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DECEMBER 2025
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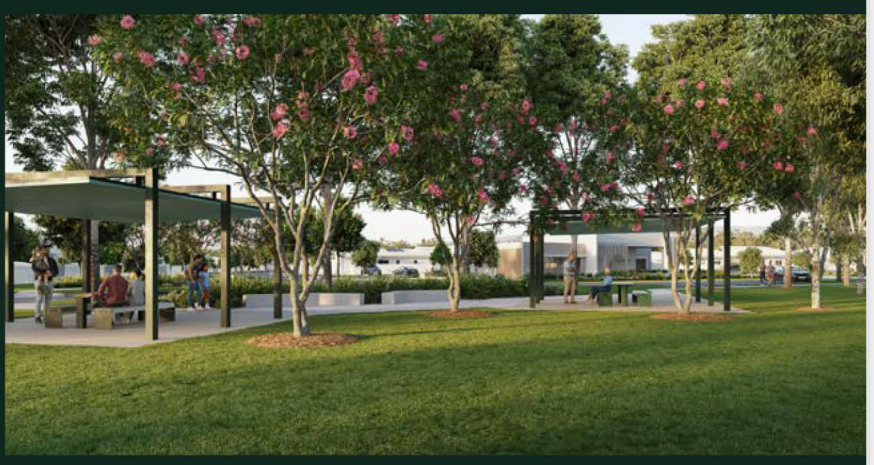
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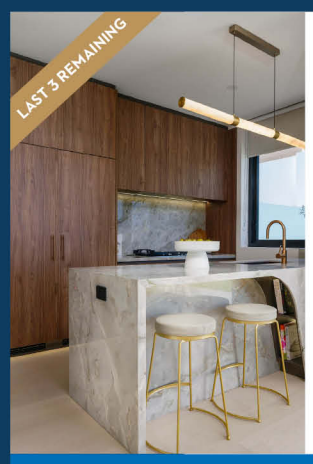


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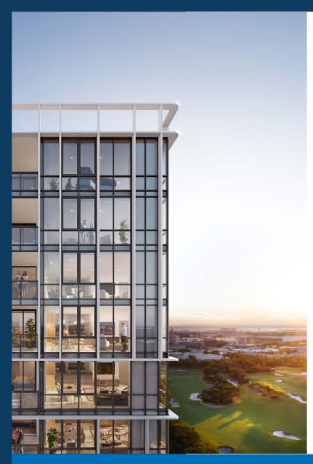



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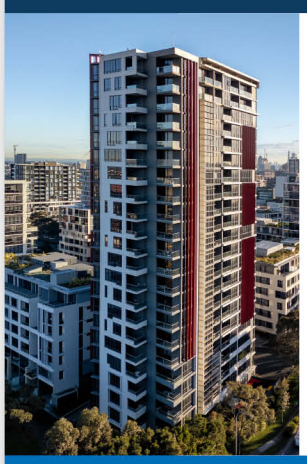


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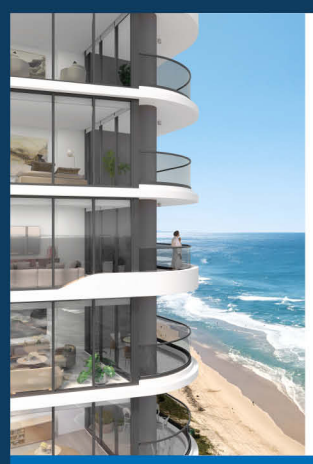


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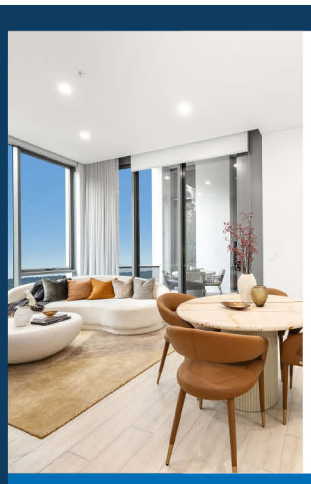
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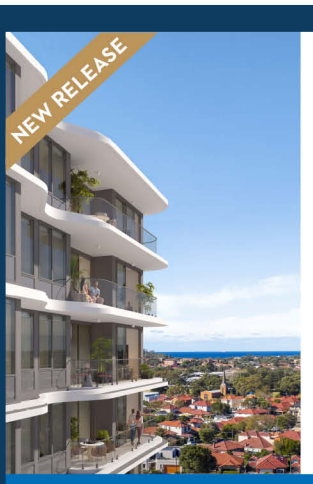


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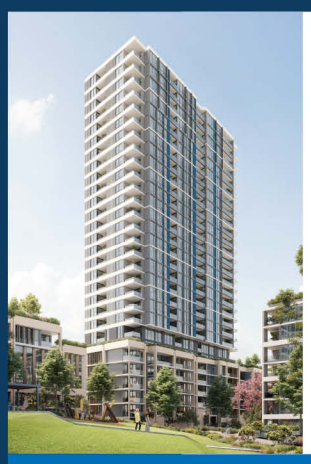


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EDITOR'S NOTE

# Community Spirit: Building, Serving, and Celebrating Across Queensland

Dear Readers,



This final edition for the year beautifully captures the multifaceted spirit of community, service, and celebration that thrives across Queensland. As we reflect on the closing chapters of the year, our stories collectively highlight the profound ways in which shared purpose and cultural richness strengthen the fabric of our state, offering inspiration and a sense of shared identity.

We begin with a truly foundational moment in the north, where the sacred Bhoomi Pooja ceremony recently marked the commencement of Townsville's first purpose-built Hindu temple. This landmark project, nurtured through years of steadfast volunteer dedication, signifies far more than the construction of a place of worship. It represents the establishment of a long-awaited spiritual and cultural heart for North Queensland—a permanent home for faith, language, music, and intergenerational connection. The deep resonance of the day was magnified by the respectful involvement of Bindal Traditional Owners and the participatory support of state leaders. This powerful convergence of ancient ritual, Indigenous heritage, and community aspiration stands as a testament to the evolving, inclusive narrative of modern Queensland, where diverse traditions are woven together to create a stronger, more unified whole.

Echoing this theme of communal commitment is the quiet, impactful generosity that defined recent Diwali celebrations. The Australian Andhra Association Queensland's significant contribution to the Sewa Diwali Food Drive powerfully illustrates how festival spirit can translate into direct, compassionate action. By delivering essential supplies to the vital, volunteer-run Community Friends service in West End, this act of sewa moves beyond symbolism to address real need. It underscores a fundamental truth: our most meaningful celebrations are those that inspire us to look outward and extend tangible support to neighbours. In the consistent, humble work of services like Community Friends, we see the enduring engine of grassroots care that operates year-round, reminding us that the true strength of our community lies in these unsung acts of solidarity.

As we turn our gaze to the immediate horizon, the festive Christmas season invites us all into a state-wide celebration of light, music, and togetherness. Queensland's calendar is alight with events designed to foster joy and connection for every age and interest. From the grand scale of Brisbane's Lord Mayor's Christmas Carols at Riverstage to the mesmerising nightly City Hall Lights projections that animate our historic civic heart, there are spectacles to inspire awe. The magic takes to the water with the glittering Bribie Island Christmas Lights Boat Parade, while community warmth radiates from local gatherings like the Pine Rivers Christmas Carols in Strathpine and the family-friendly Christmas Movie in the Park in Pimpama. These offerings, alongside the musical excellence of the Spirit of Christmas concerts at QPAC, create a rich mosaic of opportunities to pause, celebrate, and create lasting memories in the company of others.

This edition also carries stories of building bridges in other vital arenas, from academia to health advocacy, each reinforcing our collective capacity for positive impact. As we close this volume, these narratives remind us that our communities are continually shaped and elevated by a shared dedication to faith in each other, service to those around us, and celebration of our common bonds.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all our readers and to the countless individuals whose stories and efforts fill these pages. Your engagement is the cornerstone of this publication. From our team to you and yours, we wish you a season filled with peace, warmth, and joyous connection. Happy Christmas.

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

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# Townsville breaks ground for new Durga Mahalakshmi Temple

***NICK ATTAM*** *TOWNSVILLE*
***@the_indian_sun***

Townsville saw a moment of quiet pride last week as hundreds gathered for the Bhoomi Pooja that marked the start of construction on the city's first purpose-built Hindu temple, the **Shree Durga Mahalakshmi Temple**. The ceremony, hosted by the North Queensland Hindu Community Inc. (NQHC), brought together families, elders, Traditional Owners, and state leaders who came to witness a milestone years in the making.

The Bhoomi Pooja, a vedic ritual that seeks the blessings of Mother Earth before any foundation is laid, set the tone for a project that carries deep meaning for the region's Hindu community. The temple will honour Shree Durga Mahalakshmi, a rare form of the Goddess worshipped at only a small number of temples worldwide. For many in attendance, the start of construction felt like the creation of a spiritual anchor for North Queensland, a space for festivals, prayer, language, music, and the kind of cultural grounding that grows stronger when it has a home of its own.







Support from the Queensland Government was clear. Assistant Minister Jannelle Poole attended on behalf of the Premier, joined by Member for Thuringowa Natalie Marr and Member for Townsville Adam Baillie. The leaders took part in rituals, spoke with volunteers, and acknowledged the strength of the turnout and the sense of unity around the project. Their presence signalled how deeply the temple has been embraced as part of Townsville's wider multicultural story.

Respect for Country was central to the day's events. Aunty Gracelyn Smallwood and Aunty Jenny Wyles, representing the Bindal Traditional Owners, delivered the Welcome to Country and land acknowledgement, grounding the ceremony in the deep history of the land on which the temple will stand. Their words carried the weight of continuity, marking a moment where two communities shared space, respect, and purpose.

The Shree Ganesha Homam performed by the community priest drew many devotees to participate, followed by a shared lunch that stretched well into the afternoon as families lingered, taking photos on the site that will soon hold the temple's foundations.

Construction will unfold over the coming months, bringing with it a new centre for worship and celebration. For organisers, the day marked the beginning of a dream they say has been shaped by countless hours of volunteer work and a level of community support that has come from within. They describe the Bhoomi Pooja as the start of a chapter that Townsville will watch grow.

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# Diwali donation drive brings more than food to West End

***OUR REPORTER*** *BRISBANE*
***@the_indian_sun***

A steady stream of generosity marked this year's Diwali celebrations, with the **Australian Andhra Association Queensland** contributing more than 100 kilograms of packaged and non-perishable food to the Sewa Diwali Food Donation Drive. The items were delivered to Community Friends in West End, a volunteer-run service that has been supporting people in hardship for close to two decades.

Community Friends runs on simple purpose and consistent effort. Every Wednesday, more than 200 people queue for a hot meal, groceries, and essential supplies. Jimmy, the organiser, has kept the service going for 19 years. Week after week, he turns up and gets the job done. It is steady work rather than ceremony that keeps people afloat, and the demand shows how many Brisbane families continue to face pressure.

AAQ's participation this Diwali came through careful coordination from community leaders who have long been active in local service. Krishna Mohan Kandula, representing HOTA, and Dr Mrinal helped steer the drive, ensuring donations were gathered and delivered smoothly. Uma Chilukoti and Priyanka Sripathi added strength to the effort by organising contributions from their own neighbourhoods, showing how support often spreads through small, practical steps.

The AAQ Executive Committee, its members, and supporters across Queensland backed the initiative with donations and encouragement. For many families, Diwali is a time to pause and reflect, and this year the focus extended beyond celebration. The act of giving offered a quiet reminder that festivals carry their deepest meaning when they bring comfort to others.

AAQ's participation this Diwali came through careful coordination from community leaders who have long been active in local service. Krishna Mohan Kandula, representing HOTA, and Dr Mrinal helped steer the drive

Service, or sewa, has long been central to community life. This drive affirmed the value of that tradition in multicultural Queensland, where small acts of care echo widely. AAQ's message, "Together for Better Future," gained tangible form through the work done on the ground.

