

UNSW COLLEGE

The Sweltering Edition

December 2025

In The Know



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Highlighted events

Martin Place Christmas Markets

If you have not already checked out the Martin Place Christmas Markets, there is still time to do so until Saturday 20 December, with stalls open from 11am to 9:30pm on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays in the heart of the CBD.

Set around the large Christmas tree at Martin Place, the markets bring a festive buzz to the city with artisan gift stalls, seasonal food, and plenty of lights and decorations. It is an easy place to stop by after class or work, whether you are looking for a small gift, treating yourself to something festive, or just taking a slow walk through the city.



Sydney New Year's Eve Fireworks

New Year's Eve in Sydney is one of the most iconic celebrations in the world, and it is something every student should experience at least once. If you will be staying in Sydney for the holidays this year, fret not, New Year's Eve in this city is still something truly special. On Wednesday 31 December, Sydney Harbour becomes the centre of a full evening of celebrations, starting earlier in the night with harbour lighting, projections on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and cultural performances that build anticipation well before the fireworks begin. The first major fireworks display takes place at 9pm, followed by the iconic midnight fireworks.

There are plenty of free public viewing areas around the harbour, including Darling Harbour, Circular Quay, The Rocks, Barangaroo, and parts of the Royal Botanic Garden, though popular spots can reach capacity early. It is best to arrive in the afternoon or early evening, bring water and snacks, and plan your transport home in advance as road closures begin early and public transport runs on special schedules. While it can be a long night, celebrating New Year's Eve in Sydney is a memorable experience, especially if you are spending the holidays away from home.



WHO'S HUNGRY?

BRINGING YOU
THE BEST EATS IN
SYDNEY

NOTEWORTHY EATERIES



Algorithm

36-38 Darlinghurst Rd, Potts Point NSW 2011

Algorithm brings a fresh twist to cafe culture. It's not just another coffee shop, but a vibrant, creative space with inventive drinks, bold flavours and a warm, community-first vibe. If you're after a cafe that's out of the ordinary and have a soft spot for signature cold-brews, matcha creations, artisanal toasties and brunch dishes, Algorithm is a spot that keeps you coming back.

Image credit: Algorithm Instagram

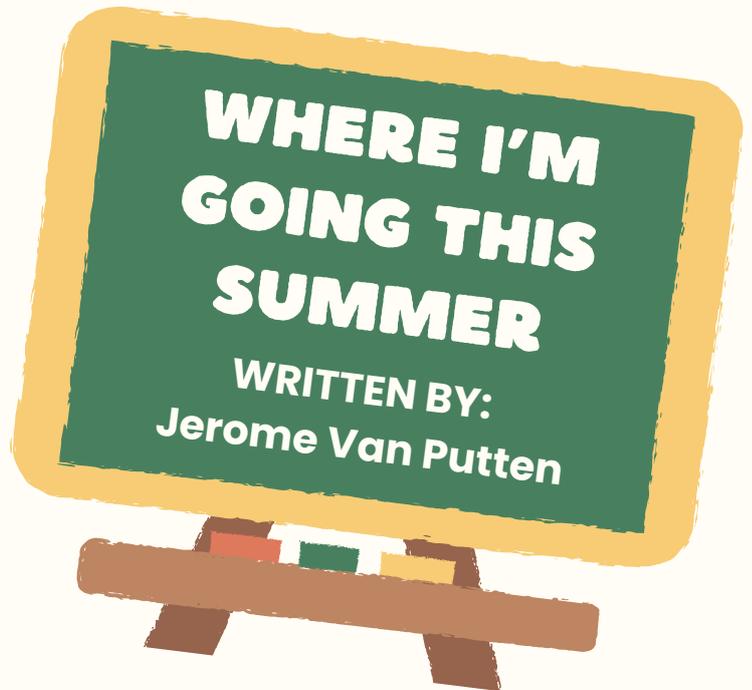
Luigi Panini

75a Fitzroy St, Surry Hills NSW 2010

Luigi Panini channels the magic of a true Italian panini window: neighbourhood charm, warm smiles and sandwiches that taste like home in Napoli or Calabria. The menu is built on family recipes and childhood memories: each ingredient is selected with care and tradition. If you can't make it to Italy this summer, Luigi Panini brings all the authenticity you could ask for.



