

FREE

Issue 25

October 2025

FREO StreetWise

Fremantle's independent
print & online magazine

Summer exclusives & images at
streetwisemedia.com.au. Enjoy!



CELEBRATE 10 years of publishing success & order your limited-edition souvenir copy of *StreetWise Media's* flagship print & online publication. Order form at the back of this issue.



US family visit WA
100th shark death
anniversary

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Science endeavour
instead of war
games

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sours Freo food
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Where is Lady
Santa?
Mrs Kringle?

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STREETWISE Media thanks and acknowledges sponsors, advertisers and supporters of Freo's publishing success launched in December 2015. Our flagship print and online magazine *Freo StreetWise* is a FREE publication that showcases the people, places and rich history of Western Australia's much-loved port city. Distributed in Fremantle, Cockburn, Melville and select sites in WA, *StreetWise* is linked to a growing print and social media community at www.streetwisemedia.com.au. A community-driven initiative by WA publisher Carmelo Amalfi, *StreetWise* attracts thousands of readers interested in local news, the arts, food, film and history. *StreetWise* stands out for quality and affordable rates, producing exclusive content and images of the city to boost the profile and online presence of local businesses and community groups. Advertise your business, people and special events at freostreetwise@gmail.com.



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WELCOME to the 25th edition of Fremantle's independent print & online street publication. In the 10th year of *Freo StreetWise*, we welcome to WA Jonathan Adolph and his family who will travel in November from the US to commemorate the 100th anniversary of their loved ones' death in a shark attack at Cottesloe Beach. *StreetWise* previews the local government elections which will see a new mayor and three councillors elected. We also take a culinary tour of Freo's dining scene. Sharks are on the menu in a new literary record of Earth's ultimate survivor by Australian fossil fish expert John Long. In the spirit of Christmas, *StreetWise* explores the fascinating history of 'lady Santas'. We explore the latest breakthroughs in science and medicine and promise of a better world without war, famine and disease.



And we ask readers whether they would buy one of the letters on the billboard 'HOLLYWOOD'. Stories and images at www.streetwisemedia.com.au.

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Carmelo Amalfi

Designer
Beau G'Froerer

Freo StreetWise is a free publication produced in Fremantle, WA. Supported by local businesses and community groups, the independent publication launched in 2015 is distributed in Fremantle, Cockburn, Melville and select sites in Perth and WA.

StreetWise also is available at www.streetwisemedia.com.au.

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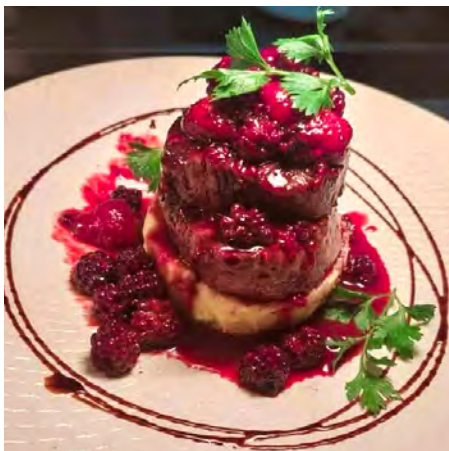
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AWARDED best Italian restaurant in Fremantle in 2024, Portorosa Fremantle offers the best in European cuisine sourced fresh locally, and made with love. Dine in, out, the experience will knock you out of the Strip. Enjoy.



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Located 85 Market Street
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portorosa.com.au



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



FREO StreetWise was launched in 2015 in a temporary West End art gallery on High Street. Attended by local business, retail and hospitality owners, historians, local heritage lovers and artists, the new independent print and online publication promised unique stories and images of faces, places and special events which define WA's much-loved port and tourist destination. 'FreO'. And we have delivered. Through COVID and controversy. Thousands of FREE printed copies distributed every three to four months in Fremantle, Cockburn, Melville and select sites in WA covering history, politics, the arts, sciences, film, music and travel. The 25th edition is available in print and online at www.streetwisemedia.com.au. *StreetWise* Media's flagship magazine continues to attract a growing online community of 'friends' and followers who share independent, unbiased and informative stories not available in Fremantle. *StreetWise* also continues to receive support from local businesses and advertisers, many of whom since day one have shared their personal stories and images of Fremantle. Unfortunately, *StreetWise* is saddened by recent closures of sponsors Warren's Menswear and The Hair and Barber Room. Port Jarrah Furniture and South Freo Continental join as new supporters. Businesses can register their support or join as sponsors or supporters with free AD support and online coverage.



