-track housing and tourism projects of state importance.

Following a request from City of Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate, the Government issued a "call-in" notice, giving Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning Jarrod Bleijie the power to determine whether the Dreamworld Masterplan meets state priorities on housing supply, tourism, infrastructure, and environmental protection.


Dreamworld CEO Greg Yong

> The plan has the potential to transform underutilised land into a vibrant mixed-use precinct that supports tourism, more housing and long-term local jobs
>
> **JARROD BLEIJIE**

The development application, lodged by Coast Entertainment Operations Limited, covers land adjacent to Dreamworld and WhiteWater World. It outlines four proposed precincts—a major tourism core for the existing parks, a nature-based tourism area with eco-walks and viewing platforms, a gateway precinct for short-stay accommodation and hospitality, and a town-centre transition zone for housing and retail.

Mr Bleijie said the plan had "the potential to transform underutilised land into a vibrant mixed-use precinct that supports tourism, more housing and long-term local jobs". He said Dreamworld had previously spent years seeking approval under the former government, adding that the new approach was about "taking a holistic view" and ensuring the right infrastructure and road networks were in place.

Environment and Tourism Minister Andrew Powell said the Government wanted to bring more certainty and timeliness to tourism development. "Tourism contributes one in 11 jobs in Queensland, and this proposal has the potential to help supercharge local businesses who rely on visitors to employ more Queenslanders," he said.

Local MPs on the northern Gold Coast have backed the intervention, saying it would ease housing pressures and attract new investment. Member for Coomera Michael Crandon said it showed "a determination to deliver real housing options and world-class tourism," while Theodore MP Mark Boothman said it sent a clear signal that "the Government is cutting through red tape and backing projects that deliver real benefits for Queenslanders."

Acting Mayor Mark Hammel welcomed the move, saying Dreamworld had been a major asset to the city for more than four decades. "This decision will ensure further investment, supporting local jobs. We look forward to new tourism product entering the market, as well as additional supply to our housing market," he said.

Dreamworld CEO Greg Yong said the call-in was "a big step forward and a real turning point for the northern Gold Coast." He added that the company was ready to work closely with the state to "bring this project to life as soon as possible."

The proposal comes at a time of strong population growth and housing demand in southeast Queensland, as well as mounting anticipation of tourism expansion ahead of the 2032 Brisbane Olympics. Dreamworld has invested more than $180 million in upgrades over the past four years, supporting more than 1,000 jobs.

However, environmental concerns remain part of the discussion, with earlier planning documents indicating potential impacts on koala habitat and local infrastructure. By calling in the proposal, the Queensland Government assumes responsibility for balancing these environmental and economic priorities.

The final decision will test whether state intervention can speed up major development while maintaining community and environmental standards—a balance the Government says is central to its broader housing and tourism agenda.



Pushpinder Oberoi receives the 2025 Multicultural Appreciation Award from Federal Member for Moncrieff, Angie Bell MP, in recognition of his outstanding service to the Central Gold Coast community. Photo supplied

Pushpinder Oberoi recognised with 2025 Multicultural Appreciation and Volunteer Awards

OUR REPORTER *BRISBANE*
@the_indian_sun

Pushpinder Oberoi has been recognised by Federal Member for Moncrieff, Angie Bell MP, receiving both the "Volunteer Award 2025" and the "Multicultural Appreciation Award 2025" for his outstanding service to the Central Gold Coast community.

The awards, part of the Gladys Moncrieff Multicultural Appreciation series, acknowledge individuals who have made exceptional contributions to their local communities through voluntary and multicultural work. Oberoi's recognition reflects his continued efforts to support and uplift diverse groups across the region.

Expressing his gratitude, Oberoi said, "I am honoured and humbled for being recognised by Angie Bell MP, Federal Member for Moncrieff, for honouring 'The Volunteer Award 2025' and was also honoured of receiving 'Multicultural Appreciation Award 2025' in recognition of my outstanding service to the community."

He added, "This recognition means the world to me because it reflects the voices and support of the community I love and serve. Thank you to everyone who believed in me, and continues to walk alongside me on this journey of service."

Angie Bell MP congratulated the award recipients for their commitment to strengthening community bonds through voluntary work and multicultural engagement. The awards form part of ongoing efforts to highlight the contributions of individuals who make a tangible difference in people's lives.

Queensland Parliament marks 100 women elected since 1929



OUR REPORTER *BRISBANE*
@the_indian_sun

Queensland's legislative assembly has reached a landmark moment, celebrating the election of its 100th woman to Parliament. The milestone marks nearly a century of progress since Irene Longman made history in 1929 as the first woman elected to the chamber.

The celebration, held at Parliament House, brought together current and former members to honour generations of women who have shaped Queensland's political life. From the early pioneers who stood for office when politics was largely closed to women, to those now serving across government and opposition, the gathering reflected on how far the state has come.

According to the official parliamentary record, the event was part of the 58th Parliament and recognised "a significant milestone has been reached in this the 58th Parliament: 100 women have now been elected to the Queensland Parliament." The chamber also hosted an exhibition showcasing photographs and stories of women who have served since Longman's time. Visitors were invited to view the display in the Parliamentary Annexe, which traces the history of women's representation across the decades.

> The chamber also hosted an exhibition showcasing photographs and stories of women



Dr Raj and Dr Preeti Khillan of Western Specialist Centre with Minister Natalie Suleyman at the Family Business Insights VIC/TAS Conference in Melbourne, where the centre received the Founder's Family Business Award. Photos supplied

Team Brisbane crowned champions at NTR Memorial Trophy 2025

OUR REPORTER *BRISBANE*
@the_indian_sun

The **NTR Memorial Trophy 2025** wrapped up in Brisbane with a weekend that brought together Telugu communities and cricket lovers from across Australia in a shared celebration of sport and heritage.

Teams from Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Sydney went head-to-head in a competitive yet spirited series that showcased both skill and camaraderie. The final match saw Team Brisbane rise to victory, earning cheers from an enthusiastic home crowd as they lifted the NTR Memorial Trophy 2025.

The NTR Memorial Trophy remains a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when sport, heritage, and community come together with purpose and passion. Photos supplied

More than a tournament, the event paid tribute to Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR), whose influence as an actor, leader, and philanthropist remains deeply rooted in Telugu identity. Widely regarded as one of India's most iconic cultural figures, NTR's work and ideals continue to inspire new generations, and the trophy bearing his name reflects the same values of courage, service, and unity he championed.

Organisers credited the success of this year's event to the dedication and teamwork behind the scenes. Special acknowledgement was given to Ravi Gaddipati, Rajesh Kanikanti, Hari Krishna Jampala, Sai Krishna Vadde, Brijesh Chaparala, Venu Prathipati, Hemanth Amilineni, and Ravi Chalasani, whose commitment and attention to detail ensured smooth execution throughout the tournament. Their collective effort helped make the event a gathering point for families and friends, strengthening community ties through shared enthusiasm for cricket.



The NTR Memorial Trophy has grown each year into one of the most anticipated fixtures for Telugu communities in Australia. Its continuing success highlights how sport can serve as both a bridge between cities and a celebration of cultural legacy. This year's edition will be remembered not only for Brisbane's victory, but for the spirit of unity and pride that echoed across every match.

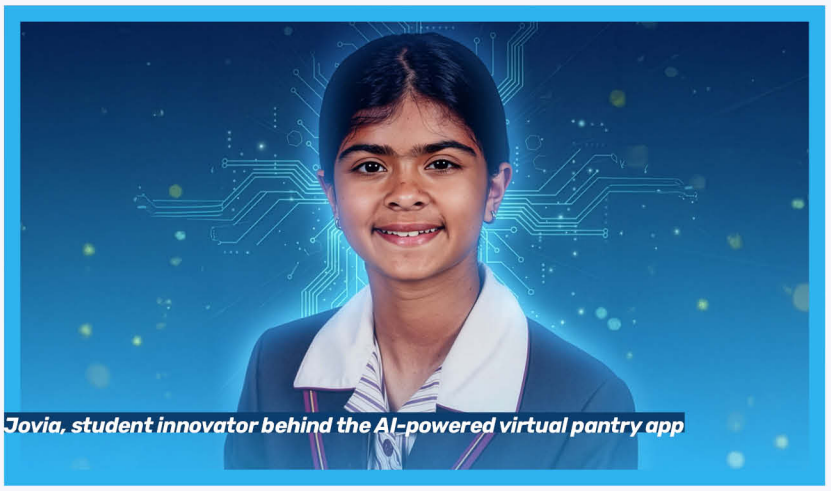
Melbourne student startup uses AI tool to help households tackle food waste

OUR REPORTER *MELBOURNE*
@the_indian_sun

A class at Haileybury Berwick in Melbourne has teamed up to create a new startup idea aimed at reducing food waste in Australian homes by leveraging the AI-driven development platform caffeine.ai.

The group's concept is a virtual pantry app that helps users track their groceries and avoid duplicate purchases or forgotten produce. "With 2.5 million tonnes of food waste generated by Australian households each year, we knew our product was addressing a real, significant issue," said one of the students, Jovia. The app is designed to provide a simple interface for users to log items, see what's on hand, and receive alerts or suggestions to use what they have before it spoils.

Jovia highlighted the role played by caffeine.ai in accelerating their prototype development. "We used caffeine.ai to create our app's prototype and were amazed at how easy it was to create. With a single prompt, our app was created; it was almost like caffeine.ai was reading our minds. It made the changes we wanted and listened to our prompts and instructions, to create the best app for our startup. We're now hoping to represent our school at the final cross-campus pitch event. If selected, we plan to further enhance and polish our current prototype into a functional app, confident that caffeine.ai will help us get there."



Jovia, student innovator behind the AI-powered virtual pantry app

The startup is part of a school-wide project at Haileybury Berwick, where pupils were challenged to devise startup ideas ahead of a cross-campus event. Jovia's group opted for the virtual pantry app concept, pitching its potential to deliver both environmental and practical household benefits. With supermarket purchases, shifting shopping behaviour, and mounting pressures on household budgets, technology solutions that reduce waste are receiving growing interest.

Caffeine.ai itself is built on the Internet Computer Protocol (ICP) and allows users to build and deploy applications through natural language prompts, bypassing much of the traditional coding workflow. Caffeine+3Chainwire+3Peerlist+3 The platform is currently live in alpha and providing free daily credits to help users experiment and prototype ideas.

For Jovia and her classmates, the appeal lies in the rapid iteration, accessibility and the fact that they could focus on the idea and design rather than programming details. The team plans to deliver a fully functional version of the app if selected for the final pitch. If successful, they aim to refine the prototype into a consumer-ready product.

There are several challenges ahead. The household food-waste problem in Australia is complex, involving consumer behaviour, supply-chain inefficiencies, perishability of produce, and the cost of waste disposal. According to recent figures, the 2.5 million tonne estimate represents a sizeable burden on sustainability goals and household budgets.

Implementing a virtual pantry app raises questions of user uptake and habit change. Will households consistently log their purchases? Will the system integrate with supermarket data or require manual input? How will food-expiry tracking and alert fatigue be handled? Additionally, the app's utility will depend on its accessibility, ease of use and value proposition for everyday consumers.

From a technical angle, using caffeine.ai means that the core app logic may live on chain or at least benefit from a blockchain-based backend. That could improve transparency and resilience, but may also face challenges around scalability, cost and integration. Many startups built with no-code or low-code tools fail to bridge the gap between prototype and live product; the conversion from an AI-generated prototype to a production-grade, user-ready app remains work-intensive.

Still, for a high-school project the team is off to a promising start. The idea taps into a widely acknowledged problem, uses emerging tech in a hands-on way and offers learning outcomes for the students around design, entrepreneurship and sustainability. Jovia's observation that the AI "was almost like … reading our minds" suggests the students were able to experiment rapidly, iterate ideas and focus on the user-experience rather than getting stuck in code. That kind of shift in educational settings is significant.