Image credit: Luigi Panini Instagram



Summer is coming and my mind wanders outside dreaming of things to do in the sunshine. I feel like going to the many beaches and parks in and around Sydney. Whatever else I like to do; I want to eat too. Many people forget that a lot of the parks will have free shared BBQs.



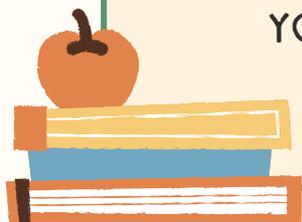
Here's what you need to know.

- Bring your own food (sausages, bread, and sauce are Aussie favourites)
- Take spray oil & tongs (maybe aluminium foil to cook on)
- Don't forget paper towels (to give the BBQ a quick clean when you're done)

These are shared, so you don't book them. Just line up if there are people using them already. There will be a button to press. Look for the light to let you know it's working. Cook your food and move on (don't eat at the BBQ). I have a few favourite places. Bronte is great but it gets pretty busy!

A quick google search will give you a better idea. Olympic Park, Centennial Park, Coogee Beach, and Shelly Beach are all places I've been and enjoyed BUT half the fun is finding your very own prize location. You might be surprised just how many there are, so just get out amongst it!

YOU WON'T GET BETTER ADVICE THAN STRAIGHT
FROM THE STAFF AT UNSW COLLEGE



Why the sun in Australia feels stronger

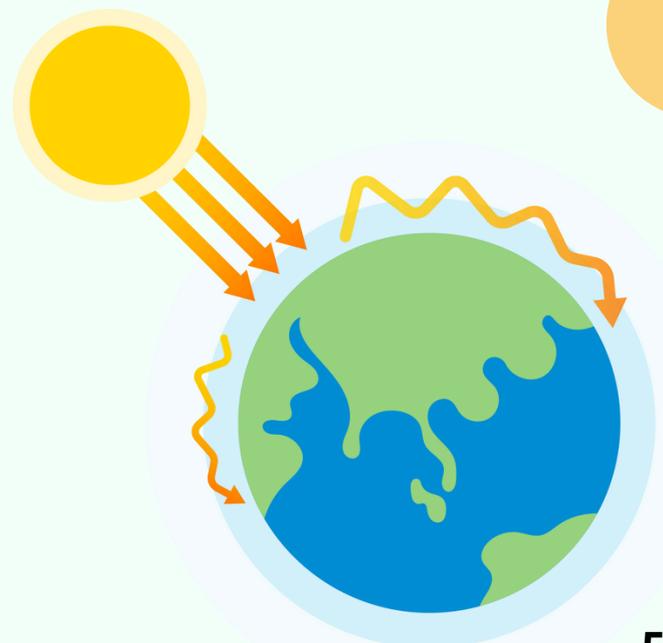


Anyone who has spent a summer in Australia knows the sun feels different here. Visitors from overseas often comment that they burn more quickly, tan more deeply, and notice their skin turning a darker, less “honey-gold” shade than they would after sun exposure overseas. This isn’t just a throwaway comment, there are clear scientific and environmental reasons why Australia’s UV radiation is among the highest in the world.

One of the biggest contributing factors is the state of the ozone layer above Australia. The ozone layer acts like Earth’s natural sunscreen, filtering harmful ultraviolet radiation before it reaches the surface. While the global ozone layer has gradually been recovering since the reduction of ozone-depleting substances, the area above Australia and the Antarctic region has historically been thinner and more vulnerable. This reduced protection allows more UVB radiation to penetrate, increasing the risk of burning and speeding up the tanning process, but also heightening the risk of skin damage.

Australia’s geographical position also plays an important role. Being closer to the equator in many regions means the sun’s rays strike the Earth more directly, resulting in more intense UV exposure.

Even during the cooler months, the angle of the sun remains stronger than for example in much of Europe, where the sun sits lower in the sky for much of the year. This difference in solar angle helps explain why people can burn in Australia even on cloudy days, while Europeans often need prolonged exposure to achieve the same effect.



Our atmosphere and climate further intensify this effect. Australia has exceptionally clear skies, low pollution, and low humidity in many areas. Unlike in parts of Europe where haze, pollution, and cloud cover can diffuse UV radiation, Australian skies provide fewer barriers. This means UV passes through the atmosphere with less scattering, reaching the surface with greater force. Even the reflection of UV off sand and water at our beaches adds another layer of exposure.