To celebrate 10 years of publishing success, *StreetWise* in December will publish a special magazine anniversary edition that will make a great gift for Freo lovers. Book your personal copy on the order form at the back of this edition or at www.streetwisemedia.com.au.



First edition pick up 2015

Celebrating 44 years of business 1981 - 2025

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SHARK DEATH REMEMBERED

EXCLUSIVE: Hotelier Michael Church could not have known when he left the water at Cottesloe on a stinking hot day in 1925 that his swimming buddy would be killed by a 4.3m tiger shark after he decided to go back in. He was 18 and would never enter the water again.

Michael's son Geoffrey, 74, said thousands of people crowded the beach including the retired accountant's late father and 56-year-old bookmakers clerk Simon Ettleson who lived at the Perth Metropole Hotel leased by the Church family.

"Simon and the old man went swimming and after they got out of the water sat on the beach reading," Geoffrey told *StreetWise*.

"Simon asked the old man whether he wanted to go back in, but he decided to stay and read his book. Simon went back in and that's when the shark got him."

Geoffrey says his father spoke reluctantly of the tragic events which not only rattled beach lovers that day, but changed life surfing and beach safety in WA for decades. Another shark attack would not take place here until 2000 when businessman Ken Crew was killed at North Cottesloe. Geoffrey's father died in 1987, aged 80. His father, Geoffrey's grandfather 'Ted' Edgar John Church, leased the Exchange Hotel in Kalgoorlie and Metropole and Criterion hotels in Perth.



Simon Ettleson grave

Teddy died in 1948.

Simon for several years after leaving the WA goldfields was a 'permanent' resident at Metropole until his beach death on November 22, 1925.

Simon's great great nephew Jonathan Adolph told *StreetWise* his family plans to travel from the US to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the tragic death of 'Uncle Simon' at Cottesloe Beach.

On Saturday, November 22, "we plan to mark the 100th anniversary on the beach with a (hopefully uneventful!) swim at 3pm".

Simon's family also will pay their respects at Simon's grave at Karrakatta. No relative has ever visited his grave. Geoffrey said he hoped to meet Simon's family, his own family memorial just a few feet from Simon's grave, "which needs cleaning". He would be happy to help give it a spruce up.

Continued pages 16 and 17

Defamation claim by Fremantle Society and President John Dowson against Fremantle Mayor Hannah Fitzhardinge.

The Fremantle Society is a community group founded 53 years ago to promote Fremantle's important heritage.

Mayor Hannah Fitzhardinge posted a video on May 26th 2025 on her social media. The Fremantle Society and its President John Dowson claim that the video improperly accused them of being racist in relation to an email in which the Fremantle Society was seeking the Fremantle Council to take a balanced approach to the 2029 Bicentenary, one that brings people together instead of dividing them.

We are pleased to advise that the claim has now settled.

The Fremantle Society and its President are very satisfied with the outcome, and the issuing of a public apology from Fremantle Mayor Ms Fitzhardinge on her social media.

JOHN DOWSON

President

The Fremantle Society
18 September 2025

mobile 0409 223622

email john.dowson@yahoo.com



The Fremantle Society

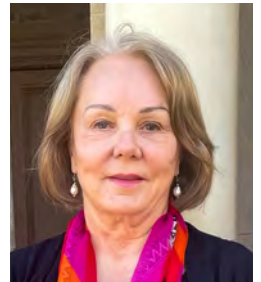
MAYORAL RACE FOR FREO

WA LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS OCTOBER 18

FIVE mayoral contenders and nine candidates in three wards hope to change the future of Fremantle on October 18. Hannah Fitzhardinge, Marija Vujcic, Ben Lawver, Mark Woodcock and Jenny Archibald will contest the top job filled by Fitzhardinge since 2021 (previously Greens MLC Brad Pettitt). Three seats in coastal, east and north wards will also be filled. Cr Fedele J Camarda was elected unopposed in central ward. At the time of publication, *StreetWise* sensed punters were fed up with politics and poor performance in local government. Fremantle is financially challenged, the city looks shabby and its elected members are driven ideologically by political parties, not the constituents they swore to represent.