If Jovia's team succeeds, the app could serve as a model for youth-led startup innovation paired with AI tools. And for those in the household food-waste space, it presents a fresh contender in the race to turn ideas into measurable change.

Find out more about the project on—Nexus and explore Caffeine to see how it works.



Dr Raj and Dr Preeti Khillan of Western Specialist Centre with Minister Natalie Suleyman at the Family Business Insights VIC/TAS Conference in Melbourne, where the centre received the Founder's Family Business Award. Photos supplied

Western Specialist Centre honoured with Founder's Family Business Award

OUR REPORTER *MELBOURNE*
@the_indian_sun

Western Specialist Centre has been recognised with the Founder's Family Business Award at the Family Business Insights VIC/TAS Conference in Melbourne.

The Family Business Excellence Awards, organised by the Family Business Association, celebrate the achievements of family-owned enterprises across Australia and New Zealand. The program acknowledges businesses that demonstrate excellence in governance, entrepreneurship, and stewardship, while showing how family involvement can drive long-term success.

Catherine Sayer, CEO of the Family Business Association, said the awards shine a light on enterprises that form the backbone of the economy. "Family businesses are the heart of Australia's economy and social fabric. These awards celebrate not only their achievements but also the enduring spirit of entrepreneurship, resilience, and community that family businesses embody."

For Western Specialist Centre, the award marks a decade of growth and commitment to quality healthcare. Founded by Dr Raj and Dr Preeti Khillan, the centre 〈TURN TO #25〉

> Family businesses are the heart of Australia's economy and social fabric. These awards celebrate not only their achievements but also the enduring spirit of entrepreneurship
>
> **CATHERINE SAYER, CEO—THE FAMILY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**





CONTINUED FROM #24 has become one of Melbourne's leading providers of culturally sensitive and community-focused medical services.

"We started Western Specialist Centre 10 years ago with a simple passion, to serve the women and children of Melbourne's Western suburbs," said Dr Preeti. "What began as just the two of us, Raj and myself, has grown into a team of more than 30 health professionals."

Dr Raj reflected on the deeper roots of the business. "It's an honour to receive this award from Family Business Association and Minister Natalie Suleyman," he said. "As a doctor, I learnt these [business] skills first-hand in a grocery shop sitting with my dad back in India many years ago when I was a child. The basic skills of integrity, trust, making connections and customer-first, these are all applicable to businesses everywhere."

The centre's recognition comes after years of steady expansion across Melbourne's north-west, with more growth planned. Beyond providing care, Western Specialist Centre collaborates with several Australian universities to train future health professionals through placements, research, and community projects. In 2024, it extended its reach globally, forming an international partnership with the University of Birmingham in the UK to host medical students.

Through its focus on excellence, innovation, and compassion, Western Specialist Centre continues to reflect the core values of the Family Business Excellence Awards—building a legacy of service that extends well beyond business.

air BEATS
AUSSIE INDIAN RADIO BEATS
COMING SOON...



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese with Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles at Parliament House, Canberra, during the inaugural Australia-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue. Photo supplied

PM hails defence dialogue with India as "a shared commitment"

OUR REPORTER *CANBERRA*
@the_indian_sun

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has used the visit of Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to reaffirm Canberra's strategic ambitions in the region. He emphasised "interests and a commitment to a peaceful, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific" and said it was "great to meet with the Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on his first trip to Australia for the Inaugural Australia-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue."

That message frames today's launch of the inaugural Australia India Defence Conclave—From Concepts to Capabilities in Canberra. The event, hosted by the Australia India Institute at Parliament House, arrives amid an intensifying defence relationship between the two nations.

The Conclave aims to move beyond statements of intent and push for concrete cooperation. Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles said the scale of bilateral engagement was "unprecedented." "Our bilateral defence engagement is seeing deepened cooperation and interoperability to the benefit of both our countries; in support of a peaceful, stable and prosperous region," he said.

Lisa Singh, CEO of the Australia India Institute, framed the meeting as part of a long-term commitment. "This Conclave reflects our Institute's enduring commitment to supporting frank, evidence-based discussions on how both countries can realise the full potential of their partnership," she said. "Through these discussions, we hope to inspire policy makers and practitioners to ensure we are contributing to a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region."

Participants drawn from defence operations, academia, industry and policy will focus on areas such as maritime security, defence 〈TURN TO #27〉

> Our bilateral defence engagement is seeing deepened cooperation and interoperability to the benefit of both our countries; in support of a peaceful, stable and prosperous region
>
> **GUY BARNETT**







❮CONTINUED FROM #26❯

technology, strategic coordination, infrastructure and regional governance—aiming to build the kind of collaborative framework implied in Canberra's and Delhi's public rhetoric.

The Prime Minister's statement does more than congratulate a visit. By placing defence ministers' engagement at the heart of Australia-India ties, it signals that Canberra desires greater weight behind the words. His reference to "interests and a commitment" suggests the government is keen to frame the relationship around shared strategic purpose rather than symbolic diplomacy.

India's Rajnath Singh is in Australia for two days, with his visit expected to feed into the next stage of Defence Ministers' dialogue and potentially influence joint initiatives across the defence sector. The inclusion of experts across several domains reflects Canberra's focus on actionable policy and long-term cooperation.



Assistant Minister for Defence Peter Khalil and Australia India Institute CEO Lisa Singh at Parliament House, Canberra, during the launch of the inaugural Australia India Defence Conclave. Photos supplied

Australia and India boost defence ties as ministers meet in Canberra

OUR REPORTER *CANBERRA*
@the_indian_sun

Australian and Indian defence officials are gathering in Canberra for the inaugural **2025 Australia India Defence Conclave**, a major step in strengthening military and strategic cooperation between the two countries.

The event, titled From Concepts to Capabilities: Next Steps for the Defence Relationship, is being held at Parliament House and coincides with the visit of India's Defence Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh. His two-day trip marks the first visit by an Indian Defence Minister to Australia under the Modi government since 2014.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles said Australia's partnership with India had entered a new phase. "Our bilateral defence engagement is seeing deepened cooperation and interoperability to the benefit





of both our countries; in support of a peaceful, stable and prosperous region," he said.

The conclave, hosted by the Australia India Institute and supported by the Department of Defence, aims to move beyond diplomatic statements to practical action. It seeks to develop a concrete framework for collaboration, drawing on recommendations from the Institute's report Building a Resilient Australia India Defence Relationship.

Assistant Minister for Defence Peter Khalil

This Conclave reflects our Institute's enduring commitment to supporting frank, evidence-based discussions on how both countries can realise the full potential of their partnership," said the Institute's CEO Lisa Singh. "Through these discussions, we hope to inspire policy makers and practitioners to ensure we are contributing to a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region."

Experts from defence operations, strategic and economic policy, industry, and academia will participate, focusing on areas such as maritime cooperation, defence technology, secure connectivity, and regional governance.

The day's program includes a welcome reception hosted by Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Customs and Citizenship Julian Hill, a keynote address by Assistant Minister for Defence Peter Khalil, and a luncheon co-hosted by Special Envoy for Indian Ocean Affairs Tim Watts and Special Envoy for Defence, Veteran's Affairs and Northern Australia Luke Gosling.

The conclave comes amid growing alignment between Australia and India across defence and security domains, driven by shared regional interests in maintaining stability in the Indo-Pacific. The discussions are expected to produce recommendations to further strengthen cooperation between the two nations' defence institutions and industries.

Monash and Firstsource join forces to advance AI innovation

OUR REPORTER
𝕏 @the_indian_sun





Monash University has signed a partnership with RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group's Firstsource Solutions Limited to co-develop next generation Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions and expand their use across business and research sectors.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed at Monash University's Clayton campus in Melbourne, witnessed by Victorian Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs Danny Pearson. The partnership aims to bridge university research and industry delivery, combining Monash's academic leadership with Firstsource's practical expertise in digital technology.

Through the collaboration, Firstsource and the Monash AI Institute within the Faculty of Information Technology will work on translating advanced AI research into scalable and responsible systems that can deliver measurable results for businesses, government and communities.

Firstsource, headquartered in India, brings global experience in technology services and digital ecosystems, opening avenues for cross-border collaboration, research exchange and talent development between Australia and India.

Monash University Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) and Senior Vice-President Professor Craig Jeffrey said the partnership would help accelerate innovation with tangible social outcomes.

"At Monash, we are committed to creating global impact through collaborative innovation," Professor Jeffrey said.

"This partnership with Firstsource brings together our deep research capability and their proven expertise in digital transformation and innovation to develop and scale technologies and AI solutions that have meaningful benefits for people and society."

Firstsource Managing Director and CEO, Ritesh Idnani, said the collaboration reflects the company's commitment to applying advanced AI to real-world challenges while strengthening Australia's digital capabilities.

"It underscores our deeper, long-term commitment to Australia—to work alongside leading universities, government, and industry to drive sustainable economic and talent outcomes.

"By combining Monash's innovation engine with our deep domain expertise and outcome-focused UnBPO□□ approach, we aim to accelerate responsible AI adoption that delivers measurable impact and strengthens Australia's digital competitiveness in an increasingly complex world.

"At the same time, we're building pathways for the next generation of innovators and technologists. This is a model for how industry and academia can come together to shape a more resilient, tech-enabled future."

Victorian Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs Danny Pearson joins Monash and Firstsource representatives at the signing ceremony celebrating the new AI partnership in Melbourne

Minister Pearson said the Victorian Government supports Firstsource's decision to base its Australian headquarters in Melbourne, citing its contribution to local jobs and skills.

"The company's growing presence in Victoria is strengthening our thriving tech sector, creating hundreds of high-value jobs, and building a valuable partnership with Monash University to upskill students and drive real-world innovation in AI—helping to build the tech talent of the future."

The agreement will give Monash students access to internships, placements and live innovation projects with Firstsource, preparing them for emerging opportunities in AI and digital technology.

Monash AI Institute Director and Associate Dean (Innovation), Professor Shonali Krishnaswamy, said the collaboration strengthens Monash's role in global AI research and responsible innovation.

"This partnership brings together Monash's world-class research in advanced AI, including neurosymbolic and optimisation-driven systems, multimodal generative and machine learning approaches, with Firstsource's deep expertise in digital transformation," Professor Krishnaswamy said.

"By combining our complementary strengths, we aim to create AI solutions that are both powerful and responsible, driving breakthroughs initially in health AI and expanding into other sectors.

"Together, we are creating a model for collaboration between academia and industry that enables AI innovations to deliver meaningful, translational impact."



Why the Liberal Party can't win Gen Z: politics has become psychological

Political strategist **Kos Samaras** argues elections are no longer won by messaging but by deep-seated psychology, leaving the Coalition struggling to connect with a new



Kos Samaras, director at RedBridge Group Australia. Photo/X



Daily Telegraph National Affairs Editor James Morrow



Sydney-based journalist and analyst Tarric Brooker

OUR REPORTER
𝕏 @the_indian_sun

The old idea that a clever message or new leader can swing an election is dying fast, says RedBridge director Kos Samaras. His latest analysis, shared on X this week, suggests that politics has shifted from persuasion to psychology—and the Coalition is stuck in the wrong mindset for a new generation of voters.

"The Coalition currently sits at 37% in Victoria. To reach a competitive 43%, they need six percentage points," Samaras said. "Simple arithmetic shows where those votes would have to come from… roughly one in five Labor voters or half of all Greens voters would have to switch." The problem, he said, is that "political psychology research shows voters sort themselves by fundamental personality traits, particularly authoritarianism versus openness to experience."

High-authoritarian voters tend to value order, tradition and security—traits that align with the Coalition and One Nation. Low-authoritarian voters value diversity and ambiguity, and align with Labor and the Greens. The divide, Samaras argues, has hardened so deeply that it leaves almost no one to persuade.