These environmental factors also influence the way Australians tan. Because UVB radiation is more intense here, melanocytes (the skin cells responsible for producing melanin) are triggered more rapidly and aggressively. This results in a deeper, darker tan. In contrast, tanning in the Northern Hemisphere tends to be driven by a different balance of UVA and UVB radiation, with UVA penetrating the skin more deeply and creating a slower, subtler bronzing effect.



In contrast, the rapid, darker tanning seen in Australia is actually a protective response: the skin darkens quickly in an effort to shield itself from further UV damage. Unfortunately, this heightened exposure also correlates with higher rates of sunburn and long-term skin issues, including Australia's globally high incidence of skin cancer.

The bottom line? The sun in Australia truly is different. A mix of ozone depletion, clearer skies, strong solar angles, and atmospheric conditions combine to create some of the highest UV levels on the planet and result in tanning habits and outcomes that differ noticeably from other countries. Understanding these differences reminds us why sun protection is not just advisable here, but essential.





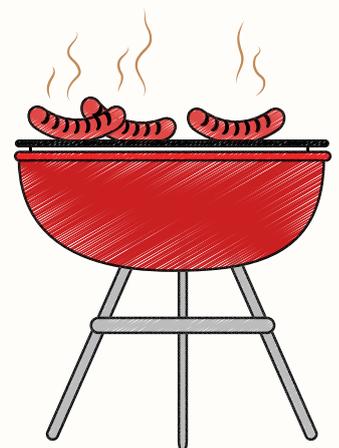
HOW THE AUSSIE BARBIE BECAME A NATIONAL ICON



In Australia, firing up the barbie is more than just a way to cook dinner, it's a ritual baked into the national identity. From backyard snags to park-side beach cook-ups, the barbie has become a symbol of community, casual living and good times with mates and family.

The roots of the classic Aussie barbecue stretch back decades. What began as a practical method to cook meat outdoors, especially well-suited to Australia's warm climate, gradually evolved into a beloved way to socialise. Post-World War II suburban expansion, affordable barbeques and the arrival of portable gas grills made backyard cookups increasingly common.

By the 1950s and 60s, having a home barbie had become a familiar part of everyday life for many households. Over time, the simple act of grilling sausages or chops morphed into a social tradition: an easy, informal way for people to get together and enjoy the outdoors.



Part of the barbie's enduring appeal is its simplicity and versatility. A typical Aussie BBQ might include sausages ("snags"), lamb chops, steaks, prawns but modern barbies often go beyond tradition and now it's common to see dishes like tandoori marinated skewers, grilled vegetables, seafood and even vegetarian/vegan options.

Yet despite this variety, the core vibe remains the same: quick, hot-plate cooking, casual sharing of food, and minimal fuss. You don't need formal table settings or fancy cutlery, just an open grill, some meat or veg, cool drinks, and good company.



Public barbecues in parks, beaches and reserves make it easy for anyone to join in. It doesn't matter your background, age or cooking skills: everyone gathers around the grill, sharing food, laughs and conversation. That casual and welcoming environment reflects what many see as core Aussie values.

The barbie isn't just for weekends. It features in holidays, public events, and everyday small gatherings. Over the decades, barbecue cooking replaced more formal or heavy meals, especially during summer. Grilled meats and seafood quickly replaced winter roasts, a shift perfectly suited to outdoor living and warmer weather.

It's also reliable: when the weather's good, it's easy to throw something on the barbie and enjoy a relaxed meal outside. No oven preheat, no formal dining rituals, just fire, food, and friends. This practicality made the barbecue a fixture in many households and public spaces across Australia.

The popularity of the barbie in Australia comes down to a mix of practicality, culture, climate and community. It suits the Aussie lifestyle: easy, relaxed, social, and adaptable. It offers a sense of togetherness and simplicity that many cherish.



DON'T SWEAT IT

Australian summers are bright, energetic, and full of beautiful places to explore, but the heat can feel intense, especially if you are not used to it. Understanding how your body reacts to hot weather and knowing how to protect yourself can help you stay healthy and confident throughout the season!

DID YOU KNOW?

SWEATING IS YOUR BODY'S NATURAL WAY OF COOLING ITSELF!

When your body gets too warm, it releases moisture that dries on your skin. This helps bring your temperature back to normal.

What you wear can change how well this process works because light fabrics like cotton and linen help sweat dry faster, while heavy or synthetic clothing traps heat and makes you feel warmer.