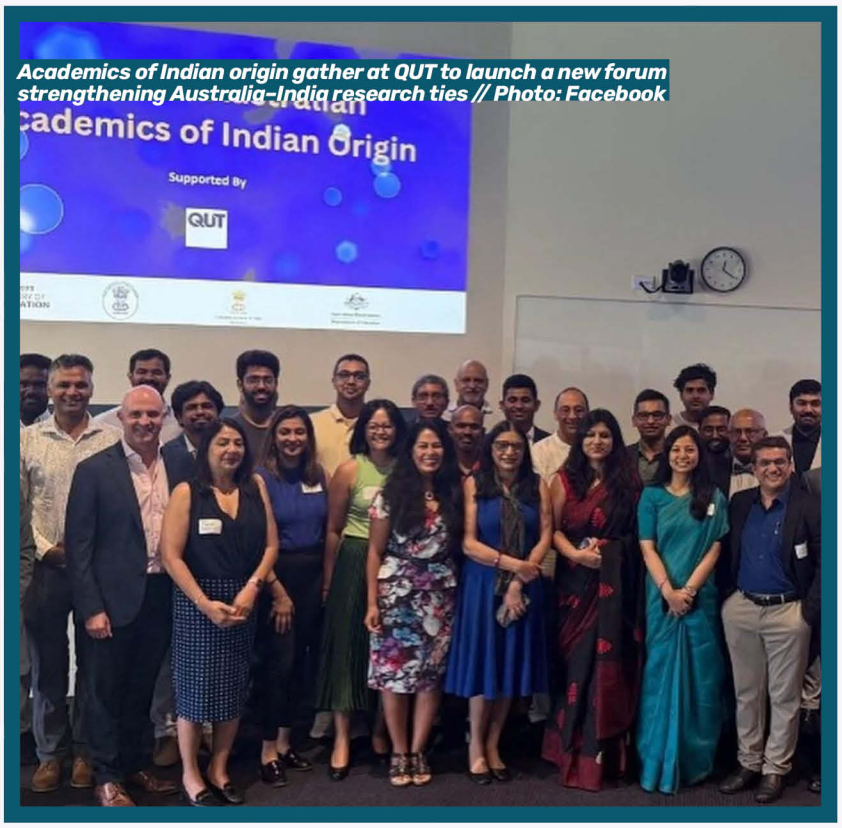
# Forum of Academics of Indian Origin launches in Brisbane

***OUR REPORTER*** *CANBERRA*
***@the_indian_sun***

The High Commission of India and the Consulate General of India in Brisbane, in partnership with the Australian Department of Education and Queensland University of Technology, have hosted the first meeting of a new forum bringing together academics of Indian origin from across Australia. The gathering, held at QUT in Brisbane, sets the groundwork for a long-term platform aimed at strengthening collaboration in teaching, research and innovation.

The initiative reflects a shared interest in widening academic cooperation between India and Australia at a time when both countries are looking closely at knowledge exchange, skills development and the future of advanced research. Organisers said the new **Forum of Academics of Indian Origin** offers an opportunity to connect scholars who contribute to Australia's universities while maintaining strong links to India's long-standing academic and scientific traditions.

Attendance at the inaugural meeting highlighted the broad appeal of the initiative. Academics from universities across Australia joined the event, representing disciplines spanning STEM fields, media and communications, agriculture, business studies and health sciences. For many, the forum provides a space to build community, explore collaborative ideas and better understand shared research priorities.



*Academics of Indian origin gather at QUT to launch a new forum strengthening Australia-India research ties // Photo: Facebook*


*Emeritus Prof Chennupati Jagdish delivering the keynote address at QUT // Photo: Facebook*

Emeritus Professor Chennupati Jagdish delivered the keynote address, drawing on decades of experience in global research networks. He spoke about the evolving expectations placed on universities and researchers, and the role forums like this can play in shaping cooperation that crosses borders. His remarks set the tone for a thoughtful day of discussion.

The programme featured three panel sessions focused on areas that continue to shape academic strategies worldwide. The first panel examined emerging technologies and their growing influence on industries and public policy. Another panel turned attention to AI and its expanding use in education and research, exploring how universities are adapting to rapid developments in machine learning and automation. The final session focused on health research, an area where collaboration between institutions often leads to breakthroughs with broad social impact.

Participants described the event as a welcome step towards building an organised network that can support joint research projects, encourage academic mobility and promote new partnerships between institutions in India and Australia. Many also pointed to the value of informal connections created on the sidelines of the event, which often lead to future collabs.



# India ties help secure Bowen Basin investment and protect QLD coal jobs

***OUR REPORTER*** *BRISBANE*
***@the_indian_sun***

Queensland's latest resources deal has taken shape through deepening ties with India, with the State Government confirming that negotiations during Premier David Crisafulli's recent trade mission to India and Japan played a central role in securing a major international investment in the Bowen Basin.

The agreement will see Argo Queensland acquire a 70 per cent stake in Fitzroy Australia Resources, locking in long-term operations at the Broadlea, Carborough Downs and Ironbark mines. More than 1000 workers, contractors and suppliers are expected to benefit from the stability the new investment brings.

Government officials say interest from Indian investors and energy partners has grown steadily as demand for Queensland coal continues across India's industrial and power sectors. The trade mission sought to reinforce those relationships, with discussions in New Delhi and Mumbai laying the groundwork for the final deal. India remains one of Queensland's most important resource customers, and the renewed collaboration is being framed as a strategic advantage at a time when international competition for investment is intense.

Premier David Crisafulli said the partnership highlights the strength of Queensland's connection with India, noting that Indian stakeholders value both the quality of Queensland coal and the reliability of its export supply chain. He described the investment as a clear endorsement of the state's approach to rebuilding confidence in the sector.

Treasurer David Janetzki said the outcome reflects a broader effort to re-establish trust with major trading partners after years of volatility. He emphasised that creating stable policy settings has been a core part of opening opportunities for regions that depend on mining.

Natural Resources and Mines Minister Dale Last added that the

> Interest from Indian investors and energy partners has grown steadily as demand for Queensland coal continues

Bowen Basin's output continues to play a key role in meeting India's energy and industrial needs. With India among the countries expanding coal-fired generation and steel production at pace, demand for Queensland coal remains strong.

# Queensland MP highlights Nick Attam's Movember drive

***OUR REPORTER*** *BRISBANE*
***@the_indian_sun***




With November coming to a close, Movember supporters across Australia are making their final push, and Nick Attam's efforts have again drawn recognition, this time from Queensland's State Member for Jordan, Charis Mullen. During a visit to Townsville, the Shadow Minister for Public Works and Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs shared her reaction after meeting him, writing, "Really great to catch up with the terrific Nick Attam from The Indian Sun whilst in Townsville. But I almost didn't recognise him with that moustache! Nick has been a longtime supporter of Movember having raised over $25,000 for men's mental health."

Her acknowledgement arrives at a moment when the campaign's message is most active. With only a few days left in the month, Movember's call for open conversations, early checks and practical support has taken on a renewed urgency. Nick's advocacy has been shaped by personal stories, including friends who faced illness or mental health struggles in silence. His Movember updates over the years have encouraged men to talk early, seek help when pressure builds, and look out for those who might not voice what they are carrying.

> Movember continues to highlight the rising pressures on men in Australia, from mental health concerns to prostate and testicular cancer

Movember continues to highlight the rising pressures on men in Australia, from mental health concerns to prostate and testicular cancer. Its resources, including Movember Conversations, help people approach difficult moments with friends and family. Local support services provide confidential guidance for those dealing with stress or health concerns that may have gone unspoken.

Nick's moustache has become part of the campaign's familiarity, giving people an easy way to begin the conversations that Movember seeks to spark. Charis Mullen's message adds weight to his longstanding role, particularly among multicultural communities where silence around health concerns can be more pronounced.

With November almost at its end, supporters are encouraged to make their final donations or reach out to someone who might need a quiet check-in. Nick's Movember page remains open for contributions, reminding people that small actions still matter as the campaign draws to a close.



# Christmas in Australia 2025

## A festive guide to celebrations across the nation

### 1. The Salvation Army's Carols in the Domain—Sydney

Saturday 20 December 2025 Sydney's most-loved Christmas tradition returns for its 43rd year. Tens of thousands gather in The Domain and millions tune in live on Channel 7 and 7plus. Pre-show entertainment begins at 12pm, the red carpet begins at 5:15pm and the main event starts at 7:45pm. A night of carols under the stars, fireworks, family fun and a star-studded line-up.

*Get tickets: https://events.ticketbooth.com.au/tickets/carols-in-the-domain25*

### 2. Festive Flicks Light Up The Capitol Theatre This December

Melbourne's iconic Capitol Theatre (113 Swanston St, Melbourne) will transform into a festive cinema this December, screening much-loved Christmas films across four special sessions. Catch *The Santa Clause* on Saturday 6 December, *Home Alone* on Saturday 13 December, *Arthur Christmas* on Saturday 20 December, and *Elf* on Sunday 21 December. Each film runs 1pm–3pm, with doors opening 30 minutes before the show. Tickets are priced between $5 and $8, and the *Elf* screening will include Open Captions TURN TO #16



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### What to expect

- Warm welcome & community meet-and-greet
- Anniversary celebration, gratitude & reflections
- Art of Living beginner-friendly wellness session
- Breathing, relaxation & meditation techniques
- Social connection activities & friendly conversations
- Light music with cultural touches
- Community lunch to end the morning on a warm note

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*Book now through Humanitix: https://collections.humanitix.com/christmas-cinema-2025*

## 3. Bubble Show for Christmas—Melbourne

A playful burst of festive fun arrives at The Capitol, 113 Swanston Street, Melbourne, with Bubble Show for Christmas—a magical family performance filled with laughter and spectacular bubble artistry. Join Dr Bubble and Milkshake the Bubble Clown in a joyful Christmas adventure where science meets imagination and bubble chaos takes over the stage. Designed for children aged 3–12, the show features breathtaking bubble displays and plenty of interactive moments to delight little audiences. All sessions include Auslan interpretation, and both performances on Wednesday 24 December are relaxed for those who prefer a more gentle sensory environment. Part of the City of Melbourne Christmas Festival, the event embraces accessibility and welcomes all families. Tickets are $5 for adults and children alike.

**Dates & Times:**

Tue 23 December: 1:30pm–2:30pm

Wed 24 December: 11:00am–12:00pm & 1:30pm–2:30pm

**Location:** The Capitol, 113 Swanston St, Melbourne 3000

*Bookings: https://events.humanitix.com/bubble-show-for-christmas-2025*

Perfect for kids, bubble lovers and holiday magic seekers.

## 4. Christmas Square—Melbourne

The heart of the city transforms into a festive wonderland as Christmas Square returns to Fed Square, illuminated by an iconic 17.5-metre Christmas tree and a dazzling program of light and sound shows. Families can wander through a candy cane- **<TURN TO #17>**

CONTINUED FROM #16 themed landscape, enjoy the vibrant atmosphere and take in one of Melbourne's most photographed holiday landmarks. Presented by the City of Melbourne in partnership with Fed Square, the event is proudly powered by 100% wind energy, bringing sustainable sparkle to the celebrations. Free and fully accessible, it's an open invitation to immerse yourself in the magic at any time of day.

**Dates & Times:**
Monday 1st December to Thursday 4 December, 9:30am–11:30pm

**Location:** Fed Square, Swanston St & Flinders St, Melbourne 3000

**Price:** Free

*Bookings: Not required*



## 5. A Christmas Carol—Melbourne

Step into the timeless world of Charles Dickens as A Christmas Carol returns to Melbourne, bringing Ebenezer Scrooge's emotional transformation to the stage in an uplifting and beautifully staged production. On one fateful Christmas Eve, Scrooge is confronted by four ghosts who guide him through haunting visions of his past, present and future—offering a powerful lesson about compassion, generosity and the true spirit of Christmas. A much-loved festive tradition for theatre-goers of all ages, this celebrated production promises atmosphere, wonder and a stirring reminder that it's never too late to change.