"Baby boomers were easier to move between major parties because they were less psychologically sorted," he explained. "A boomer small business owner might vote Labor over Medicare, then swing Coalition over interest rates, then back to Labor over WorkChoices. Their vote responded to campaigns, economic conditions and leader appeal because their psychological profile didn't pre-determine their politics."

That era, he says, is gone. Younger voters, particularly millennials and Gen Z, "have self-sorted into political tribes that match their psychological makeup. They're not persuadable by Coalition messaging because they don't share the underlying threat perception that makes conservative appeals resonate. A 28-year-old voting Greens isn't waiting for the right economic pitch or leader, their entire worldview is incompatible with authoritarian politics."

> "The Coalition currently sits at 37% in Victoria. To reach a competitive 43%, they need six percentage points. Simple arithmetic shows where those votes would have to come from…
>
> **KOS SAMARAS**

The strategic consequence, Samaras said, is stark: "You can't message your way past psychological incompatibility." To win, the Coalition must "maximise their existing authoritarian base and win back moderate Liberals uncomfortable with culture war positioning." But even that, he warned, "won't get them entirely to 43%. They can get close by pitching to diverse Victorians who harbour a greater mix of both right and left-wing traits." Any campaign built on peeling away Labor or Greens voters, he said, "misunderstands how contemporary electorates actually work."

Economic analyst Tarric Brooker echoed that view but said the problem is broader than ideology. "I don't think it's necessarily a move to the centre that is desired, but engagement with the issues that affect young people in a meaningful way," he said. Quoting writer Gray Connolly, Brooker added: "There's no future for conservatives if young people have nothing to conserve. And they don't."

"The Coalition has no plan to deliver improved living standards, genuine hope for the future, home ownership or a pathway to a tangible stake in society," Brooker said. "Until they get their act together on that I suspect that no policy platform, whether it be from the centre or the right, will dramatically improve their political fortunes."

That diagnosis lines up with current polling: the Coalition continues to trail Labor nationally and faces fragmentation on its right flank as One Nation surges among older voters.

National Affairs Editor James Morrow added a sharper cultural critique, arguing that younger progressives' moral intensity mirrors older conservative instincts. "Except though the left in Victoria were the biggest authoritarians going during Covid," he said. "I do agree however that in the absence of religion rising generations have made politics their new morality and all the depredations of life in Victoria thus become joyful mortifications."

As one pollster put it privately this week, persuasion may still be the goal of politics, but for the Liberal Party, the audience is tuning out.



Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs Julian Hill MP

Parliament marks half a century of the Racial Discrimination Act

OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

Australia's Parliament has marked fifty years since the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) came into force—a law that reshaped the nation's identity and became the cornerstone of modern multiculturalism.

Attorney-General Michelle Rowland told Parliament the Act, introduced by Labor's Attorney-General Kep Enderby and proclaimed on 31 October 1975, was an "historic step" that, for the first time, made racial discrimination unlawful under federal law. The law brought the principles of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination into domestic law.

Ms Rowland reflected on the deep social shift that accompanied the legislation, which arrived just two years after the abolition of the White Australia policy. She also recalled the contribution of Senator Neville Bonner, Australia's first Aboriginal parliamentarian, who shared his own experience of being denied employment because he was Indigenous. "As Senator Bonner concluded: 'There is discrimination and we must do something about it,'" Ms Rowland said.

Ms Rowland noted the Act's pivotal role in landmark cases such as Mabo v Queensland (No.1), which confirmed the right to equality before the law. "The subsequent decision in Mabo (No.2) struck down the fiction of 'terra nullius'," she said. "While legislation alone cannot change cultural attitudes, the RDA has been an important mechanism for civil redress."

She also paid tribute to the enduring importance of section 18C, introduced in 1995 to outlaw racial vilification. "Although there are some people in our society who want the right to be bigots enshrined in our laws, the Labor Party has always understood and defended the importance of section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act," Ms Rowland said.

The Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Dr Anne Aly, described the Act as "a watershed moment in Australia's history." Reflecting on her own journey, she said, "Modern Australia is a migrant nation. It is who we are. The Racial Discrimination Act underscores and protects this vital part of this proud nation."

Dr Aly recalled growing up in Sydney's western suburbs surrounded by families from Greece, India, China and beyond. "Nobody made fun of each other's strange names or the funny 〈TURN TO #33〉



Attorney-General Michelle Rowland, Member for Moreton Julie-Ann Campbell, and Minister for Multicultural Affairs Dr Anne Aly marked the 50th anniversary of the Racial Discrimination Act in Parliament

> It should not be controversial that we take a moment to ensure that we are not offending, humiliating, insulting or intimidating our fellow Australians because of their race
>
> **DR ANNE ALY, MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS**

CONTINUED FROM #32 way our mothers or fathers would call out for us," she said, describing those moments as her definition of Australia.

She noted that half of all Australians were born overseas or have a parent who was. "Multiculturalism is the mainstream. It's not a semicolon-and. It's not a postscript... It is Australia and it is Australians," she said.

Dr Aly also revisited the heated debate over section 18C in 2016. "It should not be controversial that we take a moment to ensure that we are not offending, humiliating, insulting or intimidating our fellow Australians because of their race," she said. "If you have been on the receiving end of discrimination, you know how deeply it cuts."

Assistant Minister Julian Hill reflected on the Act's contested history, saying the law faced fierce opposition at the time. "Contrary to this blurred historical vision... the bill was hard-fought in the parliament then," he said. "The Racial Discrimination Act stood the test of time for 50 years. It sets the legal foundation for modern Australia as the proud multicultural nation that we know and love today."

Mr Hill also warned against complacency, pointing to moments when debates about "the right to be a bigot" had real-world effects. "While that debate was raging, we saw a spike in public racism. We saw people abused on the bus, we saw hijabs ripped off, and we saw turbans ripped off," he said. "Leadership matters."

He urged those in opposition to reaffirm their commitment to the Act. "Being diverse is not the same thing as being a successful multicultural country," he said. "Success requires legal foundations and norms which this Act provides, but it also requires leadership—political, community and faith leadership, day in and day out."

Earlier, Julie-Ann Campbell, the Member for Moreton, reflected on her Chinese-Australian heritage and the long shadow of the White Australia policy. "Can I tell you—in 1901 the doors were shut to people who looked like me," she said. "The first piece of federal legislation to make racial discrimination unlawful in Australia was the Racial Discrimination Act. It is rooted in the idea of fairness."

Ms Campbell said the law remains vital but insufficient on its own. "We can never take for granted the tapestry that we have woven when it comes to our multicultural country. The concern that I have at the moment is that there are people who are pulling at the threads of that tapestry."

Echoing Dr Aly's words, she added, "When we support our multicultural communities, when we stand against racial discrimination, we have to back them in—not just with words, not just with niceties, but with action. Labor stands with you... not just today, as we celebrate an important milestone, but every single day."

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Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs Julian Hill MP

Marchers claim to speak for mainstream Australia, polls say otherwise

OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

RedBridge Group director **Kos Samaras** says the growing wave of anti-immigration rallies represents frustration, not national momentum. "We're looking at a group of frustrated conservative voters, angry about immigration and still reacting to the May 3 result, using One Nation as a vehicle for protest," he said.

Samaras believes the movement's noise masks its limited reach. "Since the election, particularly after August 31, the only real movement in national polling has been within the constellation of right-wing parties," he said. "While One Nation's vote has doubled in some surveys, this doesn't translate into them taking seats from the Coalition. What they can do, however, is fragment the conservative vote and create serious headaches for the LNP in tight contests against Labor."

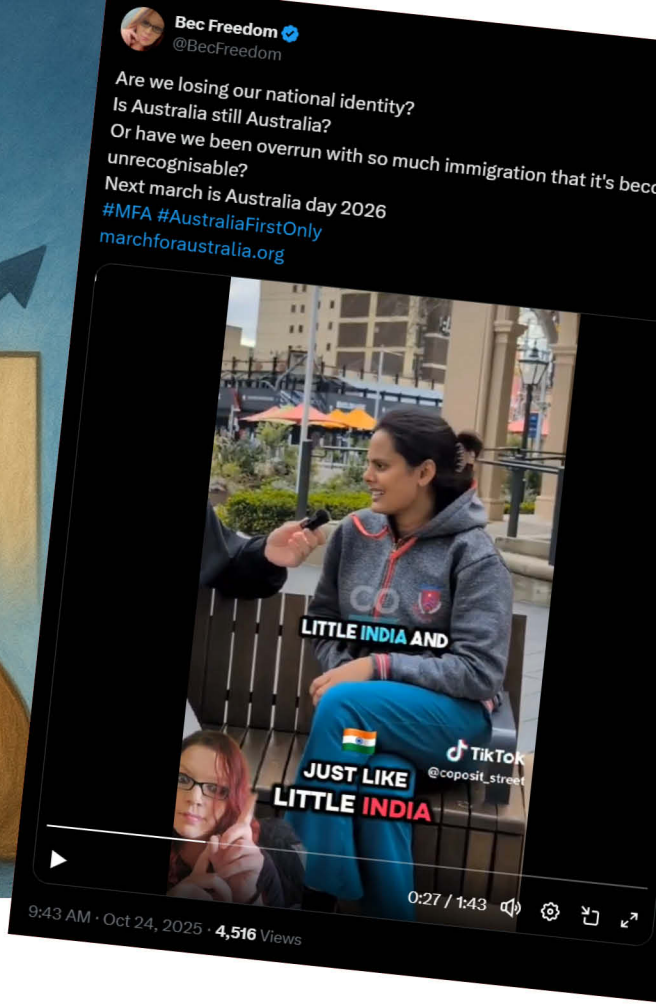
Recent national polling supports that view. Labor remains steady in the mid-50s on two-party-preferred, while the Coalition continues to lose ground. One Nation has climbed to 13 per cent nationally, but the gain comes mainly from disillusioned Coalition voters, especially those aged 50 to 64. Despite their visibility online, these shifts have not expanded the conservative base; they have fractured it.

> We're looking at a group of frustrated conservative voters, angry about immigration and still reacting to the May 3 result, using One Nation as a vehicle for protest
>
> **KOS SAMARAS, DIRECTOR—REDBRIDGE GROUP**

Yet organisers of the "March for Australia" movement claim they are giving voice to what ❮TURN TO #35❯



Kos Samaras, director at RedBridge Group Australia





<CONTINUED FROM #34> they call the "mainstream majority." Hugo Lennon, known by his online handle "Auspill," wrote after the 19 October rally, "The success of March for Australia tells us what polls have for decades, that young or old, rural or metropolitan, the majority of Aussies want an end to mass immigration."

That claim sits uneasily beside the data. Fourteen national polls since August show Labor holding firm and public sentiment largely unchanged. What has shifted is the tone of conservative politics itself—louder online, angrier on the streets, and increasingly disconnected from the broader electorate.

For organisers like Bec Freedom, who has emerged as one of the movement's key public voices, the rhetoric is deeply personal. In a recent video, she asked followers, "Are we losing our national identity? Is Australia still Australia? Or have we been overrun with so much immigration that it's becoming unrecognisable?" Her clip ends with a call to action for the next March for Australia event on 26 January, Australia Day.

The rallies claim to stand for sovereignty and belonging, but the polling suggests a different reality—one where anger has become performance, and protest has replaced persuasion. The movement may be growing louder, but it is not growing larger.





Time for Trivandrum: More Flights, More Comfort, More Reasons to Go

OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

Malaysia Airlines is expanding its Trivandrum service, making it easier than ever to travel to South India. From **1 December 2025**, the airline will operate **seven direct flights per week** from Kuala Lumpur to Trivandrum, offering more flexibility for Australians connecting via KLIA.

As part of the Time for Trivandrum campaign, Malaysia Airlines is offering **all-in return fares from just $749***. These promotional fares are available to book until **23 November 2025**, with travel valid through to **31 August 2026**. There are **no blackout dates**, so travellers can plan around school holidays, weddings, or family visits with ease.