What you eat can also affect how hot you feel. Foods and drinks that are salty, sugary, alcoholic, or harder to digest (like red meat) can warm your body and make you lose more water. Lighter options like fruits, vegetables, fish, and white meats can be gentler on your system. Overeating can also raise your body temperature because digesting a large meal takes more energy. Being mindful of what you eat and choosing lighter meals on very hot days can help you stay more comfortable!



VS



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR BODY GETS TOO HOT?

On very hot days, your body must work harder to produce more sweat to cool you down. Sometimes sweating is not enough, especially when the air feels humid or when you have not had enough water, causing your body temperature to rise quickly. In more serious situations, overheating can lead to heatstroke, a medical emergency.

From 2019 to 2022, more than 2000 people were admitted to hospital because of heat-related illness, so knowing the early warning signs is important.



According to the South Western Sydney Primary Health Network, these are the signs of heatstroke to look out for and how you can handle it:



Intense feeling of thirst



Sudden rise in body temperature



Fast and shallow breathing



Headaches, nausea, vomiting



Dizziness, confusion, or trouble focusing

They recommend that if you or someone around you feel these symptoms, the best way to manage it is to move to a cool place right away, hydrate slowly, and seek medical help if these symptoms continue.

When you're sweating a lot on a hot day or after exercising hard, you don't just lose water but also important minerals in your body. What you can do to stay hydrated is:

- Drink consistently throughout the day instead of waiting until you are thirsty
- Aim for 2-3 litres of water daily, adjusting based on your activity level and the weather
- Make yourself refreshing summer drinks like iced tea, strawberry lemonade, and raspberry vanilla soda

Moreover, Cleveland Clinic explains how electrolyte drinks can help with hydration by offering us important minerals that help balance the amount of water in our body.

WHAT ABOUT THE SUN?

Australia's UV levels are among the highest in the world, so sun protection is important even when it looks cloudy outside. To prevent skin cancer and sunburn this summer, make sure you stay Sun Smart.

For the best protection, use all five SunSmart steps:



Slip on covering clothing



Slop on SPF 50 sunscreen



Slap on a hat



Seek shade



Slide on some sunglasses

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

A few other habits can help you stay cool, like checking the weather on your phone before leaving home allows you to plan ahead for extreme heat.

You can also carry a small fan or umbrella, choose loose and breathable clothing, take cool showers, and spend time in air-conditioned areas on campus can all make hot days much easier to manage.



Heatwaves can be especially challenging for students who are adjusting to Australian summers. Keep in contact with friends, neighbours and relatives during a heat wave in case you or they need help. If you're worried about heatstroke and wish to know more about how you can manage the heat safely, you can book an appointment with the Student Wellbeing Advisers here. There are many ways we can support you!

CHECK THIS OUT

Don't forget to check out the other support article on the Current Students Website below:



Balancing Your
Screen Time



View all Health and
Wellbeing support
articles

*Love,
Jolin*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

December

THIS MONTH'S GENRE

This month's picks bring together a heartfelt romance, a gripping summer mystery and an uplifting non fiction book. Each explores the changes that surface in the heat, from unexpected love to the simple joy of slowing down and paying attention.

BEACH READ

EMILY HENRY

Beach Read feels like the perfect summer holiday in book form. It is sunny on the surface, but still has moments that feel honest and emotional.

January Andrews escapes to a quiet lakeside cottage after her life turns upside down, and discovers that her new neighbour is Gus Everett, the grumpy and brilliant author she used to compete with at university. Their tension quickly turns into a hilarious challenge to swap writing genres for the summer. This leads to strange research outings, late-night conversations, and feelings they did not expect.

This book balances humour, romance and genuine heart in a way that feels refreshing. It is warm, clever and satisfying, and it is ideal for reading on a hot day with a cold drink, by the beach or anywhere with sunlight and free time.