**Dates & Times:**
Tue 2 Dec—6:30pm–8:30pm
Wed 3 Dec—1:00pm–3:00pm & 6:00pm–8:00pm
Thu 4 Dec—7:00pm–9:00pm

**Location:** Comedy Theatre, 240 Exhibition St, Melbourne 3000

**Tickets:** From $79.90 to $179.90

*Bookings: https://premier.ticketek.com.au/shows/show.aspx?sh=CHRISCAR25*

## 6. Carols by Daylight—Melbourne

Join the festive spirit at Carols by Daylight, returning for its 18th year at Fed Square. This lively community celebration invites families and music lovers to enjoy a joyful Christmas sing-along and variety performance featuring the Hello Music Children's Orchestra and Choir, talented students from local Melbourne schools, Melbourne Uni's Biomedicine Students Orchestra, international concert pianist Warren Wills, the Hot Socks Big Band, and a special visit from Santa Claus. Hosted by Sam McLarty and Karen Kim, it's a bright and heart-warming afternoon designed for all ages.

**Date & Time:**
Sunday 7 December—3:00pm–4:30pm

**Location:**
Federation Square—The Edge, Flinders St, Melbourne 3000

**Tickets:** From $22 to $49.50
Adult $39.50
Senior / Student / Concession / Children $22
Free for children under 5

*Bookings: https://luma.com/98cmzgm3*

## 7. Pasko sa Melbourne—Melbourne

Experience the joy of a Filipino Christmas at Pasko sa Melbourne, a vibrant, family- TURN TO #18








CONTINUED FROM #17 friendly celebration in the heart of the city. Visitors can join in parol (lantern) making, enjoy perya-style games, and watch colourful multicultural performances including Filipino folk dances and carols. The event also features live entertainment, interactive workshops, food stalls, and festive moments with Santa's gift-giving for children, culminating in a joyful Christmas Parade that unites the community in celebration.

**Date & Time:**
Friday 5 December—1:00pm–7:00pm

**Location:** C-D Sheds (Peel Street end), Queen Victoria Market, Queen St, Melbourne 3000

**Price:** Free

*Bookings: Not required*

## 8. Love Actually in Concert—Melbourne

Back by popular demand, Love Actually in Concert returns to Melbourne Town Hall, bringing the beloved holiday film to life with the Australian Stage Orchestra performing the iconic soundtrack live. Relive over 20 years of heartwarming stories, laughter, and festive romance as the film screens on the big screen, creating a magical holiday experience for couples, friends, and solo movie lovers alike. Guests are encouraged to don their favourite Christmas attire, sip, sing along, laugh, and maybe shed a joyful tear as the music and film combine for a truly memorable evening.

**Dates & Times:**
Sunday 21 December—3:30pm–5:30pm
Monday 22 December—2:00pm–4:00pm

**Location:** Melbourne Town Hall, 90/130 Swanston St, Melbourne 3000

**Tickets:** Adult / general $109

*Bookings: https://loveactuallyliveinconcert.com/#buy-tickets*

## 9. Victoria Chorale: O Magnum Mysterium Christmas Concert—Melbourne

Celebrate the TURN TO #19

❮CONTINUED FROM #18❯ wonder of Christmas with Victoria Chorale in their O Magnum Mysterium concert at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. This evocative performance explores the profound mystery of the Incarnation through masterful interpretations of J.S. Bach's Christmas Oratorio and other timeless works, alongside cherished carols with opportunities for audience participation. Collaborating with The Choir of St Andrews Brighton, Victoria's oldest and most distinguished choir, the evening promises a rich and moving musical experience to close the year in festive style.

**Date & Time:** Saturday 13 December—5:00pm–6:30pm

**Location:** St Paul's Cathedral, 200 Flinders St, Melbourne 3000

**Tickets:** Adult $70 | Student / Concession $35 | Children $20

*Bookings: https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1461334*

## 10. Floating Christmas Tree—Sydney

Sydney's first-ever Floating Christmas Tree returns to Darling Harbour! Standing 10 metres tall in Cockle Bay, the tree is adorned with dazzling baubles that shimmer in the sunlight.



As evening falls, the display transforms into a magical spectacle of lights, bringing a festive glow to the waterfront and creating a must-see holiday attraction for families, couples, and visitors alike.

**Dates:** Monday 1st December—Saturday 27 December 2025

**Location:** Cockle Bay, Darling Harbour, Sydney NSW 2000

**Price:** Free

*Booking: Not required*

## 11. Cockle Bay Christmas Spectacular—Sydney

Get ready for a splashing festive celebration at Darling Harbour! Santa makes a high-octane entrance on a jet ski, thrilling the crowd as elves soar on jet-packs above the sparkling waters.

Enjoy a lively marching band, a live DJ spinning summer tunes, and even a surprise Santa flash mob.

The event culminates in a spectacular fireworks display over Cockle Bay, creating a magical waterfront Christmas experience for families and visitors alike.

**Date:** Friday 6 December 2025 | 4pm–9pm

**Location:** Cockle Bay, Darling Harbour, Sydney NSW 2000

**Price:** Free

*Booking: Not required*

## 12. Mayor's Christmas Carols—Gold Coast

The City of Gold Coast's Mayor's Christmas Carols returns for its 14th year with two nights of festive cheer at HOTA. Enjoy live performances from Gold Coast pop star Ricki-Lee, toddler techno favourite Lenny Pearce, and the Looney Tunes Christmas Show, alongside a special visit from Santa. Each evening concludes with a breathtaking fireworks display, capping off a memorable celebration of music, family fun, and Christmas spirit.

**Dates:** Saturday 6 & Sunday 7 December 2025 | Gates open 4pm

**Location:** HOTA Outdoor Stage & Parklands, 135 Bundall Road, Surfers Paradise, QLD

**Price:** Free

*Booking: Not required*

## 13. Christmas Flicks & Fireworks—Gold Coast

Enjoy a coastal Christmas celebration at Surfers Paradise Beach with festive movies under the stars and fireworks lighting up the night sky. Arrive early to explore ❮TURN TO #20❯

air BEATS
AUSSIE INDIAN RADIO BEATS
COMING SOON...






**<CONTINUED FROM #19>** the Surfers Paradise Beachfront Markets from 4pm, then settle in with a picnic rug for a movie screening at 7pm, concluding with a spectacular fireworks display at 8:30pm. A magical evening of sand, sea, and Christmas cheer for families and friends alike.

**Dates:** Friday 12 & Saturday 13 December 2025 | Movie 7pm, Fireworks 8:30pm

**Location:** Surfers Paradise Beach, Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise, QLD

**Price:** Free

*Booking: Not required*

## 14. Lord Mayor's Christmas Carols, Brisbane

Riverstage in Brisbane City will light up on 6 December 2025 from 6pm for the Lord Mayor's Christmas Carols, an annual celebration of festive music under the stars. The evening promises a stellar lineup of Aussie talent performing classic carols alongside big-name acts. Tickets are required to attend, but the magic can still be enjoyed for free via the livestream at Roma Street Parkland. Bring a picnic, grab a bite from the food trucks, and gather friends or family for a night of music, lights and holiday cheer.



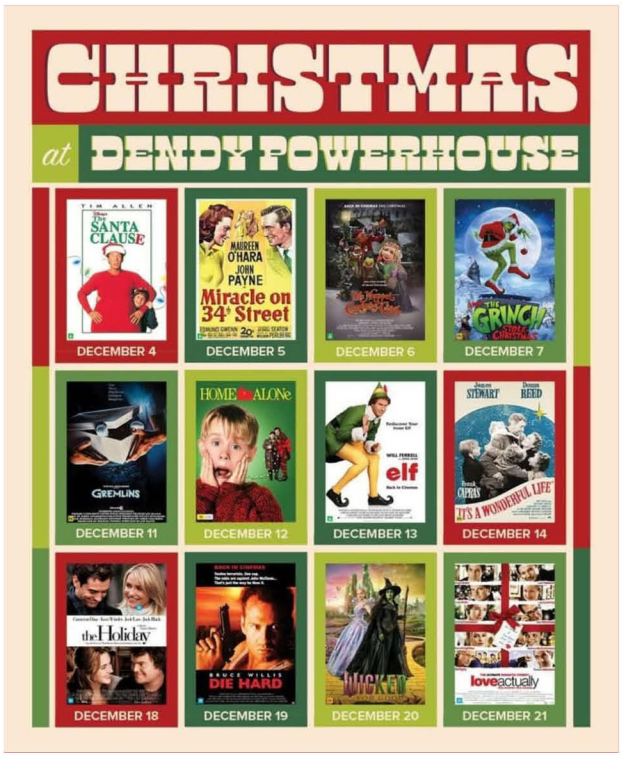

## 15. Sono Lumo: Festive Nights of Sound and Light, Brisbane

Queen's Wharf Brisbane will come alive from 10 to 21 December 2025 (6pm–11pm, excluding 15–16 December) with Sono Lumo, a free celebration of light, sound and festive fun. Each night features three spectacular shows combining dazzling visuals, immersive audio, pop-up bars, food trucks and roaming entertainment. No ticket is needed—just wander, soak it all in, and enjoy a night out with a few surprises along the way.

## 16. City Hall Lights, Brisbane

King George Square will dazzle from 6 to 24 December 2025 as City Hall Lights returns, a Brisbane favourite. Every 15 minutes from 7:30pm to midnight, the front of City Hall transforms into a vibrant canvas of projections, **<TURN TO #21>**

CONTINUED FROM #20 bringing a new Christmas story to life each year through visuals and sound. This free, family-friendly event is perfect for kids and adults alike—grab a spot early and enjoy a festive tradition in the heart of the city.




## 17. Spirit of Christmas at QPAC, Brisbane

QPAC Concert Hall at South Bank will host Spirit of Christmas from 17 to 19 December 2025, a beloved annual celebration of music and festive cheer. The concert features performances from Australia's top musical theatre talent, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, and a variety of choirs, blending traditional and modern Christmas classics. With heart, harmony and holiday joy filling the iconic venue, tickets sell quickly—don't miss your chance to be part of this seasonal favourite.

## 18. Bribie Island Christmas Lights Boat Parade

The Bribie Island Canals will sparkle on 13 December 2025 at 7pm for the annual Christmas Lights Boat Parade. Boats decked out in fairy lights glide along the canals and Pumicestone Passage, accompanied by a laser show, live music and food trucks. The event is free and draws thousands, so grab a spot near Pacific Harbour Marina for the full spectacle, or find a quieter vantage point along the route. Bring your own seating and enjoy a couple of magical hours of festive cheer.

## 19. Christmas Movie in the Park, Pimpama

Bim'Bimba Park at Gainsborough Greens will transform into a festive wonderland on 14 December 2025 for Christmas Movie in the Park. The day features live music, face painting, pony rides, obstacle courses, markets, nine food trucks and a special visit from Santa. As evening falls, Santa Clause 3 screens under the stars, capped off with fireworks at 8:30pm. This free, family-friendly event is one of the biggest Christmas community celebrations in the area.

## 20. Pine Rivers Christmas Carols, Strathpine

Pine Rivers Park will come alive on 14 December 2025 for the annual Christmas Carols, a night full of festive fun for all ages. Santa's Village offers craft workshops and face painting for the kids, while the main stage showcases local talent performing beloved carols. A twilight market and food trucks add to the festive atmosphere, and the evening concludes with a fireworks display at 8pm.

## 21. Dendy Powerhouse Outdoor Cinema Christmas Classics, New Farm

From 4 to 21 December 2025, Dendy Powerhouse Outdoor Cinema at Brisbane Powerhouse in New Farm will screen festive favourites including The Grinch, The Muppets Christmas Carol and Miracle on 34th Street. Enjoy a relaxed summer night under the stars—bring a picnic or grab a bite from on-site options—and soak up the Christmas spirit on the big screen.





# Queensland opens new grants to keep wheelchair accessible taxis on the road

***OUR REPORTER*** *BRISBANE*
***@the_indian_sun***

Queensland's wheelchair users are set to benefit from a fresh round of funding aimed at keeping accessible taxis running safely and reliably across the state. The Queensland Government has reopened applications for the **Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Grant Scheme**, backed by 6.3 million dollars in new funding.