Trivandrum, also known as Thiruvananthapuram, is Kerala's capital and a welcoming entry point to South India. It offers a gentler pace, ideal for first-time visitors as well as regular travellers heading home. Just outside the city, the **beaches of Kovalam** offer golden sands and palm-lined shores perfect for sunrise swims or relaxed sunset strolls.

A few hours away, the **hill stations around Kochi** such as Munnar and Vagamon provide cooler air, tea gardens, and quiet retreats. The **Kerala backwaters**, known for their iconic houseboats and peaceful canals, are within reach too, offering a unique glimpse into traditional village life.

For those interested in culture and wellbeing, Trivandrum delivers on both. The **Padmanabhaswamy Temple**, with its rich history and architectural splendour, is one of the most revered in the region. Kerala is also known globally as a centre for **Ayurveda**, attracting visitors who seek rejuvenation through ancient therapies, yoga, and holistic healing.

This expanded route comes with an upgraded flying experience. Selected flights will be operated by the airline's **new Airbus A330neo**, designed with both comfort and modern technology in mind. Business Class passengers will enjoy fully flat beds with privacy doors, wireless charging, and direct aisle access. Economy Class travellers will benefit from ergonomic seating, more stowage, coat hooks, and a refreshed cabin design.

All passengers will have access to **complimentary Wi-Fi** and a newly enhanced in-flight entertainment system, featuring **4K screens** (17.3-inch in Business, 13.3-inch in Economy) and **Bluetooth pairing** for personalised device use.

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TIME FOR
TRIVANDRUM

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Your Gateway to
Asia & Beyond

Diplomats, business leaders toast global connections at Sydney Gala

OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

The **Australian Business Summit Council Inc. (ABSC Inc.)** reaffirmed its growing role in strengthening ties between diplomacy and enterprise with the second edition of its networking event, **Connect & Cheers 2: An Evening of Business and Diplomacy**, held at the Hyatt Regency Sydney on 9 October.

The elegant evening gathered more than 140 guests, including ambassadors, consuls general, trade commissioners, and senior business leaders from across Australia's multicultural business scene. Among them were H.E. Ambassador Anwar Muktar Mohammed (Ethiopia), Mr. Ahmed Abdelatif (Sudan), Dr. Vajiv Jafarov (Azerbaijan), and Mr. Richard Broinowski AO, former Australian Ambassador to Vietnam, South Korea, and Mexico. Consuls General from Italy, Serbia, Romania, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Paraguay, and Vanuatu also attended, alongside representatives from Japan, the United States, China, Thailand, and other nations—reinforcing ABSC Inc.'s growing reputation as a key diplomatic bridge.

Business leaders and civic figures added depth to the evening's discussions, including representatives from the French-Australian, Korean, Cambodian, and Bangladeshi chambers of commerce, as well as local councils such as Ryde and Canada Bay.

ABSC Inc. 〈TURN TO #39〉



Dr Frank Alafaci PhD (President, ABSC Inc.) and Councillor Sylvia Alafaci (Secretary, ABSC Inc.)

> This will be a celebration of innovation, culture, and commerce. We invite every diplomatic mission, trade organisation, and business network"

DR FRANK ALAFACI

CONTINUED FROM #38 President Dr. Frank Alafaci opened the evening with characteristic wit: "We like to say Connect & Cheers is Sydney's most productive excuse to enjoy a cocktail—and tonight, we intend to prove it again, not just by sharing business cards, but by exchanging ideas, values, and opportunities in a space where a conversation could become the spark for a future partnership." His words set the tone for an event where conversation flowed as easily as opportunity.

Dr. Alafaci also outlined the council's expanding role as a convener of trade and diplomatic engagement, describing ABSC Inc. as "Australia's premier multi-sector international trade council" operating "where business, government, and diplomacy intersect." He highlighted two flagship initiatives—*EKONOMOS*, the council's international business magazine, and the upcoming ABSC Connect Global Expo at ICC Sydney in 2027, envisioned as a large-scale trade showcase uniting nations, industries, and innovators. "This will be a celebration of innovation, culture, and commerce. We invite every diplomatic mission, trade organisation, and business network here tonight to participate," he said.

As the evening concluded, Dr. Alafaci led a toast: "To diplomacy. To business. To partnerships with purpose. And to friendships forged—once again—over a very fine cocktail."



F. Dr Frank Alafaci PhD (President, ABSC Inc.)

The event captured the essence of Connect & Cheers: refined yet relaxed, where ideas meet goodwill, and global connections take root through genuine conversation. Through ABSC Inc.'s efforts, bridges continue to be built between nations, businesses, and communities—ensuring Australia remains at the heart of global dialogue. One guest summed it up succinctly: "You can feel the energy in the room—this is where diplomacy meets real opportunity."









Because Caregivers Need Care Too: Kartavya Foundation's Free-Meal Initiative

DEEPIKA SAHU
@menondeepika

It all started with **Laliltendu Jena** getting deeply moved by a newspaper picture of a man dusting off ants from a chapati in a tiny eatery before taking a bite while his son was being treated at a leading government hospital in Cuttack. Thus started his intense desire to do something meaningful for the innumerable caregivers who toil day and night in the hospitals just to see their loved ones recover fully. For many of these caregivers, securing a decent meal is a real difficult task both due to lack of resources, accessibility and also time factor.

Sukham Annam project led by Bhubaneswar-based **Kartavya Foundation** is an effort to provide free coupon-linked meals to caregivers in two major hospitals in Cuttack. Every day, as part of the project, the foundation offers 1,100 meals (550 meals lunch and 550 meals for dinner) per day at the SCB Medical College and 900 meals (450 meals for lunch and 450 meals for dinner) per day at the Acharya Harihar Regional Cancer Centre.

Talking about the project, Lalitendu Jena, managing trustee of the Kartavya Foundation, says, "There was no grand planning behind the project. It all happened organically. I remember seeing a newspaper picture and reading its caption (in the year 2000) that really moved me deeply. A father had brought his ailing son to the SCB Medical College, Cuttack. The picture was about the father dusting off ants from the roti at a tiny eatery near the hospital before eating it. The picture stayed in my mind like a sharp image that just refuses to leave."

He adds, "In 2005, once I fell sick and that time I went to a government hospital in Bhubaneswar. And the hospital was so overcrowded that there were patients lying on the ground too. It was a difficult sight. While waiting at the medicine shop's queue, there was an old man ahead of me. And he did not have the money to pay for all the medicines the doctor had prescribed. Seeing his helplessness, I offered to pay the money to the cashier so that the old man could get his medicines. These are the true, life experiences that inspired me to start Kartavya Foundation. I have always believed that for any society to prosper, education and health-care facilities need to be inclusive. That also became our foundation's core areas of focus. In 2009, the foundation started a Pathological lab at Kalyani village in Odisha. We were distributing free medicines to the needy. We also conducted health camps to create health awareness among women which was a great success. But navigating through the village politics became increasingly difficult to handle. And that made us close the lab with a heavy heart. But as they say when one 〈TURN TO #41〉











> True, life experiences inspired me to start Kartavya Foundation. I have always believed that for any society to prosper, education and health-care facilities need to be inclusive. That also became our foundation's core areas of focus

LALITENDU JENA
MANAGING TRUSTEE—KARTAVYA FOUNDATION

《CONTINUED FROM #40》 door is closed, another one opens if you have the right intent."

During those days of reflection, Jena's mind went back to the father, who was a caregiver and his struggle to find food for him. That image in the newspaper is the seed from which he started the Sukham Annam project.

Healthcare professionals agree that in India, caregivers are not really celebrated either at home or at hospitals. And in this context, the Sukham Annam project gains significance. Explaining the project, he says, "The top government hospitals in Odisha attract a lot of patients and their caregivers from faraway places. And most of them are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and it's a real struggle for the caregivers to have a decent hygienic meal."

The Sukham Annam project offers coupon-linked meals which come without any charge. Hospital authorities decide the coupons based on the economic conditions of the caregivers.

Digambar Behera, a 63-year-old man, had come from Begunia village to Cuttack because he wanted to give the best treatment to his wife struggling with constant pain and fatigue. He considers the meals given by the project as a blessing to caregivers like him. "It is a healthy and tasty meal. It felt like a homemade meal. It is a real blessing to have a meal at no cost even as I am waiting for my wife to recover quickly." There are many like him for whom the project acts as a great advantage.

"We have taken all care to maintain highest quality services right from sourcing the food ingredients, to preparing the meals, packaging it and then distributing. Everything is monitored through CCTV. We have a gas plant at our food preparation centre. Sukham Annam is a sustainable project as it is a solar-powered one. For the smooth operations of all machinery involved, we sent our team for training in Gujarat," says Jena.

Talking about the challenges of spearheading the project, he says, "To maintain excellent hygiene on a daily basis is the most important one. There can be no compromise on the Standard Operating System. To maintain discipline, hygiene while serving the food at the hospitals, our team members have to be on their toes every single day. Sometimes, pouring rains make the going tough too."

How difficult is it to sustain this project on a daily basis? "We have worked under different circumstances. Sometimes the ride has been tough too like the recent situation at Cuttack when parts of the city were under curfew. But there is no greater satisfaction than serving a hot nutritious meal to caregivers. During the cyclone, there was a demand for more meals at a short notice, and we fulfilled that which was really gratifying."

Even as this service is really making a difference to many caregivers, a little support from the government can go a long way. "Every day we pay the toll tax twice when our food vans go for distribution and if that could be waived, it can be of help to us, " says Jena.

Ask him how he looks at the future of the project? " I want to float in the small waves. I am looking at providing meals for 2300-2500 people a day. I take every day as it comes."

Deepika Sahu *has been a journalist for 30 years and she has worked with some of India's leading media houses. Right now, she is independently engaged in content creation and curation.*

@menondeepika
@moodydeepika
/Deepika Sahu

Kolkata Cricket Club expands at Crown Melbourne

***Kolkata Cricket Club** at **Crown Melbourne** introduces a new private dining venue, perfect for corporate events and celebrations, featuring bespoke design and a renowned Indian*



Kolkata Cricket Club

Led by chef Mischa Tropp, the restaurant has become one of Melbourne's most sought-after dining destinations

OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

The hatted Indian restaurant **Kolkata Cricket Club** has unveiled a new private dining venue, designed for corporate gatherings and special occasions, adding another draw to Crown Melbourne's bustling hospitality hub.

Led by chef Mischa Tropp, the restaurant has become one of Melbourne's most sought-after dining destinations, now opening its doors to events ranging from intimate dinners to grand celebrations. The new space offers flexible layouts, catering for 20 to 70 seated guests or up to 80 standing, with the option to expand into the adjoining Sports Bar for larger **<TURN TO #44>**









> We're always thinking about how to make our guests feel at home. This new setup gives us the freedom to tailor each event to what people really want
>
> **MISCHA TROPP**

<CONTINUED FROM #43> gatherings of up to 120. Full venue hire is also available for guests seeking exclusivity.

Interior designer Min Tseng has curated the new room with burnt orange tones, hand-crafted lamps from Jaipur, and bespoke teak chairs made locally by Scarfo Furniture Melbourne, inspired by Tropp's travels through Bengal.

Guests can enjoy the restaurant's acclaimed menu featuring flame-licked meats, tandoor-baked naans and its famous butter chicken, complemented by beverage packages that include Champagne, rare whiskies, and standout Australian-Indian wines from producers such as Bindi and Avani.

Kolkata Cricket Club Founder, Mischa Tropp, said: "We're always thinking about how to make our guests feel at home. This new setup gives us the freedom to tailor each event to what people really want. Whether it's something intimate, an elegant banquet or a big celebration, it's all about keeping things fun and flexible."

Located within Crown Melbourne, the restaurant joins one of Australia's most recognisable entertainment precincts. Since opening in 1994, **<TURN TO #45>**



CONTINUED FROM #44

Crown has become synonymous with luxury dining and hospitality, attracting more than 26 million visitors annually. The complex features over 1,600 rooms across Crown Towers, Metropol and Promenade, as well as world-class event venues such as the Palladium Ballroom and Crown Conference Centre.