BEACH READ

"A breath of fresh air... Steamy, smart, and perceptive."
— JOSIE SILVER,
author of
One Day in December

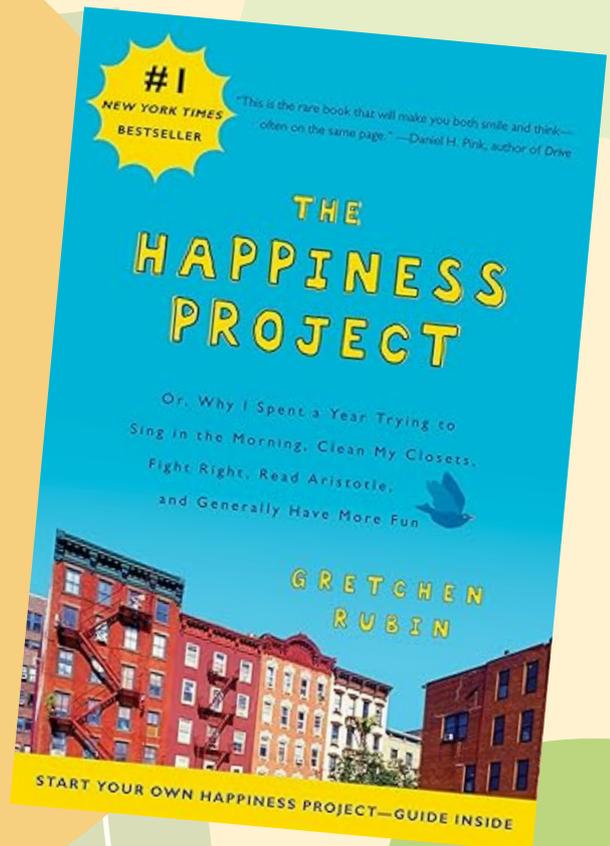
EMILY HENRY

THE HAPPINESS PROJECT

GRETCHEN RUBIN

The Happiness Project follows Gretchen Rubin as she spends a year trying small changes that make everyday life feel lighter, brighter and more meaningful. Her approach is friendly and relatable, and she shares her experiments with habits, gratitude, energy and curiosity in a way that feels both practical and fun.

The book has an easy, upbeat tone that fits the feeling of summer, when there is more room to pause, reflect and try something new. It encourages you to notice the moments that bring joy, whether they are tiny or unexpected, and to build a life that feels more intentional. For students who want a non fiction read that feels refreshing without being heavy, this book is a cheerful and inspiring pick for the holiday break.



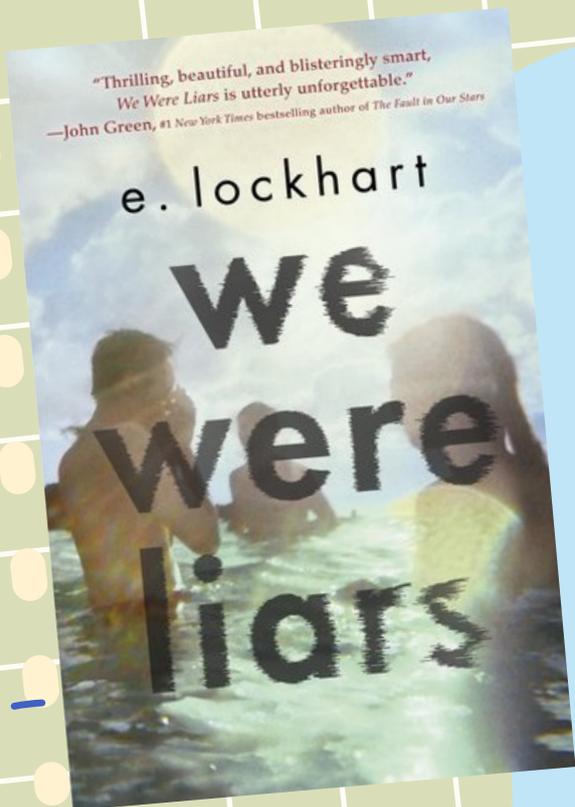
WE WERE LIARS

E. LOCKHART

Set on a private island owned by the Sinclair family, *We Were Liars* mixes mystery, memory and summer heat into one addictive story.

Cadence returns to the island hoping to remember what happened during a past summer that remains blurry and painful. As she reconnects with her cousins and her first love, small pieces of the truth slowly return.

The writing feels dreamy and atmospheric, and the island setting is described with bright sunshine, salty air and thick summer heat that almost becomes a character on its own. The tension grows quietly, and the story builds toward a twist that leaves a lasting impact. It is short, emotional and easy to read in a single sitting, which makes it a great choice for a hot afternoon when you want something gripping and memorable.



Contact Us



Welcoming all submissions to the newsletter!

Got a fresh idea, content suggestion, your best kept secret of Sydney, or a tale of your student experience here at UNSW College you'd like to share?

Click the button below to send us your submission for a chance to get featured in next month's issue!



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