The program gives taxi owners and operators the chance to apply for support that covers half the cost of a new maxi taxi, capped at 55,000 dollars. The idea is to help operators replace older vehicles or those that have been written off, which in turn keeps the overall fleet in workable condition. According to the government, the latest allocation should allow the replacement of at least 115 vehicles.

Officials say the need for long-term stability around accessible transport had become a concern after the previous government did not allocate funding beyond mid-2025. Acting Transport Minister Sam O'Connor said the decision to continue the scheme reflects a broader push to keep essential services running for people who rely on them.

He noted the feedback from drivers and operators who often shoulder the extra costs involved with maintaining larger, specialised vehicles. He also pointed to the daily realities faced by passengers who depend on wheelchair accessible taxis for work, appointments, and social connections.

The Christmas period is receiving particular focus. A doubled incentive payment will apply on Christmas Day, lifting the driver payment to 50 dollars per eligible trip. The intention is to encourage more drivers to stay on the road during a time when demand is high and services can be harder to secure. The government says this move is aimed at ensuring people using wheelchairs can spend the day with family or friends without worrying about whether a taxi will be available.

Advocates have welcomed the renewed funding. Michelle Moss, CEO of Queenslanders with Disability Network, said wheelchair accessible taxis play a central role in enabling mobility across the state. She highlighted how often people use these services for day-to-day life, from work commitments to health care and shopping. She added that keeping the fleet modern and reliable will only become more important as Queensland prepares for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, when visitor numbers and accessibility needs will increase.

While the government's approach has received approval from disability advocates, the politics around the announcement are still present in the background. Government representatives have framed the move as correcting an oversight from the previous administration. As is often the case with transport funding, the conversation around long-term commitments and stable planning is likely to continue, especially given the competing pressures on the taxi industry from rideshare platforms and rising operational costs.

For now, however, operators interested in upgrading their vehicles can begin applying. The hope is that renewed confidence in the program will help keep accessible services available statewide, including in regional areas where transport options are already limited.

The scheme's future beyond this round of funding has not been outlined in detail, though industry groups and disability advocates are expected to continue pushing for multi-year certainty. For many Queenslanders who rely on wheelchair accessible taxis to move through everyday life, consistency is as important as innovation.

# Year 6 student inspires social media pledge as Australia under-16 ban comes to force

***OUR REPORTER*** *BRISBANE*
***@the_indian_sun***



When Year 6 student Flossie began researching social media's effects on young people, she wasn't looking to start a movement. What began as a school project has turned into a national conversation.

For her exhibition, Flossie explored how social media affects children's brains. She consulted experts like neuroscientist Dr Lila Landowski, learning how developing brains react to online feedback loops. Her research led her to design a pledge encouraging under-16s to delay joining social media, which visitors could sign.

Explaining her motivation, Flossie said, "I've never been allowed social media, and I wanted to see if the science actually backed up my parents' reasoning." She grinned, admitting, "They were right, as much as I hate to say it."

Her initiative caught the attention of policymakers. She presented her findings to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese just weeks before Australia's new laws banning under-16s from major platforms take effect.

Albanese praised the community-driven debate. "This isn't a debate that comes from the top down," he said. "The community demanded an appropriate government response." The new rules require platforms to remove underage users, with compliance overseen by the eSafety Commissioner. Albanese acknowledged implementation might not be flawless but likened it to other social reforms that gain acceptance over time.

Flossie focuses on education over punishment. She knows peers may try to bypass the ban but hopes knowledge of the risks will deter them. "They should be educated on the impacts that social media actually has on them," she said. Her view reflects a growing youth awareness that online connection has costs, with experts warning heavy use can heighten anxiety and affect concentration in developing adolescents.

For parents, the new approach brings challenges, especially with summer approaching. Albanese expressed confidence parents would have necessary support, framing it as the community demanding social responsibility.

As the first major Western democracy with such age-based restrictions, Australia's model is being watched closely. Albanese, confident of success, said, "People like Flossie give me not just confidence, but pride."

For Flossie, the project has achieved more than she imagined, sparking a discussion that reaches far beyond her school gates and helping to define Australia's next step in online safety.




# Townsville opens recruitment drive to lift city services

***OUR REPORTER*** *BRISBANE*
***@the_indian_sun***

Townsville City Council is preparing to hire up to 30 workers as part of a back-to-basics push aimed at improving day-to-day services across the city. The move comes as the organisation tries to strengthen its workforce in a tight labour market, with a public recruitment information session planned at Reid Park.

Mayor Nick Dametto said the focus heading into the New Year was on restoring a sense of pride across Townsville by ensuring the small but essential tasks are done properly. "I want people to be proud to call Townsville home once again, and that starts by making sure people are happy with the services we provide and the amenity of our city," Cr Dametto said.

He said the aim was to lift performance through practical improvements that residents can see in their streets and suburbs. "I am heavily focussed on getting those basics done right, the lawns mowed, drains cleaned, potholes fixed, and bins emptied, but to do that we have to make sure we have the right people for the job."

With competition for skilled workers affecting councils nationwide, Townsville is looking to take a more direct approach to recruitment. Cr Dametto said that removing barriers for jobseekers was central to the plan. "That's why we are trying to remove barriers to getting appropriate people into jobs, by holding a recruitment information session on Saturday 13 December at Reid Park."

Council's vacancies stretch across a range of operational roles, including waste truck drivers, labourers, parks and gardens staff, and gatehouse operators. The information session, scheduled from 10am to 1pm, will include break-out discussions and on-site interviews.

"Everyone is in the same boat when it comes to getting skilled labour at the moment, so it's time to do something different to get the information out there for people to come down, have a listen, be able to ask questions and see if they are a fit for our team," Cr Dametto said.

> Council's vacancies stretch across a range of operational roles, including waste truck drivers, labourers, parks and gardens staff, and gatehouse operators

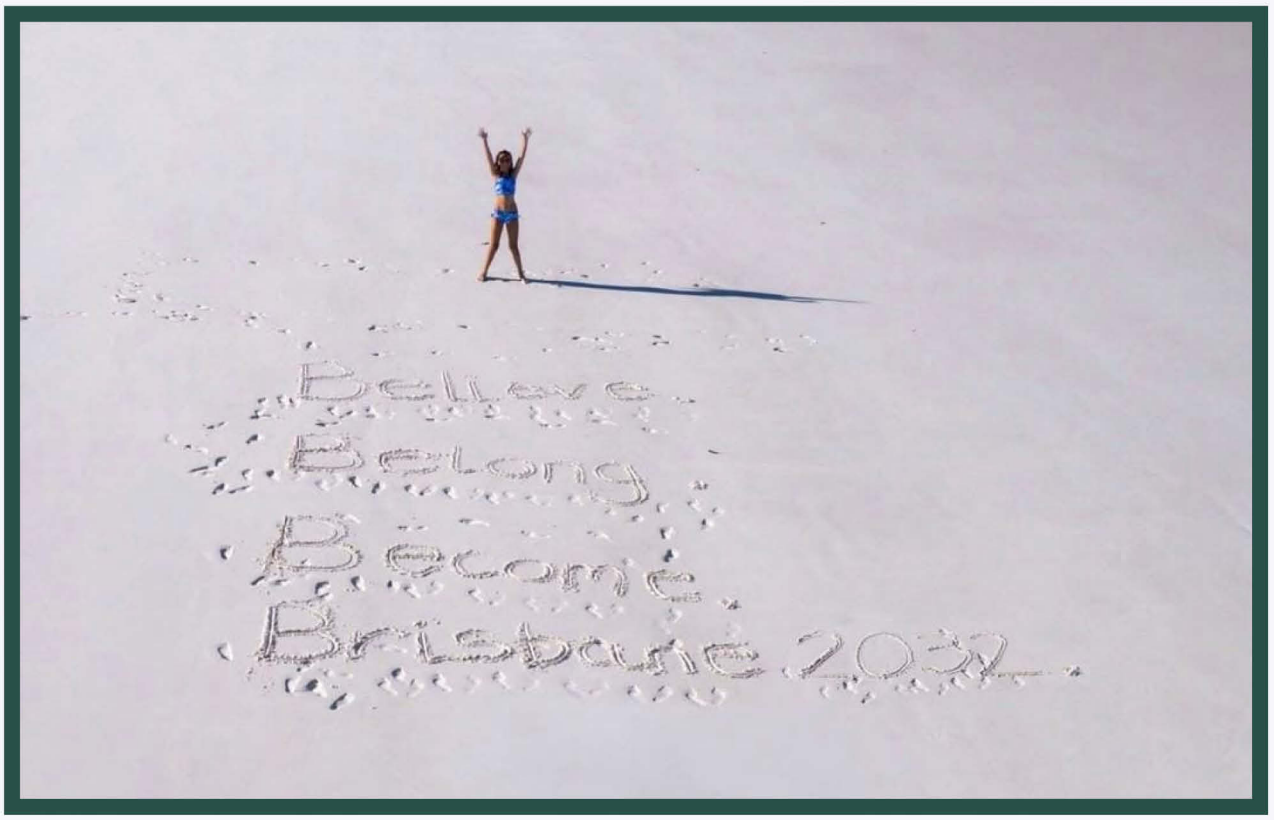
He said the call-out was directed at a broad mix of potential applicants. "We're looking for people who are up for a change, keen to upskill, want to work with great team members and have access to great benefits, whether you're in the industry already or looking to return to work from having kids or even from early retirement, if you have the skills and the passion we want to hear from you."

Cr Dametto said every role contributes to steady improvement in the city's upkeep. "From full-time opportunities to part-time and casual roles, every job at Council plays a vital role in growing Townsville, this is about getting boots on the ground in those areas where the little things can make a big difference in both the amenity of our city and Townsville's civic pride."

The recruitment information session will be held at the Reid Park complex from 10am.

# Brisbane 2032 sets out its vision as Queensland pushes to rebuild momentum

***OUR REPORTER*** *BRISBANE*
***@the_indian_sun***




Brisbane's preparations for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games have taken another step forward, with organisers revealing the official Games Vision: Believe. Belong. Become. Brisbane 2032. The phrase is intended to act as an aspirational guide for planning and delivery across the next eight years.

The Queensland Government says the vision is part of its wider 2032 Delivery Plan, which focuses on transport links, long-term infrastructure and support for tourism and community sport. Ministers framed the release as a fresh start after what they described as a long period of stalled progress.

> Committee president Andrew Liveris said the three-word motto—Believe. Belong. Become.—is intended to guide decision-making as the event approaches

More than 6,000 people contributed ideas during the consultation phase, with about half coming from Queensland. The organising committee says that input shaped the tone and direction of the vision, which is meant to anchor the cultural and social themes that will sit alongside the sporting programme.

Sports and Olympic Minister Tim Mander said the Games have the potential to highlight Queensland on the global stage. He framed the vision as a reflection of the state's ambition and said it was designed to send a clear message about inclusivity and participation.

Committee president Andrew Liveris said the three-word motto is intended to guide decision-making as the event approaches. He described the phrase as a reminder of the values organisers want to promote, adding that Queensland's communities already show those qualities in their day-to-day life.

Liveris also pointed to the broader opportunity for the region, saying that hosting the Games could lift Queensland's profile as a place to visit, invest and build long-term projects. He emphasised that anticipation is rising and that the aim is to present a Games that feels cohesive, community-driven and welcoming.

The release of the vision marks one of the early public steps in a lengthy preparation phase. Much of the work from here will focus on infrastructure, transport readiness and supporting the sports system across the state. With eight years to go, organisers say the goal is to keep the planning transparent and ensure communities stay connected to how the event is being shaped.



# Queensland moves ahead with GP prescribing powers for adult ADHD treatment

***OUR REPORTER*** *BRISBANE*
***@the_indian_sun***

Queensland is preparing to introduce a new model of ADHD care that will allow specialist GPs to prescribe medication for adults, marking a shift in how the condition is managed across the state. The change, due to begin on 1 December 2025, positions Queensland as the first Australian jurisdiction to give GPs this level of involvement in adult ADHD treatment.