Bookings for Kolkata Cricket Club's private dining space are now available via the Crown website: **https://www.crownmelbourne.com.au/events-and-conferences/private-events/kolkata-cricket-club**.



Bibi Ji brings the Light of Diwali to Carlton

***Bibi Ji** illuminated Carlton with a vibrant celebration of Diwali, filling its space with the festival's signature light, colour,*



> We planted the seed of an authentic Indian restaurant with street-inspired snacks and cocktails, a space filled with vibrant flavours, good vibes and a feeling of home"
>
> ~ AMARJEET SINGH

OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

With Diwali around the corner, Lygon Street had a new reason to shine. Bibi Ji, the Indian diner at 179 Lygon Street in Carlton, transformed its space into a celebration of light, colour and flavour.

The restaurant's founder Amarjeet Singh said, "We planted the seed of an authentic Indian restaurant with street-inspired snacks and cocktails, a space filled with vibrant flavours, good vibes and a feeling of home. That was exactly what Bibi Ji became."

Bibi Ji meant grandmother in Punjabi, and Amar's vision had always been simple: to serve guests with that same home-like love through ❮TURN TO #48❯







> We wanted to keep the spirit of a neighbourhood diner alive, and Bibi Ji's arrival added a splash of India to the Italian heart of Carlton, reflecting Melbourne's evolving cultural mix
>
> **AMARJEET SINGH**

<CONTINUED FROM #47> every recipe, every meal and every experience, whether it was a casual dinner or a grand festivity.

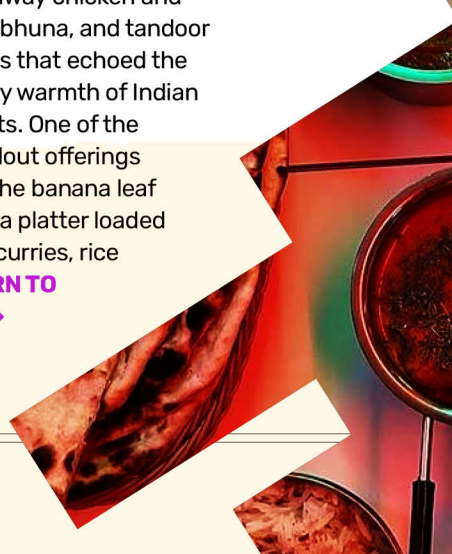
For that Diwali, the team went all out. There was an Indian mandap to set the mood, festive menu highlights paired with Indian sweets, cocktails inspired by the season, and "crackers and colourful moments to complete the festive spirit." It was their second Diwali since opening and they planned to make it one to remember.

When you stepped inside, you found a burst of colour and texture. The interior, once home to Café Notturno, had been reimagined into a playful, immersive setting. Ceilings were draped with fabric, mirrors caught the light, and the bar gleamed with marble and patterned tiles.

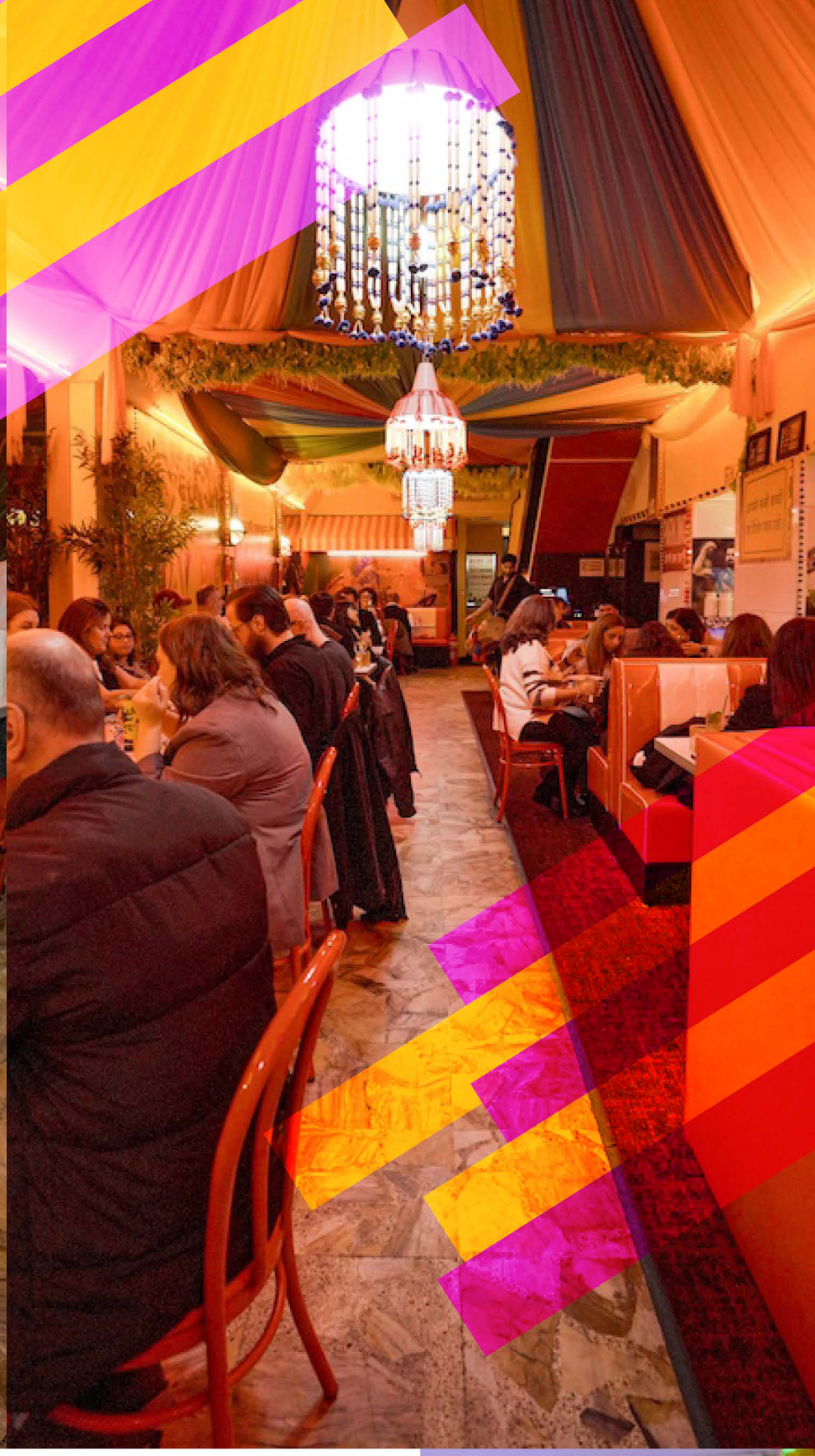
The menu blended familiarity with discovery, offering halal and vegetarian options, street-style snacks like dahi puri and Amritsari fish fry, hearty curries such as railway chicken and lamb bhuna, and tandoor dishes that echoed the smoky warmth of Indian streets. One of the standout offerings was the banana leaf thali, a platter loaded with curries, rice

<TURN TO #49>









CONTINUED FROM #48 and accompaniments that invited you to eat with your hands and heart.

During the festival, there were limited-edition dishes like corn ribs dusted with housespices, goat curry slow-cooked in a tomato-onion base, and gajar halwa infused with cardamom. Drinks followed suit with a mango lassi touched with rum, Indian-inspired cocktails, and a wine list that leaned local.

Choosing Lygon Street wasn't an accident. Amar Singh said he wanted to honour the area's legacy while bringing a new flavour to it. "We wanted to keep the spirit of a neighbourhood diner alive," he explained, nodding to Café Notturno's long history. The arrival of Bibi Ji had added a splash of India to the Italian heart of Carlton, part of a growing trend that reflected Melbourne's evolving cultural mix.

As Diwali neared, the timing couldn't have been better. For those seeking a place that captured the warmth of an Indian home while offering Melbourne's style and sophistication, Bibi Ji made for a perfect stop. With its festive décor, comforting food and welcoming spirit, it was a reminder that Diwali was about light, flavour and togetherness.



Plant-based sushi meets fine dining at Midori by Tao's

Melbourne's first vegetarian and vegan sushi train pairs Southeast Asian creativity with fine-dining sophistication for a new era of "clean indulgence"





> **As someone experiencing a sushi train for the first time, I was instantly engaged. For selected items, the dishes even arrived directly from the kitchen via the train"**
>
> NAV GANESH

NAV GANESH
@navneetganesh

I recently visited **Midori by Tao's**—Melbourne's first vegetarian and vegan sushi train. I was there for lunch to check out their sushi train and returned later in the evening to experience their six-course dinner.

Melbourne is known for pushing culinary boundaries, but Midori by Tao's takes that spirit to a new level—one where plant-based cuisine meets artistry, wellness, and refined Asian flavour.

Tucked away in Doncaster East, Midori is Melbourne's first vegetarian and vegan sushi train, complemented by a six-course fine-dining menu that rotates seasonally and redefines what "clean eating" can be.

<TURN TO #52>



❮CONTINUED FROM #51❯

What makes Midori exceptional isn't just its innovation, but its philosophy. The team behind it has spent years developing dishes that balance tradition and creativity—drawing not only from Japan but also from the broader palette of Southeast Asia. The result is a dining experience that's visually stunning, texturally balanced, and deeply satisfying.

The vision at Midori by Tao's is to offer "clean" eating that doesn't compromise on quality, service, or presentation. In that regard, this venue ticks every box and is certainly worth visiting even if you're not vegetarian or vegan.

💙 THE SUSHI TRAIN EXPERIENCE

At lunchtime, Midori's sushi train offers a lively yet refined introduction to its plant-based concept. Plates glide past in different hues—green ($4), red ($5), and yellow ($6)—and you simply reach out and grab whatever catches your eye.

As someone experiencing a sushi train for the first time, I was instantly engaged. For selected items, the dishes even arrived directly from the kitchen via the train—a fun, futuristic touch that added to the excitement.

From trying multiple varieties of sushi, tofu, and crispy tempura rolls to the standout Crispy Guo Bao—a fluffy bao bun filled with fried tofu, vegan Dijon mustard, and pickles—every plate was exceptionally tasty.

The miso soup was simple yet soulful, the kind of dish that reminds you why minimalism can be so comforting. To finish, I couldn't resist the assorted cupcake trio—Lychee, Sticky Date, and Chocolate—a playful finale that showcased the kitchen's versatility beyond savoury dishes.

It's a vibrant, accessible, and joyful experience—the kind that makes "clean dining" feel anything but restrictive.

💙 THE FINE DINING EXPERIENCE

Dinner at Midori transforms into something else entirely—calm, immersive, and artful. Their signature six-course tasting menu, which changes seasonally, combines Japanese precision with Southeast Asian warmth, showing how plant-based dining can be indulgent without excess.

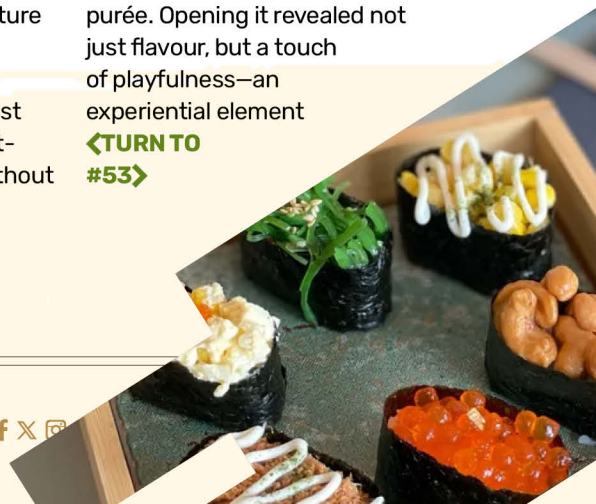
★ Starter—Chef's Assorted Platter of the Day

A light, colourful plate featuring cherry tomatoes with basil, roasted pumpkin on cucumber, and celery with crackers—each bite fresh and elegantly presented.