No better example is there than Fitzhardinge's 'racist' rant against John Dowson, president of The Fremantle Society, who criticised City bicentenary plans as "disgraceful and divisive". Not a good look going into an election, so Fitzhardinge removed the offensive online post and apologised (opposite). Her campaign is lacklustre and promises to achieve what she should have after she was elected in 2021. Former councillor Vujcic will forego her entire pay, both as mayor or councillor, if elected. Archibald who many believed was retiring says she nominated for mayor because, "we can do better". Woodcock says he is running because Fremantle residents deserve a mayor who puts the community first before personal politics. Lawver says he will be a full-time mayor focused on the port city. He told *StreetWise* in August that Fremantle could not continue into the next four years as it had in the past four years under Fitzhardinge.





Our Commitment to Fremantle:

Goals

- * Support and advocacy for ratepayers and businesses to help them thrive within the challenging environment of Fremantle.
- * Ensure the City of Fremantle works for stakeholders and strengthen ratepayers' role in local governance.
- * Develop meaningful engagement with Council ensuring transparent communication and collaborative decision-making in shaping the city.
- * Raise awareness of council policies to ensure that everyone understands how policies affect how we live and work.
- * Ensure prudent financial management by Council by ensuring City officers present a true picture of spending and overall financial position, maintain our income-bearing properties and not undertake property transactions detrimental to the city.

Our Fremantle - Live, Work & Thrive Together

REGISTER your interest and fill out a membership application form by email at greaterfremantle@gmail.com or scan here. Donate to Bendigo Bank - Account 179191507 BSB 633-000



Actions taken

- * We challenged the WA Electoral Commission after it mismanaged the 2023 council elections in Fremantle.
- * Our team exposed Council's decision to stop commercial waste services, an issue impacting local businesses.
- * We submitted motions at the previous annual electors meetings to ensure community concerns are voiced.
- * Our financial experts identified major failings in Council's annual budgets.
- * We support efforts by The Fremantle Society to support local heritage conservation and recognise heritage as a Council asset.
- * We consistently monitor Council meetings, maintain oversight and try to make Council accountable for their decisions, on behalf of the community.

MARIJA VUJCIC MAYORAL CANDIDATE

FIVE elections in eight years - why I keep fighting for Fremantle. In 2017, after a year off, former mayor Peter Tagliaferri convinced me to run for South Ward. Yes Peter, your fault. I ran, and did well, then the WA Electoral Commission allowed a Cockburn candidate to run in Fremantle. A re-run in 2018, another loss. That loss taught me that elections are not about warm fuzzies, they're about strategy, numbers, and waking up the 65 per cent who don't vote. In 2019 I ran again. Turnout rose 12 per cent - and I won. My four years as a South Ward councillor were an honour, but I was not elected to sit quietly. I was elected to hold council accountable. For example, how did the Civic Centre blow out from \$45m to \$65m (and is still rising)? Or why did the Henderson Street carpark, 840 bays, sell for \$16.5m when the smaller Collie Street carpark, 440 bays, sold the same year for \$38m? That's a \$43.5m haircut for Fremantle. Now you know now why rates keep increasing. And the Fremantle Markets lease? Passed down like a roya inheritance since the 1970s. A \$3m better deal was on the table, but council waved it away. Only Cr Camarda and I voted for the extra millions. The year 2023 brought another WAEC ballot paper stuff-up. Did the mayor or other councillors demand an apology or re-run? Another court case, another throw-out.



Now it's 2025, and I'm back, running for mayor and coastal ward. My pledge. To give back my total pay of \$600,000 as mayor or \$140,000 as councillor. This will be reinvested in projects chosen by the community. I have a dream for a new initiative for the homeless. No spin. Just service. And I will focus on the basics such as restoring the CAT bus service, fix roads and parks, clean and light our streets, bring back business rubbish services and create new revenue including a renewed Notre Dame lease and a \$1.3m Round House tourist fee.

**Marija Vujcic - The People's Mayor
Independent Accountable Proven**

VOTE **1** BEN LAWVER MAYOR FOR FREMANTLE



GENUINE  HONEST  LEADERSHIP

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FREQ

Authorised by B Lawver 1 Chadwick Street Hilton WA

MARK WOODCOCK
(MAYOR, NORTH WARD)



Independent. Local. Loud for the Community. Fremantle deserves better - fair rates, responsible leadership, and a council that puts people first. Right now, families are feeling the squeeze while ratepayers bankroll mismanaged budgets and half-finished projects. I'm Mark Woodcock, running as your independent voice for North Ward and Mayor. No party politics. No backroom deals. Just common sense and community action.