The Queensland Government says the new system will ease pressure on specialist services and shorten the long waits many adults currently face before receiving a diagnosis or treatment plan. According to the Government, the change is intended to create a more connected and timely pathway, particularly for people living in regional and remote communities where specialist services have been limited.

Health Minister Tim Nicholls said the shift reflects extensive conversations with clinicians who felt the existing model placed too much strain on both patients and the health system. He stressed that safety measures will guide the rollout and that training for GPs was a central focus during the consultation process with psychiatrists, general practitioners and other clinical groups.

Minister Nicholls said the changes are aimed at helping adults access care closer to home and with a doctor who already understands their medical history. He added that the move has strong backing from GPs who have been seeking a more active role in managing ADHD within general practice settings.

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Chair, Dr Cath Hester, welcomed the decision, saying GP-led models of care are well suited to ongoing management of chronic conditions. Dr Hester said continuity of care matters for patients with ADHD and that many already rely on their GP for long-term support.

ADHD affects an estimated six to ten per cent of children and adolescents in Australia, and between two and six per cent of adults. Under current Queensland arrangements, all doctors, including specialist GPs, can prescribe ADHD medication to children aged four to seventeen. The upcoming changes extend that authority to adult patients.

While the new system has been framed by the Government as a way to repair gaps left by previous approaches, some stakeholders have called for ongoing monitoring to ensure quality standards remain consistent across the state, particularly as demand for ADHD assessment and treatment continues to grow. The Government says safeguards will remain central as the model is introduced and evaluated.

Queenslanders interested in accessing ADHD care through their GP from next year are expected to receive more detailed guidance as implementation plans are finalised.

# First tram rolls out on Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 3 as testing begins

***OUR REPORTER*** *BRISBANE*
***@the_indian_sun***




The first tram has travelled along the new section of tracks between Broadbeach and Miami North, marking a key milestone in the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 3 project. The controlled night-time testing marks the start of the final phase before passenger services open next year.

The tram's initial run followed weeks of preparation, including the energisation of overhead wires, traction power systems, and checks on signalling and communication networks. From 26 November to 18 December, tram drivers will conduct night-time testing between 8pm and 4am, using up to two trams to verify system performance.

Testing will cover critical operations such as signalling, communication systems and station readiness to ensure safety and reliability before the new section opens to the public.

**Stage 3 of the Gold Coast Light Rail is set to extend services from Broadbeach to Burleigh Heads, adding eight new stations**

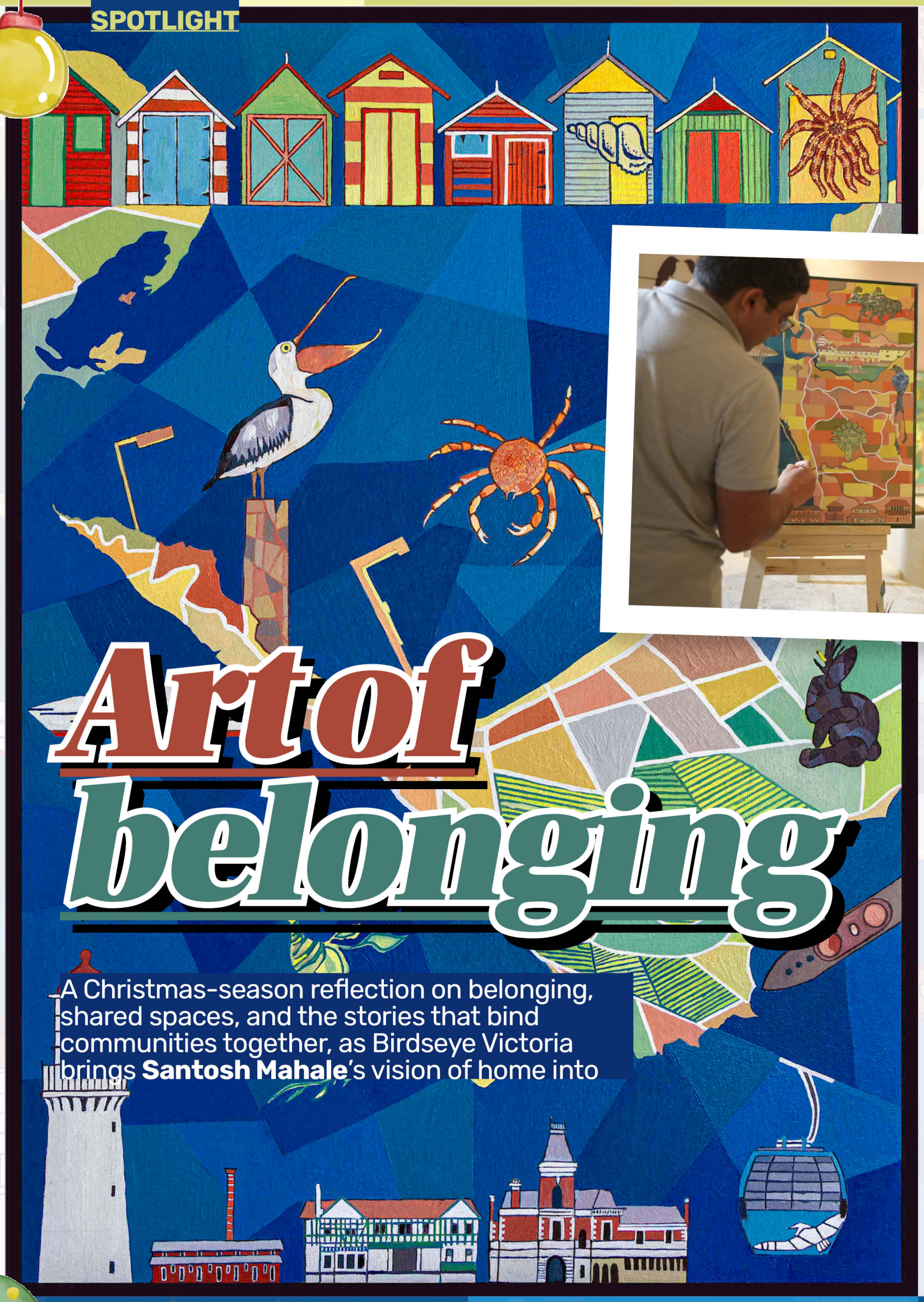
While the northern section between Broadbeach and Miami moves into its testing phase, finishing works continue on intersections, crossings, footpaths, landscaping and park upgrades. South of Miami, track installation and paving are progressing toward Burleigh Heads, with testing on that stretch expected in the first half of next year.

Acting Minister for Transport and Main Roads Sam O'Connor said the government remains focused on delivering safe and accessible transport. He thanked residents for their patience and said the testing phase was crucial for ensuring the system's safety for all road and track users.

Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate said the latest 6.7-kilometre section would likely become one of the most popular parts of the light rail network once operational, predicting a strong increase in passenger numbers as residents and visitors embrace the expanded service.

GoldlinQ CEO Phil Mumford described the tram's first movement on the new tracks as an encouraging moment for the community and the project team. He reminded the public that trams are not open for use during testing and urged people to stay clear of tracks and overhead lines, which are now live.

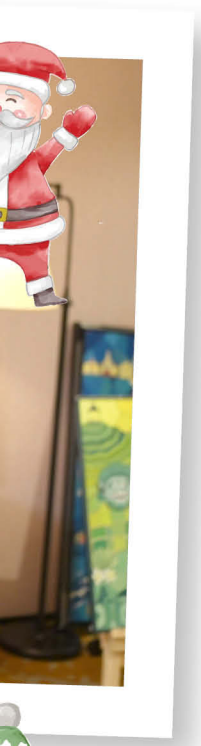
Stage 3 of the Gold Coast Light Rail is set to extend services from Broadbeach to Burleigh Heads, adding eight new stations and connecting key areas along the coastal corridor. Once complete, the extension will link more residents and visitors to local businesses, beaches and entertainment areas, continuing the city's shift towards a more connected and sustainable transport system.





# Art of belonging

A Christmas-season reflection on belonging, shared spaces, and the stories that bind communities together, as Birdseye Victoria brings **Santosh Mahale**'s vision of home into



***OUR REPORTER***
***@the_indian_sun***

There is a quiet sense of purpose in the way **Santosh Mahale** speaks about art. He arrived in Melbourne as an engineer who had already lived across continents, worked in boardrooms, and built a career in management consulting. Yet the stories he tells today come from a very different place. They rise from birds, old streets, worship spaces, memories of India, the rhythms of Melbourne, and a lifelong habit of seeing cities from above. His latest exhibition, Birdseye Victoria, has now opened at Montsalvat's Barn Gallery, running from 26 November through the summer period and into early February. For visitors looking for inspiration during the Christmas break, it offers a thoughtful journey through the state he calls home, shaped by two countries, two cultures, and two creative worlds that continue to guide his practice. It is a story that begins with movement across borders and finds its voice in the places he has carried with him.

When Mahale talks about identity, he starts with migration. "Two Worlds is really the foundation of my story. India and Australia, engineering and art, migration and belonging. Though I've lived and travelled across many countries, it is India's cities and my current home of Melbourne that have shaped me the most." There is calm clarity in his acceptance of this duality. He describes these worlds as distinct yet connected, held together through colour, memory and birdsong. "Migration taught me that identity isn't about choosing one place over another. It's about weaving them together. My map-inspired oil paintings are simply a reflection of that. A celebration of belonging to more than one place, and of finding connection across continents, careers, and cultures."

That link between places defines his journey as an artist. When he moved into Melbourne's creative landscape, there was no existing network to rely on. "I'm a self-taught artist who came into the art world after two decades in management consulting, built on an engineering background. So there was virtually no overlap. No network, no roadmap, no exposure to how galleries or art ecosystems work." What could have been a setback became a structure. "The challenge was starting from scratch and building an entire world from the ground up. But I soon realised that the analytical, problem-solving and project-planning skills from my first career became incredibly useful. They allowed me to approach art-making methodically and think like an artrepreneur from day one."

That mix of artistic instinct and structured thinking is visible in his paintings, especially the churches that have become a recurring motif. He has painted more than thirty, spread across Melbourne, Goa, Mumbai and beyond. "I'm drawn to heritage architecture in all forms. Churches, temples, old government buildings from the gold-rush era, anything with historical craftsmanship. Architecture is art expressed through materials, design, and the cultural context of its time." Churches, in particular, have become visual anchors. "Churches in particular often represent the dominant artistic influences of their era, and they sit at the heart of communities, whether in Melbourne, Goa, or regional India."

For Mahale, the attachment is primarily architectural, though he acknowledges the deeper presence such structures hold within a place. "Mostly architectural, but when I'm trying to capture the essence of an entire place on a single canvas, these structures become visual anchors. Just as Notre Dame is to Paris, St Patrick's or St Mark's is to Melbourne, or Mount Mary is to Bandra. They help root the viewer in the identity of that place." His interest is less about devotion and more about what these sites reveal. "It's less about personal faith and more about capturing the confluence of spiritual beliefs that shape a place. My work is grounded in exploration, blending cartography, heritage architecture, and nature, especially birds."

The Birdseye series grew from this instinct to express place through pattern, perspective and memory. "My subject is always the essence of a place on a single canvas. Not two, three, or twenty. That constraint forces strong choices." His compositions weave maps, landscape elements, built forms and birds. "Choosing what to include is as much problem-solving as it is painting, and that challenge makes the process deeply exciting for me." The idea, he says, has been with him for more than twenty years. "I've been painting the same subject in the same way for over two decades. It began in San Francisco, where I would paint places I travelled as souvenirs for myself. Over time the technique evolved, more detail, more depth, but the subject remained consistent." He smiles at the simplicity of the thread that runs through it all. "Now, as a professional artist, I'm stretching the breadth and depth of what I can cover, but always through that Birdseye lens. And a big part of it is my love for birds. Every Birdseye painting has a local bird species acting **<TURN TO #31>**

> "I'm drawn to heritage architecture in all forms. Churches, temples, old government buildings from the gold-rush era, anything with historical craftsmanship
>
> **SANTOSH MAHALE**


FLINDERS ST
300



CONTINUED FROM #29 as an ambassador for that place."