★ 1st Entrée—Fortune Parcel with Pea Purée

I opted for the Fortune Parcel—a delicate pouch filled with peas, corn, and carrot resting on a vibrant pea purée. Opening it revealed not just flavour, but a touch of playfulness—an experiential element

❮TURN TO #53❯











CONTINUED FROM #52 that enhanced the fine-dining experience.

★ **2nd Entrée—Rice Bowl Cake (Wanguo)**

This was one of the most intriguing courses: tender mushrooms and fresh coriander atop a soft, custard-like rice base. The texture was silky, almost dessert-like, yet savoury and comforting—a true cross-cultural fusion.

★ **Soup of the Day**

A clear, tea-like infusion served between courses. Light and aromatic, it acted as a palate cleanser rather than a conventional soup, allowing the next course to shine.

★ **Main—Tofu and Oyster Mushrooms Steamed in Banana Leaves**

For the main, I chose the tofu and oyster mushrooms wrapped in banana leaves and served with a crisp Asian salad topped with peanuts. The banana-leaf presentation immediately transported me to Southeast Asia, and unwrapping the parcel released a wave of delicate, fragrant flavours.

★ **Dessert—Vegan Panna Cotta with Chocolate Mousse & Raspberry Compote**

The finale was exquisite—a vegan panna cotta paired with rich chocolate mousse and tangy raspberry compote. It was creamy, balanced, and a testament to how indulgent plant-based desserts can be.

💙 **A NEW CHAPTER IN "CLEAN" FINE DINING**

What truly sets Midori by Tao's apart is its quiet sophistication. The restaurant creates space for those who want to eat consciously without compromising on experience or elegance.

In a city filled with incredible restaurants, few specialise exclusively in vegetarian or vegan fine dining. Midori by Tao's fills that gap beautifully—offering a premium dining atmosphere that caters equally to wellness-minded food lovers and those simply seeking something extraordinary.

From the playful vibrance of the sushi train to the serene flow of its fine-dining menu, Midori by Tao's embodies the evolution of modern dining: sustainable, sophisticated, and soulfully delicious.

My overall experience was nothing short of delightful—a celebration of creativity, mindfulness, and flavour. Midori by Tao's proves that plant-based food isn't a compromise; it's a canvas for innovation. I left feeling inspired, satisfied, and excited to return.

Midori by Tao's

201 Doncaster Road, Doncaster East, Melbourne

www.midoribytaos.com.au

Nav Ganesh** is a Melbourne-based entrepreneur and lifestyle creator. He loves to travel, discover new places and share stories that inspire with his followers on **Instagram @navman26

"My Ears Were Ringing": The Hidden Hearing Risk of AirPods and Earbuds

DR. PREETI KHILLAN & DR. RAJ KHILLAN
𝕏 @the_indian_sun

Seventeen-year-old Mia thought her AirPods were harmless. She wore them constantly, on the bus to school, while working out at the gym, and even while falling asleep. It was part of her lifestyle, something every friend seemed to do. But after months of almost non-stop listening, she began to notice a high-pitched ringing in her ears after long sessions. Sometimes voices sounded muffled, as though she were listening through cotton wool.

Her parents took her to an audiologist. The tests revealed early signs of noise-induced hearing changes, the kind usually seen in adults exposed to years of loud environments. "I didn't think it was possible," Mia admitted afterwards. "I thought only older people lost their hearing." Mia was fortunate. With changes to her habits in form of lowering the volume, taking breaks, and switching to noise-cancelling over-ear headphones, her symptoms stabilised. But her story reflects a bigger, quieter epidemic that is slowly stealing the hearing of young and old alike.

NOT RADIATION, BUT SOUND

Scroll through social media and you'll find plenty of viral posts **❮TURN TO #55❯**

Representational Photo by Matthew Ball on Unsplash

Seventeen-year-old Mia's love for her **AirPods** nearly cost her hearing—revealing a growing, often-ignored danger of everyday listening habits among young

<CONTINUED FROM #54>
warning that AirPods can cause cancer because they emit "radiation." The idea sounds frightening, but the science is clear. Bluetooth uses low-energy, non-ionising radiation, far weaker than a mobile phone signal, and international agencies including the World Health Organization have found no consistent link to cancer.

The real danger lies elsewhere. Earbuds deliver sound directly into the ear canal, millimetres from the eardrum. At maximum volume, AirPods can exceed 100 decibels which is equivalent to standing beside concert speakers. At that level, hearing damage can begin in as little as 15 minutes. Unlike many parts of the body, the fragile hair cells of the inner ear do not regenerate once damaged.



THE NUMBERS AT HOME AND ABROAD

Hearing loss is already one of Australia's fastest-growing health concerns. Today, around one in seven adults live with some degree of hearing loss. Projections suggest that by 2060 nearly eight million Australians will be affected. Age is the strongest driver: half of Australians in their sixties have measurable hearing loss, rising to nearly 80 per cent by their eighties.

Children and young adults are far from immune. About one in every 1000 newborns in Australia is born with permanent hearing loss, and between three and six in every 1000 school-aged children are affected. A 2022 global study estimated that 1.35 billion young people worldwide are at risk from unsafe listening through devices like AirPods or at loud venues.

The problem is compounded in some communities. A University of Queensland study last year found that children from culturally and linguistically diverse families had a 58 per cent higher risk of hearing loss compared with their peers, though the risk declined the longer families had lived in Australia. Among First Nations Australians, ear disease and hearing loss remain disproportionately high, particularly in remote areas where access to specialists is limited.

These patterns are echoed overseas. In New Zealand, Māori and Pacific Islander children face higher risks of hearing problems. In Canada and the United States, researchers have documented disparities in both childhood ear disease and access to treatment among immigrant and minority groups.

In India, newspapers have reported rising rates of hearing damage among young urban residents, frequently linked to heavy earbud use in noisy cities. Taken together, the evidence shows how technology habits and social disadvantage can combine to widen health gaps.

OVER-EAR VERSUS IN-EAR

So are over-ear headphones a safer option? Not automatically, but they often help. Because they cover the ear and block outside noise, over-ear models allow listeners to hear clearly at lower volumes. Earbuds, by contrast, often encourage higher volume in noisy environments like public transport or gyms. Active noise-cancelling technology, found in both designs, can reduce background noise and encourage lower listening levels. The safest device is the one that lets you listen more quietly.

HOW LOUD IS TOO LOUD?

Hearing scientists talk about the "three-decibel rule." At 85 decibels, the level of heavy city traffic, you can listen safely for up to eight hours. Increase the level to 88 decibels and the safe time halves to four hours. At 94 decibels, it drops to just one hour. And by 100 decibels, the level earbuds can reach when cranked up,safe time shrinks to only 15 minutes.

That is why public-health experts often recommend the "60/60 rule": listen at no more than 60 per cent of maximum volume for no more than 60 minutes at a time, then give your ears a rest. It's a simple way to reduce exposure, especially for young people who may not notice early signs of damage.

PROTECTING YOUR EARS

The good news is that hearing loss from earbuds is preventable. Phones now include features that allow users to set a maximum volume limit and receive weekly exposure alerts. Noise-cancelling headphones help reduce background interference, so you don't feel the need to turn the sound up. For long study or work sessions, over-ear headphones are a better choice than in-ears.

In noisy environments like concerts, clubs or gyms, simple musician's earplugs can protect hearing without dulling the experience. And if you notice ringing, muffling, or a growing need to turn up the volume, it's time to get a hearing test. Early intervention can prevent long-term damage.

AirPods are not microwaving your brain. But they may be quietly eroding your hearing if you use them at high volume for hours every day. For teenagers like Mia, the effects can begin earlier than expected. For adults in their sixties, loud earbuds only add to the natural decline of ageing ears.

Whether young or old, the message is the same: lower the volume, limit the time, and take breaks. You only get one pair of ears, and once they're gone, they don't come back.

INFO BOX: DECIBELS VS SAFE LISTENING TIME

- 85 dB (busy traffic) → 8 hours safe
- 88 dB → 4 hours
- 91 dB → 2 hours
- 94 dB (noisy pub) → 1 hour
- 97 dB → 30 minutes
- 100 dB (maxed-out earbuds) → 15 minutes

INFO BOX: HOW TO LISTEN SAFELY

- Set your phone's **volume cap** and leave alerts switched on.
- Choose **over-ear headphones** for long sessions.
- Use **noise-cancelling** in noisy places so you don't need to turn up the sound.
- Take regular **quiet breaks** to let your ears recover.
- Wear **earplugs** at concerts and gyms.
- See an **audiologist** if you notice ringing, muffled hearing or needing ever-higher volume.

HEALTH

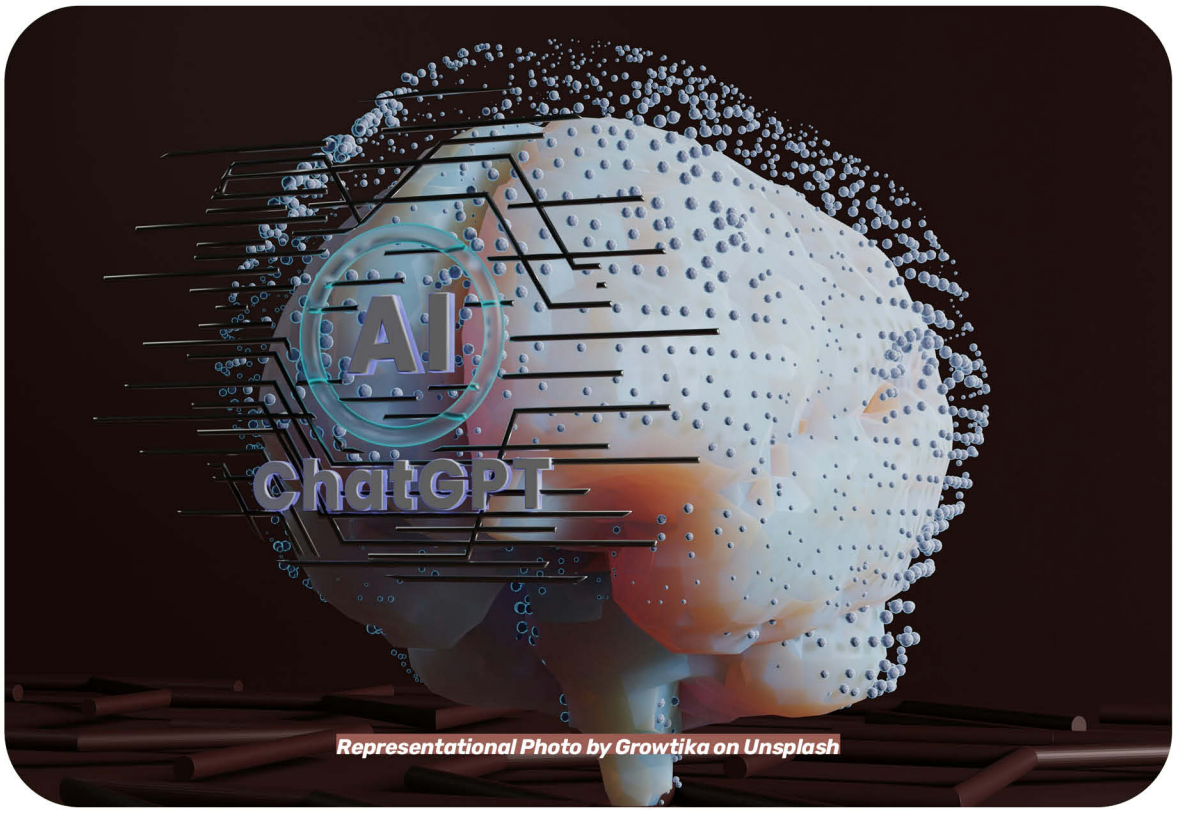
ChatGPT and the cry for help: What OpenAI's data means for Australia's mental health



Representational Photo by Matthew Ball on Unsplash

As AI chatbots like **ChatGPT** become a silent confessional for millions, Australia confronts a new reality where technology is both a potential lifeline and a risk for the

OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun



Representational Photo by Growtika on Unsplash

When **OpenAI** revealed this week that about 1.2 million people worldwide use ChatGPT each week in conversations signalling suicidal intent, the figures struck an uneasy chord in Australia. The numbers are global, but the reality here is confronting: in a country where nine people take their own lives every day, artificial intelligence is quietly becoming both counsellor and confessional.