Birdseye Victoria is the newest expansion of this idea. Instead of a single city, the exhibition travels across the entire state, gathering forests, coastlines, deserts, towns and skylines into one continuous story. "For the first time, I'm painting an entire state instead of a single city. Victoria is my home, and I've spent years travelling through its regions, absorbing the contrasts, forests, coastlines, deserts, gold-rush towns, and modern cities." The result, he says, is a state-sized canvas of histories and habitats. "These varied landscapes and histories make Victoria a fascinating subject. Birdseye Victoria brings all of that together in one cohesive narrative."

The exhibition introduces another creative voice, that of local artist and fellow bird enthusiast Mia Emily. Mahale calls the collaboration seamless. "Birdseye Victoria is the next chapter in my Birdseye series, and I'm very glad to collaborate with local Melbourne artist and fellow bird enthusiast Mia Emily. My works offer sweeping aerial perspectives, blending maps, topography, and birds as place ambassadors. Mia brings a grounded, intimate lens, capturing the delicate beauty and character of Victorian birds." Together, they create a layered experience. "The show invites viewers to see Victoria as a living ecosystem where every place, and every bird, tells a story."

Precision and freedom coexist within these compositions, though he admits that harmony is never easy. "That balance is the art. It's the core problem I'm solving, how to bring a place to life with enough structure to ground it and enough freedom to let it breathe. The balance becomes the subject itself."

Exhibiting at Montsalvat is a milestone he speaks of with genuine warmth. "It's an honour, and I'm hoping to shift my studio there for the two months of the exhibition. Montsalvat embodies the artistic spirit of Victoria, a sanctuary for makers, thinkers, and dreamers for nearly a century. The idea of painting in that historic, creative environment while preparing for my 2026 shows is incredibly energising."

When asked about the art scenes he has moved through, he is careful and honest. "I can't truly compare because I didn't grow up in the formal Indian art world. But what I've seen in my last few years as a professional artist is that every market has its own strengths and challenges. Australia offers clarity, structure, and strong support through public galleries and councils." He has seen a shift in the way multicultural artists are welcomed. "Absolutely. From local councils to national platforms, there is strong support for diverse artists. I'm grateful for the opportunities I've received so far and excited to take my work to major cities and regional centres across Australia."

His studio routine reveals a person who works with discipline as much as imagination. "Nothing is typical in the art world. Luckily, my consulting background prepared me for uncertainty, tight timelines, and intense workloads. The common thread is the enormous amount of work required, and the joy I get from pouring myself into it. In terms of routine I am generally a very early riser and try to finish most of my creative activities in the first half of the day." The energy he brings comes from curiosity. "There's always a story waiting to be uncovered, and my subject, landscapes, heritage, maps, birds, naturally invites exploration. That keeps me moving forward."

Music and sound become tools in his process. "A mix. I listen to podcasts during long hours alone. And music, often of the place I'm painting, helps me immerse myself. When I painted Kolkata, for example, Rabindra Sangeet was playing on loop."

He resists naming influences, choosing respect over lists. "People expect a list, but my honest answer is that I draw inspiration from every artist who has managed to build a sustainable practice. It's a very hard profession. Anyone who has cracked it becomes an inspiration and influence." Travel has shaped him just as deeply. "Too many. I've travelled to over fifty countries and lived in more than six. I see myself as a global citizen now, shaped by cultures, landscapes, and experiences across continents. Each place adds a new layer."

The future is already mapped out, and he speaks of it with quiet excitement. "Next is Birdseye San Francisco, coming in March 2026, returning to the city where my artistic journey began, even when art was just a side hobby. The inspiration has remained the same; the scale and ambition have evolved."

His final reflection brings together the path he has taken and the places that have shaped him. "Every place has a story waiting to be told. All it requires is curiosity to ask, humbleness to learn, and generosity to share that knowledge for the collective good. If my paintings spark that sense of connection and discovery, then they've done their job."

For those visiting Montsalvat between now and February, Birdseye Victoria is a chance to slow down, explore the state through an artist's eye, and enjoy a moment of quiet discovery during the holiday season. It is an exhibition rooted in belonging, carried by birds and places, and shared with the generosity of someone who has lived across worlds yet remains firmly grounded in both..





# Healing Through Henna brings colour and calm to Casey

***OUR REPORTER*** *CASEY*
***@the_indian_sun***

On 15 November, the Multicultural Women's Alliance Against Family Violence brought the community together in Casey for its **Healing Through Henna** event, filling the room with colour, conversation and a relaxed atmosphere. The gathering was supported by the Victorian Government through the Multicultural Festivals and Events Program and drew a strong turnout from local residents who arrived for henna art, music and a space to unwind.

Belinda Wilson MP joined Mayor Stefan Coomen, Cr Michelle Crowther, Cr Scott Dowling, Cr Carolyn Eaves and Cr Kim Ross for the occasion, adding to the sense of shared community effort. The hall stayed lively throughout the day as families sat together over henna designs, chatted across tables and joined in the dancing that carried the mood forward.

Henna carries different meanings across cultures, **<TURN TO #33>**











**<CONTINUED FROM #32>** from wishes of good fortune to a symbol of affection or protection. It has also become a simple creative outlet for many, which helped the event strike a warm, familiar tone. The organisers wanted an atmosphere where families could relax, meet new people and feel supported.

Dr Veena Barsiwal, Co-Chair of MWAAFV, said she was "heartened by the turnout. The ambience was just right, with parents and children enjoying a fun day out. The success of this event reflects the hard work behind it, and seeing more smiles in the room made it worthwhile. The music, dance and food added so much to the day."

Her fellow Co-Chair, Nisha Gull-e-Nishat, said the afternoon showed what community connection can do. "Healing Through Henna brought culture, calm and connection into one room, an uplifting way to reduce isolation and remind everyone that wellbeing starts in community."


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# NSW community language teachers celebrated

***OUR REPORTER***
***@the_indian_sun***

Hundreds of teachers who keep community languages alive in New South Wales gathered in Sydney for the annual dinner of the **NSW Federation of Community Language Schools**, drawing warm praise from both sides of politics.

The Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Jihad Dib, spoke with the ease of someone who has lived the work. "As an educator prior to becoming an MP I know the contribution these teachers make and I have long been a supporter of the work they do to celebrate our diverse community."

He joined teachers, students, families and Federation leaders, calling the event "an incredible night of celebration, recognition and joy." He said he has "always believed that learning a language is not just about the words, but the culture, spirit and identity, we all have within us."

It was also the first major outing for the newly elected NSW Opposition Leader, Kellie Sloane, who began her tenure by acknowledging the communities that shape the state. "I couldn't think of a better way to spend my first day as NSW Liberal Leader than celebrating the multicultural communities that make our state great."

> "I've always believed that learning a language is not just about the words, but the culture, spirit and identity, we all have within us
>
> **JIHAB DIB, MINISTER OF CUSTOMER SERVICE & DIGITAL GOVERNMENT**

She described the teachers and volunteers she met as "hardworking, aspirational and inspiring" and said her party had supported the sector in government ❮TURN TO #35❯










CONTINUED FROM #34 because "we recognised the vital role they play in keeping children connected to their family, culture and heritage." She added that she was "truly touched by the warm welcome" and hoped to return annually.

One of the evening's most moving moments was the honouring of Mrs Soula Tsilimos, a Modern Greek educator whose service spans 47 years. She received the Medal of Service from both the Minister and the Opposition Leader.

Mrs Tsilimos reflected with modesty and warmth. "I am humbled and deeply honoured to receive this award. I wish my late husband, Michael Tsilimos, could be here to celebrate this achievement with me. I know he would be so proud."

Federation CEO Michael Christodoulou paid tribute to her lifelong contribution. "Soula's dedication, passion and warmth have shaped the lives of countless students. Her influence reaches far beyond the classroom, she has built bridges between language, culture and our diverse community in NSW." He also noted the scale of the annual gathering, describing it as the largest event of its kind in the sector.

The Federation represents more than 220 after-hours community language schools, teaching 72 languages across 460 locations with the help of 2,700 teachers and volunteers. More than 29,000 students attend these classes each week, forming one of the country's most diverse education networks. The dinner served as a reminder of how strongly this work is supported across the political spectrum, and how central these schools have become to the cultural life of NSW.






# Hello Zindagi marks first anniversary with a message of community spirit

***OUR REPORTER***
***𝕏 @the_indian_sun***

The **Hello Zindagi** team marked its first anniversary at Knox Library on 18 October with warmth, colour and reflection, celebrating a year of storytelling, connection and cultural exchange.

The event brought together a cross-section of Melbourne's community, including Consul General Dr Sushil Kumar, MP for South East Metropolitan Region Lee Tarlamis, and Maribyrnong Mayor Cr Pradeep Tiwari, along with sponsors, past guests, and listeners of the show.

> "This celebration marks a year of building community and creating spaces for people to share stories, find support and celebrate cultural identity in a welcoming environment
>
> **LEE TARLAMIS, OAM MP**

Founder Ruchi Sharma opened the evening with a heartfelt address, saying, "This celebration belongs to everyone who believed, contributed, and connected through this platform." She described Hello Zindagi as more than a greeting, but "a philosophy of mindfulness and acceptance—living every moment consciously, rather than resisting or escaping from it."

The celebration began with a mindfulness session led by life coach Christy Roberts, followed by a vibrant dance performance by Abhivyakti Fine Arts Academy and three lively Bollywood numbers that drew the audience to their feet.

Guests took part in a Diwali Kris Kringle, placing gifts beneath a floral display and selecting one on their way out—a simple act that reflected the show's spirit ❮TURN TO #37❯

**<CONTINUED FROM #36>** of sharing and community. The evening concluded with food, conversation and curated return gifts for attendees.

Many described the experience as uplifting and grounding. "The event made them pause and appreciate life," one attendee said. Another shared, "It's no longer just a radio program, it's a feeling of connection."

Lee Tarlamis OAM MP later reflected on the occasion, calling it "a wonderful Diwali and multicultural celebration at Knox Library." He said, "This celebration marks a year of building community and creating spaces for people to share stories, find support and celebrate cultural identity in a welcoming environment."

He congratulated Ruchi Sharma and her team for "spreading light, joy and happiness" and said he was confident "the future will be even brighter."

The evening captured the essence of Hello Zindagi's message—to embrace life with gratitude, awareness and joy.

> "Thank you Ruchi Sharma, for spreading light, joy and happiness. The future will be even brighter
>
> **LEE TARLAMIS, OAM MP**





# WOMADelaide adds 20 more global acts to its 2026 lineup

***OUR REPORTER*** *ADELAIDE*
***@the_indian_sun***

**WOMADelaide**'s 2026 program has widened again, with another 20 artists confirmed for the four-day festival in Botanic Park/Tainmuntilla next March. The latest announcement draws together artists from across the world, including an exclusive Australian performance by Arrested Development, the first hip-hop act to win Best New Artist at the Grammy Awards. Malian vocalist and activist Oumou Sangaré joins the list, along with Italian pop favourite Jovanotti, who will open the festival.

The additions include a mix of established names and fresh discoveries. BADBADNOTGOOD, the Canadian jazz-fusion group with a reputation for genre-bending collaborations, will perform alongside blues-funk trio MY BABY from the Netherlands and New Zealand. Annie & The Caldwells, the American gospel family band whose recent album found a fan in Sir Elton John, are also on the bill, as is Nusantara Beat, a six-piece Amsterdam group whose sound draws on their Indonesian heritage. They sit alongside Fantastic Negrito from the USA, KAIIT, Mama Kin Spender and Brazilian Australian artist Alcides Neto.

They join the already announced Yothu Yindi, Obongjayar, First Nations gospel singer Kankawa Nagarra, Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker's Rosas danst Rosas, Baker Boy, Troy Cassar-Daley with a string quartet, DJ Jyoty, and the all-female Moroccan ensemble Asmâa Hamzaoui & Bnat Timbouktou.

Among the international performers are Thiruvannamalai Nadaswaram Balaganesan and Thiruvannamalai Nadaswaram P. Bageswari Balaganesan from India. The husband-and-wife duo are dedicated nadaswaram players, having trained from childhood under respected teachers in Madurai and Chennai. They serve as Asthana Vidwans at Sri Ramanasramam ashram and will be accompanied in Adelaide by Thavil Vidwan Purushothaman on the Tamil Nadu thavil.

Altogether, WOMADelaide 2026 will bring more than 600 artists in 69 groups from 38 countries. It continues one of South Australia's strongest cultural partnerships, with government support for the festival extended through to 2029.

Tourism Minister Zoe Bettison said: "There are now another 20 reasons to lock in your March long weekend plans and discover the magic of WOMADelaide. With more than 600 artists coming from 38 countries, there will be something for everyone to enjoy as this impressive lineup transforms our glorious Botanic Park into a cultural oasis. We know about 40 per cent of ticket sales typically come from interstate festival goers, which not only helps to boost trade for our tourism businesses but cements South Australia as a leading events and festival destination."

Festival Director Ian Scobie said: "We are delighted to announce these amazing artists joining us in the finishing touches to our lineup, to grace the WOMADelaide stages over the March long weekend. Whether you're already a fan or getting to know these artists for the first time, WOMADelaide 2026 is ready for you."

WOMAD founder Peter Gabriel said: "It's brilliant to have an audience that cares so much about what WOMAD is, could be, and stands for. In a world in which many bad actors seem to be achieving power by fanning the flames of hatred, racism and division, a meeting place for all the world's cultures and dreams, built on mutual respect, seems all the more precious."

*Tickets, the full program and festival details are available at* ***womadelaide.com.au***



# 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.

**FARES AT A GLANCE:**

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With more flights, greater comfort, and a travel window stretching into next year, now is the perfect time to rediscover South India.

BOOKS

# From Bombay to Bondi:

## The journey of Indian-Jewish recipes

*A new cookbook uncovers the unique culinary heritage of India's Baghdadi Jews who made Bondi their home*

**BHUSHAN SALUNKE**
**@the_indian_sun**

Baghdadi Jews from India, mostly Bombay and Calcutta, began arriving in Australia in the late 1940s. Many settled in Sydney's eastern suburbs, especially Bondi.

The book *Indian-Jewish Food: Recipes and Stories from the Backstreets of Bondi* by Elana Benjamin captures the spectacular—but little-known—cuisine of India's Baghdadi Jews who immigrated to Australia in the 1950s and 60s.

By incorporating Indian spices into traditional Iraqi dishes and following the Jewish dietary laws—which prohibit the mixing of meat and dairy—India's Baghdadi Jews created a delicious cuisine that isn't quite typical Indian.

The collection of recipes in this book is in five



Elana Benjamin






sections: Sides, Vegetarian, Fish & Chicken, Meat, and Sweet. Recipes include chakla bakla (pickled vegetables), cheese samoosas (cheese-filled pastries), chittarnee (tomato-based chicken curry) and chatpatay (chickpeas and potatoes in tamarind sauce).

The book also tells the story of Eze Moses' legendary Bondi spice shop. Eze Moses was a Baghdadi Jew from India, and for many years, his shop was a magnet for all Indian immigrants—Jewish and otherwise.

Waverley Mayor Paula Masselos said that Waverley Council was delighted to support the creation of Elana's book through its Small Grants program. "Our heritage is fundamental to who we are as a community. This story illustrates and celebrates our multicultural past and present, and gives us a resource for the future."

Award-winning author and food literacy advocate, Alice Zaslavsky, said the book "is full of robustly researched and beautifully written memories and explorations of Jewish cuisine in the subcontinent." Zaslavsky added that "this vibrantly photographed and designed book will help to expand our understanding of regional differences and similarities—and I've already bookmarked a bunch of recipes to try!"

Elana Benjamin is a Jewish-Australian writer of Indian-Iraqi heritage and a home cook. Her writing has been published widely, including in *Good Weekend*, *Sunday Life*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *SBS Voices*, *The Jewish Independent* and *Tablet Magazine*.

*Elana is a contributor to the* Growing Up Indian in Australia *anthology (2024, Black Inc.). She is also the author of* My Mother's Spice Cupboard: A Journey from Baghdad to Bombay to Bondi *(2012, Hybrid Publishers). Indian-Jewish Food was recently a dual finalist in the (international) Next Generation Indie Book Awards 2025—in two categories: best cookbook, and best overall design.*

*ISBN: 9780645977011*

*Publisher: Sydney Jewish Museum › RRP: $39.99*

*This project was made possible with support from the Sydney Jewish Museum & Waverley Council*

# Metricon brings Diwali to life with colour, food and community spirit

***Metricon celebrated Diwali** with community, culture, food & warmth, transforming its Doulton 56 display home into a vibrant gathering of families,*

# Metricon

## MasterChef Australia 2021 winner Justin Narayan was the evening's drawcard

***OUR REPORTER***
***@the_indian_sun***

Metricon marked Diwali with an evening that blended warmth, food and cultural celebration at its Doulton 56 display home in Burwood East. More than 80 guests filled the space, turning the luxury home into a lively gathering point for families, influencers and community members who came to share the Festival of Lights.

Guests were welcomed with the kind of hospitality the festival is known for. **<TURN TO #44>**






Justin Narayan






> Events like this highlight Metricon's passion for creating homes that bring people together, places where culture, connection, and celebration can thrive
>
> **DREW GLASCOTT, METRICON'S GENERAL MANAGER, SALES & MARKETING**

❮CONTINUED FROM #43❯ Bollywood dancers set the tone early, followed by henna artists and craft activities for children that kept the evening moving at an easy pace. The house itself became part of the experience, with the two-storey setting offering a calm backdrop to the colour and music.

MasterChef Australia 2021 winner Justin Narayan was the evening's drawcard, running a hands-on cooking session featuring dishes that reflected both comfort and heritage. He said the opportunity meant a great deal to him. "It was a privilege to share my love of food and culture at the event. Food is such a powerful way to connect people, and Diwali is all about celebrating family, friendship, and community. It was fantastic to see everyone come together to share great flavours and experience the warmth of this festival."

Actor and influencer Sharon Johal was among those attending, sharing glimpses of the gathering with her online audience and helping extend the celebration beyond the room.

For Metricon, the event was a chance to open its doors in a different way. Drew Glascott, Metricon's General Manager, Sales & Marketing, said the night captured what the company aims to foster. "The event was such a meaningful way to celebrate cultural diversity with our fantastic customers while showcasing one of Metricon's most impressive homes. Diwali is such a joyful celebration of light, love, and togetherness, and we're proud to open our doors to celebrate that spirit with our community. ❮TURN TO #45❯

CONTINUED FROM #44

Events like this highlight Metricon's passion for creating homes that bring people together, places where culture, connection, and celebration can thrive."

The event reflected a growing trend of major brands taking part in cultural moments that matter to the communities they serve. For many attendees, it was simply a chance to slow down, enjoy good food, and connect with others under the glow of Diwali.



Diljit Dosanjh

# Australian music pushes further into India with new industry delegation

## Australia deepens cultural & commercial music ties with India as Sounds Australia announces a major new opportunity at **India International Music Week 2026**

***OUR REPORTER***
***@the_indian_sun***

Australia's music sector is preparing for a fresh chapter of engagement with India after Sounds Australia, alongside the Australian Consulate General to Mumbai, confirmed a new opportunity for artist managers to take part in India **International Music Week in 2026**.

The announcement closed this morning's India-focussed VMDO event, marking a renewed effort to strengthen creative and commercial ties with one of the world's busiest music markets. Expressions of interest are open for Association of Artist Managers members keen to join a select Australian delegation travelling to Mumbai for next year's conference and showcase festival.

India International Music Week brings together artists, executives and music businesses from across the globe. For Sounds Australia, the new program builds on earlier work in the region. Between 2012 and 2014, Australian artists were showcased in Bangalore, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune, featuring names such as The Aston Shuffle, Big Scary, Cloud Control, Karnivool, Kate Miller-Heidke, Peking Duk, Sampology and Sheppard. The organisation has also led delegations to NH7 Weekender, Nokia Music Connects and All About Music, along with an inbound exchange during SXSW Sydney in 2024.

3 November 2012, Pune, Maharashtra, India: The NH7 Weekender Music Festival in Pune. Oz Fest sponsored the music festival with the Sound Chamber which had many concert goers try the facility out at the three day event while Australian act, Big Scary from Melbourne kept the crowds entertained with a rocking set. Pictures by Graham Crouch

Esti Zilber, Executive Producer for Sounds Australia, said, "Sounds Australia is excited to return to India, bringing a targeted approach that draws on 〈TURN TO #49〉

> "Over the last year, we have seen an increasing number of Australian artists and industry leaders making their mark in India's vibrant music scened
>
> **PAUL MURPHY, AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL IN WESTERN INDIA**













CONTINUED FROM #47

our track record of connecting Australian artists with audiences and opportunities worldwide. By deepening relationships with trusted industry partners and key players in the territory, we're expanding networks that drive impactful outcomes, create lasting opportunities, and position Australian talent within one of the world's most dynamic music markets."

The week in Mumbai will include tailored networking sessions, curated panels, strategic meetings and public events, including a spotlight on Australia within the official program. Previous editions of IIMW have featured speakers from Spotify India, Believe Music, Warner Music India, Sony Music Entertainment, Universal Music Publishing, Amazon Studios, Netflix India, Times Music, PRS India and Skillbox, as well as festival programmers, venue operators and export offices from more than 30 countries.

The Australian Consul-General in Western India, Paul Murphy, said, "Over the last year, we have seen an increasing number of Australian artists and industry leaders making their mark in India's vibrant music scene. India's dynamic music market offers vast opportunities for collaboration with their Australian counterparts. With a strong and globally respected music industry, Australia is well positioned to foster creative partnerships and cultural exchange. To build on this momentum, we are delighted to support an Australian presence at India International Music Week 2026. This engagement will be a powerful platform to showcase the Australian music ecosystem, build networks and explore bilateral opportunities."

Victoria is set to strengthen its ties with India too. The Victorian Music Development Office has opened expressions of interest for two Victorian industry professionals working in fields beyond management, such as labels and agencies, to receive an AU$2,000 contribution to attend IIMW. The support is aimed at helping Victorian businesses gain direct access to the market, share expertise and build long-term partnerships across both communities.

Kirsty Rivers, General Manager of VMDO, said, "The VMDO is delighted to provide additional support for Sounds Australia's delegation to IIMW and look forward to supporting two Victorian professionals in attending. Indian languages are the fastest-growing languages other than English spoken in Victorian homes, and looking to India is not only an opportunity to find out more about the export market, it is a chance to build on our shared cultural connections here in Victoria."

*Applications are now open.*



*Sahana Raghuraman*

# A journey shaped by devotion as Sahana prepares for her Chennai Arangetram



## A young dancer's journey across countries, culture, and tradition culminates in a long-awaited arangetram grounded in dedication, family, and legacy

***OUR REPORTER***
***@the_indian_sun***

**Sahana Raghuraman**'s life has moved across borders, classrooms, and dance studios, yet the thread that holds it together has always been Bharatanatyam. Her story begins in New Zealand, where she was born and where the first hints of rhythm and storytelling took hold. At five, she walked into a dance class and felt the spark that would grow into something larger. She still remembers the sound of the mridangam and the way each gesture carried meaning far beyond movement. Under the early guidance of Dr Dhanya Sreekanth, the foundations of her dance journey were set.