The tech company's disclosure—part of its October 27 update on safety features — showed that roughly 0.15% of its 800 million weekly users send messages with "explicit indicators of potential suicide planning or intent". Scaled to Australia's population, this translates to about 41,000 Australians turning to ChatGPT every week when they are at their lowest.

OpenAI says ChatGPT directs users to crisis helplines such as Lifeline and the Samaritans, but admits that "in some rare cases, the model may not behave as intended in these sensitive situations." In its latest tests involving more than 1,000 conversations about self-harm or suicide, GPT-5 followed safety guidelines 91% of the time. The company is working to strengthen long-conversation safeguards, where consistency can weaken over time.

For Indigenous and rural Australians—who already face suicide rates up to three times the national average—these risks are magnified. Internet access is often patchy and professional help scarce. The temptation to offload pain into a chat window is understandable. Mental health experts warn that while AI tools can help people express their distress, they may fail to recognise cultural context or the urgency behind a cry for help.

OpenAI's blog acknowledged that mental distress "is universally present in human societies," and that as its user base grows, more such cases will appear. The company has been working with more than 170 mental health professionals to refine GPT-5's responses, introducing features such as break reminders, safer handovers to helplines, and region-specific support links. Yet critics say self-regulation is not enough. Following reports of teens engaging with AI chatbots for hours, Education Minister Jason Clare said in October that "AI chatbots are hurting children," urging stronger national rules for digital wellbeing.

The federal government's National Suicide Prevention Strategy for 2025–2035 now calls for hybrid support systems that blend technology with human oversight. This includes pilot programs where AI tools flag crisis indicators to trained counsellors in real time. Suicide Prevention Australia's 2025 report notes that while digital platforms can expand access—particularly among young people and men reluctant to seek help—they must be "culturally sensitive, transparent and supervised".

The debate isn't confined to policy. Across social media, reactions range from gratitude to alarm. Some users credit ChatGPT with saving them by "listening without judgement". Others warn it creates false intimacy that can deepen loneliness. Researchers at the eSafety Commissioner's office found growing evidence of emotional over-reliance on AI companions, particularly among teens and the elderly.

Globally, the disclosure comes amid mounting legal scrutiny. In the United States, the family of 16-year-old Adam Raine has filed a wrongful death lawsuit, claiming their son's suicide in 2025 followed unsafe responses from an earlier version of ChatGPT. OpenAI has denied liability but said it continues to improve safeguards and cooperate with authorities.

Back home, Lifeline and Beyond Blue have taken cautious steps into the digital era, introducing chatbot assistants that are always monitored by humans. Their message remains simple: AI can help start a conversation, but it cannot replace the human one that might save a life.

As OpenAI chief executive Sam Altman put it, "Mental health symptoms are part of being human, and with an increasing user base, some portion of ChatGPT conversations will include these situations." In Australia, where isolation often wears a smile and help can be hours away, that portion may already be too large to ignore.

*If this article raises concerns for you or someone you know, contact **Lifeline** on **13 11 14** or **Beyond Blue** on **1300 22 4636***

Frequent ejaculation linked to lower prostate cancer risk, studies suggest

Frequent ejaculation may be linked to a lower risk of prostate cancer, according to research, though scientists note this correlation does not prove causation

Representational Photo by Kyle Loftus on Unsplash

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A growing body of medical research indicates that men who ejaculate 21 times or more each month appear to face a lower risk of developing **prostate cancer** compared with those who report four to seven times. The findings, while attention-grabbing, call for careful interpretation.

The most frequently cited evidence comes from the long-running Health Professionals Follow-Up Study, led by researchers from Harvard University and published in JAMA. It tracked more than 31,000 men over nearly two decades. Those who ejaculated most often had a roughly 31 per cent lower risk of prostate cancer, particularly in cases confined to the prostate.

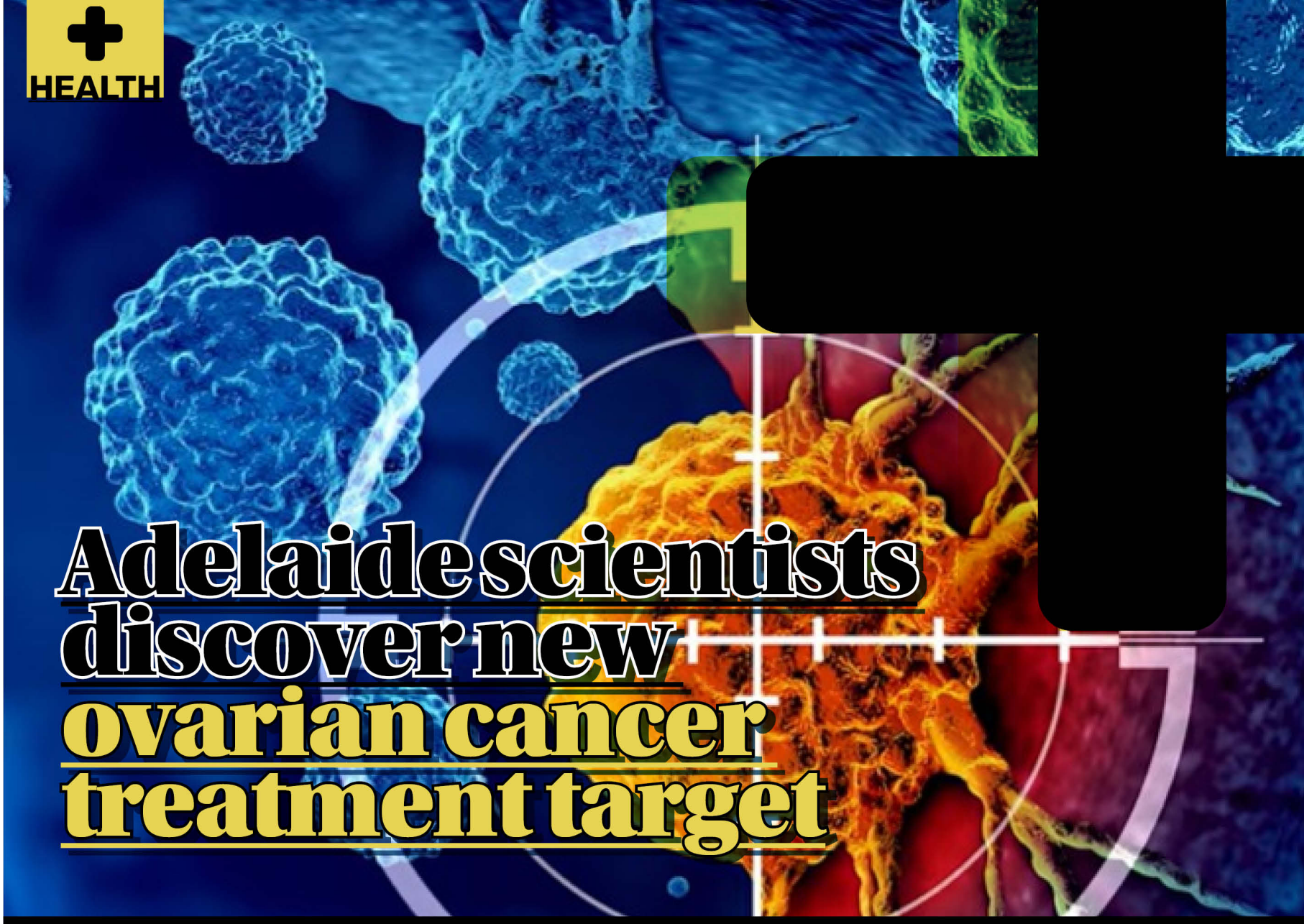
Australian researchers have observed similar trends, with some suggesting that frequent ejaculation might help clear potentially harmful substances from the prostate or reduce inflammation. Others believe it could simply reflect better overall health among more sexually active men.

Yet experts stress that frequency alone is not a medical prescription. The studies are observational, meaning they identify correlation rather than cause. Men who eat well, exercise, and avoid smoking are also more likely to be sexually active—factors that may all play a role in lower cancer risk.

Doctors continue to advise regular check-ups and discussions about prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing, particularly for men over 50 or those with family history. Lifestyle measures such as maintaining a healthy weight, moderating alcohol, and staying active remain the cornerstones of prevention.

Prostate cancer remains one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers among Australian men, with around 25,000 new cases each year. While the "21 times" headline may spark curiosity, the broader message is about balance—keeping physical, sexual, and emotional health in step.

Disclaimer: *This article is for general informational purposes only. It summarises scientific studies and does not constitute medical advice. Readers should consult a qualified healthcare professional for guidance on prostate health, screening, or treatment options*



Adelaide scientists discover new ovarian cancer treatment target

Adelaide researchers have identified a new molecular target, F2R, which could revolutionise the early detection and treatment of deadly ovarian cancer



Photo supplied

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Researchers in Adelaide have found a new molecular target that could transform how **ovarian cancer** is diagnosed and treated, raising fresh hopes for women living with one of the world's deadliest cancers.

A team from the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide has identified a receptor called F2R, found at high levels on the surface of ovarian cancer cells, particularly in cases where the disease has spread or resisted chemotherapy. Their work, published in the International Journal of Molecular Sciences, points to F2R as both a potential biomarker for early detection and a target for future therapies.

Dr Hugo Albrecht from UniSA's Centre for Pharmaceutical Innovation says current diagnostic tools often fail to detect the disease early enough for effective treatment. "Existing biomarkers aren't accurate enough, leaving doctors with limited ways to predict how patients will respond to treatment," he explains. "Our findings suggest that F2R could help fill that gap and support more personalised approaches to care."

Ovarian cancer remains the most lethal gynaecological cancer, claiming more than 200,000 lives each year. Around 70 per cent of cases are diagnosed at advanced stages, largely because early symptoms are vague and can be confused with other conditions. The most commonly used biomarker, CA-125, is unreliable because it can also be elevated by non-cancerous factors, making it unsuitable for screening.

To build a clearer picture, the Adelaide team analysed extensive genomic data and confirmed high F2R levels in tumour samples from patients. They found that women with greater F2R expression tended to have shorter survival times, highlighting its potential as a prognostic marker.

Laboratory studies went further, showing that silencing F2R reduced cancer cell movement and invasiveness—traits that drive metastasis. When F2R was suppressed, tumour cells also became more responsive to carboplatin, a common chemotherapy drug.

Dr Carmela Ricciardelli from the University of Adelaide's Robinson Research Institute says these results could lead to more refined and responsive treatments. "Testing for F2R could help identify women at greater risk of recurrence or resistance to chemotherapy," she says. "It might also help tailor drug combinations that deliver stronger results."

While the findings are still in the early stages, the researchers believe the discovery could lay the groundwork for new diagnostic and therapeutic options. Larger clinical studies are needed to confirm the results and translate them into practice.

"Ovarian cancer has been so difficult to detect early, which is why outcomes have remained poor," Dr Albrecht says. "By understanding how F2R drives the disease, we may be able to develop better tools for diagnosis and treatment that genuinely improve survival."

The study, Protease-activated receptor F2R is a potential target for new diagnostic/prognostic and treatment applications for patients with ovarian cancer, was authored by researchers from the University of South Australia, the University of Adelaide and the Royal Adelaide Hospital.



Diljit Dosanjh

Mayura Academy's annual Kuchipudi Concert 2025



Mayura Academy's annual Kuchipudi concert showcased the grace and rhythm of Indian classical dance, performed by 140 students in Sydney

BHUSHAN SALUNKE
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Sydney witnessed a magnificent celebration of Indian classical dance on 18 October 2025, as **Mayura Academy** hosted its annual **Kuchipudi** concert at the Multipurpose Centre, Pacific Hills Christian School in Dural, Sydney. The evening was a large-scale cultural showcase of rhythm, storytelling, and devotion, featuring students trained under Guru Sri Venkata Ramana Karanam, one of the premier exponents of Kuchipudi in Australia. All students of Mayura Academy (about 140 students) participated in the concert, barring a few who were busy with their HSC exam preparation.

The concert was much more than a student recital—it was a living tribute to the timeless elegance of Kuchipudi, one of India's oldest classical dance forms. Each performance combined intricate footwork, expressive storytelling, and narrative depth. The show's theme centered on the triumph of good over evil and the celebration of light, echoing the spirit of the Vijayadashami and Diwali season.

The program started with sloka recital by the young kids, followed by Mahaganapathim (an invocatory item performed in praise of lord Ganesha), Rajasree Shabdam (in praise of King Pratap Singha), Brahmanjal (a salutation to lord Shiva), Dasavathara Shabdham (illustrates the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu), First Set Steps (performed by young kids. More than 80 steps which each student learns at the beginning of their Kuchipudi career); Vinayaka Kowthvam (an item in praise of Lord Vinayaka), Indariki Abhayamu (Annamacharya praises forLord Venkatesa), Garuda Gamana Tava (a *keerthana* in praise of Lord Vishnu), Pushpanjali (an item in praise of Goddess Durga), Natesha (an obeisance paid to Lord Nataraja), Krishnam Kalayasakhi (a popular Tarangam TURN TO #63

The concert was much more than a student recital—it was a living tribute to the timeless elegance of Kuchipudi, one of India's oldest classical dance forms





CONTINUED FROM #61

written by Narayana Teertha), Gajaananayutham (a composition by Muthuswamy Dikshitar, composed in praise of Lord Ganesha), Jathis Male (a combination of various adugus or basic steps which are intertwined and set to a particular taalam), Geetham (praise of goddess Saraswati), Jathiswaram (a song consisting of only swaras and jathis to which the dancer dances without any abhinaya or expression), Second Set Steps (by the young students), Slokas (a distinct verse in praise of deities), Bhoomi Mangalam (a devotional song and a prayer for auspiciousness and tranquility), Tarangam: Neela Megha Sareera (a devotional piece describing the divine beauty and grace of Lord Krishna), Namashivayathe (in praise of lord Shiva), Shiva Namaskaratha Mantra (performed by a group of mums and dad, in praise of Lord Shiva), Koluvaithiva (an item where the grandeur of Rangasai is explained by the dancer using various gestures), Sri Ragavam (the story of Lord Rama), Thillana (a composition by Swati Tirunal), and concluded with Pavamana (Mangalam for all students)

The highlights of the show were the Shiva Namaskaratha Mantra, Thillana & Krishnam Kalayasakhi

The chief guest, Dr Jyothi Marry garu, lauded the efforts of Guru Ramana garu in keeping the tradition of Kuchipudi alive and explained the benefits of dance for both mental and physical growth of a person

The evening featured group and solo performances that skillfully showcased Kuchipudi's hallmark blend of graceful gestures, athletic movement, and rhythmic precision. Dancers captivated the audience with stories from Hindu epics—depicting divine characters through expressive abhinaya and classical music accompaniment. The colourful costumes, traditional jewellery, and live orchestra created a visually rich, immersive stage experience.

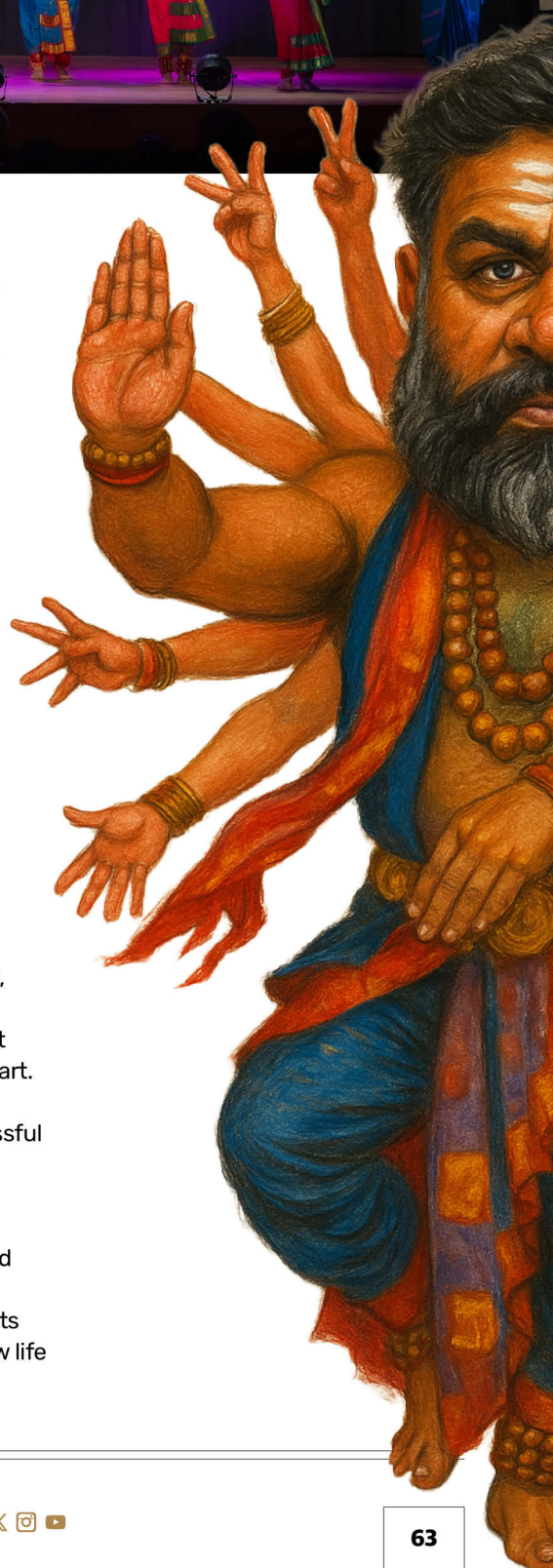
The event drew an audience of families, art enthusiasts, and cultural dignitaries from Sydney's Indian and broader multicultural communities. Parents and students collaborated tirelessly behind the scenes, reinforcing Mayura Academy's commitment to community-driven art and inclusive participation. The concert was not just a performance, but also a cultural bridge connecting Australian audiences with India's artistic heritage.

Founded in 1990 by Guru Venkata Ramana and Srivani Karanam, Mayura Academy has branches in Bella Vista, Schofields, Wentworthville and Westmead, training hundreds of students in Kuchipudi's traditional and technical aspects. The academy remains deeply rooted in preserving classical dance while nurturing new generations of performers in Australia.

Guru Venkata Ramana garu is preparing three of his senior students for their Rangapravesham in 2026—Sriharshitha Puthi on 23 May 2026, Hruthika Dasari on 31 May 2026 and Ayushvi Bhavaraj on 31 October 2026.

As the final curtain fell, the auditorium resounded with applause—a heartfelt acknowledgment of the young dancers' discipline, artistry, and devotion. The concert reaffirmed Mayura Academy's reputation as one of Sydney's finest Indian cultural institutions, blending heritage, performance excellence, and community spirit into a memorable celebration of art. Venkata Ramana garu profusely thanked everyone for the successful event.

In every rhythmic step and expressive glance, Mayura Academy's performers reaffirmed what Kuchipudi stands for: a dance form where devotion meets discipline, and tradition finds new life on modern stage.



A community in mourning: MCG pays tribute to young star Ben Austin



Ben was critically injured while batting in the nets at Ferntree Gully's Wally Tew Reserve. He passed away th next day

OUR REPORTER
@the_indian_sun

The Melbourne sporting community is united in grief after the death of 17-year-old **Ben Austin**, a talented and much-loved cricketer and footballer, who died last week after being struck during cricket training.

Ben was critically injured while batting in the nets at Ferntree Gully's Wally Tew Reserve on Tuesday afternoon. Despite the efforts of emergency responders and the medical team at the Monash Children's Hospital, he passed away on Wednesday. His parents, Jace and Tracey, expressed their gratitude for the care provided, stating, "Jace and Tracey would like to thank Ambulance Vic, the Police, the Monash Children's Hospital and those people who assisted on Tuesday."

The Ferntree Gully Cricket Club, where Ben was an accomplished ❮TURN TO #65❯



Ben's image appeared on the MCG's big screen, and players, umpires, and staff wore black armbands as a mark of respect, ensuring his spirit was remembered on the grand stage of the game he loved

> "Cricket is a sport that unites communities and inspires Australians, and we're delighted to play a role in ensuring its continued success
>
> **SEAN HANLEY, VICE-PRESIDENT, SALES & MARKETING, TOYOTA AUSTRALIA**

CONTINUED FROM #64 player, confirmed the tragic news, describing the club as "absolutely devastated." In a statement, the club shared, "Our thoughts and prayers are with his family—Jace, Tracey, Cooper and Zach, his extended family, his friends and all of those who knew Ben and the joy that he brought."

His talent extended beyond the cricket pitch. Ben played more than 100 games for the Waverley Park Hawks Junior Football Club, which paid an extensive tribute to his character. "Ben was a kind, respectful, popular and much-loved player at our club," the Hawks' statement read. "He supported his teammates and was a support to all of the kids that he played with." The club highlighted his loyalty and dedication, noting he was "a true Hawks man" who was "universally loved." This culminated in him winning the Runner Up Best and Fairest and Best Finals Player awards in 2025.

As a cricketer, Ben represented both Ferntree Gully and the Rowville Sports Academy. Earlier this year, he captained the FTGDCA Under-16s Keith MacKay representative team to a Grand Final victory, where he delivered a match-winning performance, taking 3 for 13 and scoring 18 runs. He finished the tournament as the third-highest wicket-taker.

In a moving national tribute, the Melbourne Cricket Ground fell silent this evening ahead of the Australia–India T20 International to honour the young cricketer. Fifteen minutes before play, both teams, match officials, and representatives from Cricket Victoria and Cricket Australia stood together in a moment of total silence. Ben's image appeared on the MCG's big screen, and players, umpires, and staff wore black armbands as a mark of respect, ensuring his spirit was remembered on the grand stage of the game he loved.



Both clubs have asked for privacy for Ben's family as the community grieves. The Waverley Park Hawks have made counselling support available to players and families, and funeral details are expected to be shared in the coming days.

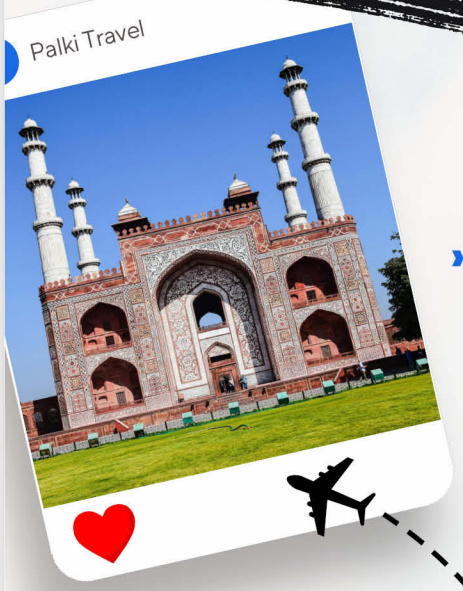
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