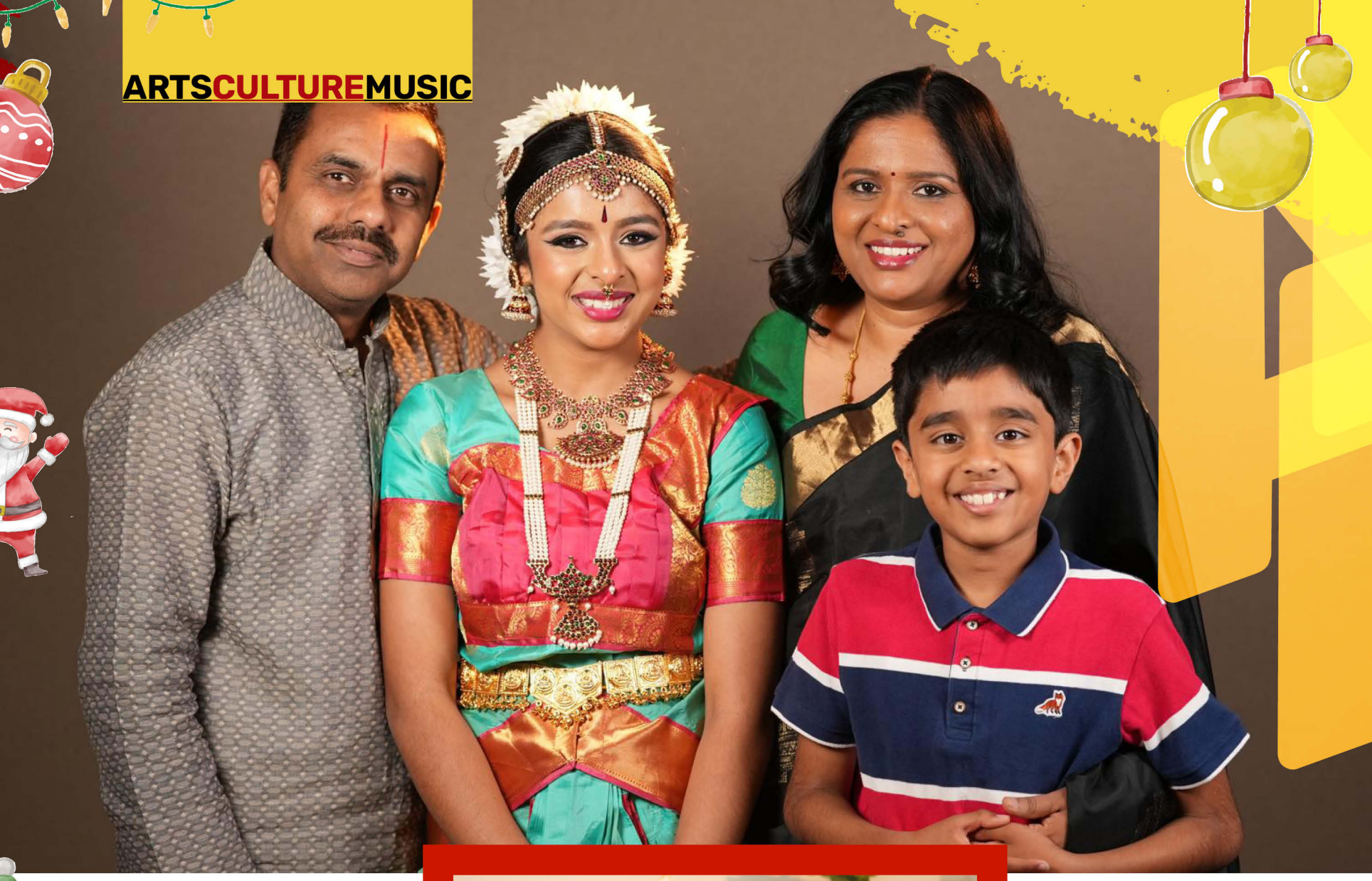
Years later, in 2019, she joined Artham Natya and began learning under her guru, Dr Bhuvana Kannan, a relationship that has shaped her understanding of Bharatanatyam with depth and purpose. Dr Bhuvana's training, grounded in classical rigour and an insistence on discipline and clarity, left a strong mark. "My love for this art started to grow," Sahana says, a reflection that sits at the heart of her long preparation for her arangetram. Guided by her guru's approach to theory, rhythm, and expression, she completed her Year 3 certification and started working towards the milestone that every dancer dreams of.

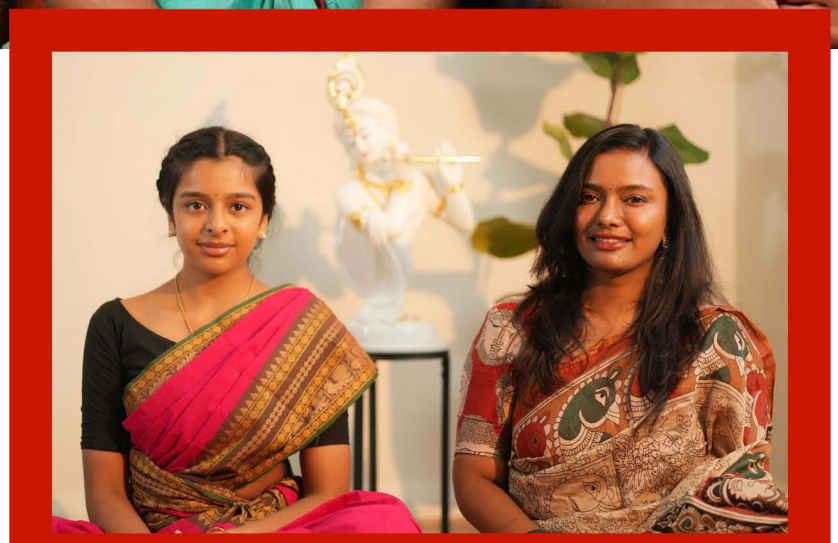
Then came a shift. Her family moved to Melbourne, and the stage she had imagined for years suddenly felt far away. The transition to online learning was difficult. "It was challenging at first," she recalls. Connecting to an ancient art form through a screen required discipline that stretched her both technically and emotionally. Yet something in her held steady. "I discovered that dedication isn't just about talent," she says. "It's about showing up again and again with heart." Through those months of remote training, she found a new way to dance, relying on persistence and trust. **<TURN TO #53>**

> "It was challenging at first. I discovered that dedication isn't just about talent. It's about showing up again and again with heart
>
> **SAHANA RAGHURAMAN**



Just as compelling as Sahana's own path is the story of the family behind her. Her parents' journeys began far from Melbourne. Her father, Raghuraman Kidambi Gopalan, grew up in Tiruttani in Tamil Nadu





CONTINUED FROM #51

Her arangetram will now take place at Rani Seethai Hall in Chennai on Saturday 10 January 2026 from 6.00 PM to 8.30 PM, accompanied by an orchestra of respected artists whose presence will lift the performance with classical richness. Every piece in her repertoire carries its own weight, its own history, and its own role in the evening she has worked towards for years. Each composition chosen for the performance reflects her grounding in the classical structure of the art: Pushpanjali in Gambira Nattai; Vishnu Kauthuvam in Nattai; Shree Rajarajeshwari Ashtakam in Raga Malika; Bo-Sambho in Revathi; Kandhan Varnam in Kamas; and a lively Thillana in Amirthavarshini. These works have been choreographed by her guru, with Kandhan Varnam arranged by Kalaimamani Guru Sri Binesh Mahadevan.

Behind her stands an ensemble of artists who will shape the experience on stage. Vocalist Smt Chitambari Krishnamkumar will lead the music, with Dr Bhuvana Kannan on nattuvangam. Sri Danamjayan on mridangam, Sri Mudikondan Ramesh on veena, Sri Deva Raj on flute, and Sri Venkatasubramaniam on rhythm pad round out the orchestra, ensuring the performance captures the full classical soundscape.

Just as compelling as Sahana's own path is the story of the family behind her. Her parents' journeys began far from Melbourne. Her father, Raghuraman Kidambi Gopalan, grew up in Tiruttani in Tamil Nadu before building a career anchored in laboratory science. His work took him from Apollo Hospitals in Chennai to Auckland, then to leading a COVID-19 laboratory team during the height of the pandemic. His commitment carried him into the commercial sector and eventually to his current role as Technical Operations Advisor at RMIT University. Her mother, Dr Pavithra Raghuraman, began her career in research at CMC Vellore, moved to New Zealand inspired by the idea of becoming a research doctor, completed her PhD at AUT, and continues working in science with equal dedication.

Sahana describes her brother Tharan as the steady current of joy in the family, the one who lifts moods, celebrates every small moment, and brings energy to everything he does. His interest in chess and cricket keeps the household lively, and she laughs when she mentions that the family is waiting for the day he brings his mridangam skills into the mix.

At the centre of all this is her guru, whose own dance lineage traces back to Kalaimamani Smt Ranganayaki Jayaraman of Sri Saraswathi Gana Nilayam in Chennai. Dr Bhuvana's training across India and her experience performing on global stages make her influence clear in her students' approach to expression, movement, and thought. Her teaching draws from the Natyasastra and Abhinaya Darpanam, demanding not just performance but understanding. She brings her experience as a Creative New Zealand award recipient, lecturer, panellist, and reviewer into her classes, shaping dancers with a strong sense of discipline and curiosity.

Sahana's upcoming arangetram is a reflection of all these strands. Her own perseverance, her family's enduring support, and her guru's guidance come together in a performance that marks transition as much as achievement. She has danced on stages in Auckland and Melbourne, explored styles from classical to hip-hop, and even begun choreographing. Along the way she has taught herself instruments including guitar and ukulele and studied Carnatic vocal music, finding ways to bring rhythm into her everyday life.

The night in Chennai will be a culmination of years of practice, but also something more: a connection back to where her family's stories began, a return to the city where her parents' scientific journeys started, and a stage that links her to the tradition she spent her life honouring.


SMT. SUNDARI
SARIPALLE



# Young performers bring Mahabharata alive in Melbourne



## A vibrant cultural celebration where young performers brought the spirit of **Sri Krishna Raayabaaaram** to life

***OUR REPORTER***
***@the_indian_sun***

Sri Krishna Raayabaaaram was staged on Saturday, 22 November 2025, at 3 pm at the Banksia Performing Arts Centre at Keysborough Secondary College, Janine Road, Springvale South. The hall filled with families and community members who had come to watch Abhyudaya's young performers take on one of the most challenging stories in the Mahabharata. The scale of the production, and the response it drew, reflected how much the event meant to the children who had worked on it and the parents who had guided them.

Abhyudaya describes its purpose with clarity. Its vision is "to nurture, preserve, and promote the rich heritage of Indian performing arts by empowering children and young individuals to express their creativity with confidence, discipline, and cultural pride". The organisation hopes to build a wider platform where children from across the community can carry their stories to major stages. It aims to involve families, cultural organisations, and teachers so that the next generation grows with artistic ability and a sense of belonging.

Its mission is built around structured training, skilled guidance, and the chance to perform at multicultural festivals, theatres, conventions, and international venues. It places equal weight on teamwork, confidence, discipline, and communication. Teaching mythological stories in ways that children enjoy is seen as a key part of passing culture forward.

The organisers wrote that Sri Krishna Raayabaaaram "was not just a skit, it was a grand celebration of dedication, discipline, passion, and the richness of our cultural heritage brought alive on stage". The children moved through their dialogue and padyams with ease, drawing admiration from the crowd. Families 〈TURN TO #57〉



The stage design, props, and costumes echoed the world of the Mahabharata, and the audience reacted strongly to every shift in mood



CONTINUED FROM #55 spoke about the work that went into each scene, from rehearsals to costume preparation, and the pride of seeing their children respond to such demanding material.

The stage design, props, and costumes echoed the world of the Mahabharata, and the audience reacted strongly to every shift in mood. The team recalled how "the hall echoed with continuous cheers, applause, and emotions and a Standing Ovation a clear reflection of the production's massive success". The response showed how closely the performers connected with the story and with the viewers.

The event was supported by a wide network of community partners, including the Telugu Association of Australia Inc. (TAAI), Australia Telangana Association Incorporation, Australia Telugu Community and Cultural Centre, Melbourne Telagana Forum, Australia India Chamber of Commerce, Telugumalli, KIW World, and Australia Alludu. Sponsors ranged from legal and financial firms to builders and business groups. Many local music academies, dance schools, artists, and volunteers contributed to the production.

The organisers expressed their appreciation to parents, partners, supporters, and volunteers, thanking them for making the staging possible. They added, "Here's to many more cultural milestones together", setting the tone for what they hope will be a long journey of nurturing young performers across Victoria.









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