- Fix potholes and footpaths
- Rebuild the CAT bus for all of Fremantle
- Protect our coastline, beaches, and heritage
- Save the Leisure Centre car park from sale
- Ease cost of living and cutting red tape.

Let's build a stronger, safer, more liveable Fremantle - together.
Vote 1 Mark Woodcock. Fremantle deserves it.

SALLY MCKAY
(EAST WARD)



Fremantle has been Sally McKay's home for almost three decades. She raised her family here, worked in healthcare and contributed as a volunteer at schools and junior sports. Sally is running as an INDEPENDENT candidate for East Ward as she believes council should focus on practical and sensible decisions that protect Fremantle's unique character while also planning responsibly for the future. Sally respects Fremantle's green values and heritage and is committed to balanced solutions that support sustainability, local business and everyday needs of residents. Sally is not aligned with political parties. Sally will donate her council income to local community groups of East Ward. Priorities include keeping Freq vibrant and sustainable; supporting local businesses and families; ensuring council is financially responsible and transparent; and protecting Fremantle's unique character and heritage.



FOOD RECALL



COVID-19 threw a fork in the works in Fremantle's popular dining scene. Public time and space restrictions, staff vaccinations and the BIG one, hygiene. Hand sanitisers. Face masks. A call to keep it clean. That we can defeat diseases if we stop the spread. Sadly, COVID 'fatigue' has set in. We got slack, complacent. Unclean. No longer alarmed, or alert, the fall in hospitality standards in Fremantle is reflected in social media reviews and reader complaints, complete with Facebook and Instagram images, mostly of bad food and service. What happened?



StreetWise visited Freo's dining scene in 2024 and 2025 and found while most restaurants and cafes punched above their weight, others are pulling down the city's reputation as a foodie destination.

Millions of people every year are poisoned by poorly prepared meals. Restaurant owners, chefs and hospitality staff told *Freo StreetWise* business has been tough in the post-COVID shortage of skilled staff whose poor training and food handling practises are giving Freo a bad name. It shows.

Alfresco king Nunzio Gumina lamented in a *StreetWise* interview in 2016 that it took one bad food or coffee experience for people to stay away. He was spot on. *StreetWise* readers have over many years enjoyed many memorable dining experiences in the port city. Traditional, fusion, tapas, vegan and impromptu backyard 'cook-ups'. Unfortunately, 'COVID creep' that set in after public restrictions were lifted persists. Poorly prepared meals and substandard service, dirty furniture, menus and cutlery. It happens. *StreetWise* explored Freo's favourite food and booze venues and filed this report (see opposite). Names withheld to protect hardworking hospitality staff in Fremantle.



FISH & CHIPSTEETH

If you can't serve up fish and chips in Australia, buy a flower shop or call Pauline. These images of our iconic dish were taken at a popular Fremantle venue by the sea. Sadly, it is not alone.

A nearby waterfront brewery is called out serving undercooked prawns and a mystery 'grey' meat stuffed into its lobster roll of the day special after customers, one a seasoned cook and nutritionist, sent them back. Instead of catering to their taste buds, the manager proceeded in front of other customers to explain why he did not agree before refunding the order. No apology nor little consolation for the customers forced to find another venue (and parking) as this one could not cook a prawn pizza. It needed only a minute more in the wood fire and the fake 'lobster' thrown in the bin.

Another brewery by the harbour enjoying the school holiday trade serves a family with two children undercooked chicken wings and old mussels. The family left without asking for their money, but not before alerting the unmoved day manager



and serving staff about the dangers of serving salmonella to the public. A nearby venue with ocean views serves a couple looking for a bowl of hot chilli mussels greasy over-battered snapper with shrivelled potato chips hard enough to pick your teeth (above). And South Australian mussels the size of a baby broad bean (opposite). The couple were not even asked how the meal was

by the cashier who made no eye contact and took \$62 thank you very much for two inedible dishes. The couple's email about their unsavoury experience was ignored. Poor form.

SERVICE ON NOTICE

CUSTOMER beefs over food and service (not just in Freo) regularly refer to poorly prepared overpriced dishes and dirty venues. Imagine being seated at your table for lunch greeted by a lipstick-stained water glass or iPad menu smudged by fingerprints and DNA of previous diners. That's exactly what greeted *StreetWise* at this City Beach venue with a popular franchise in Fremantle. One of the biggest gripes by customers is over food quality, authenticity, including preparation and service. Bruschetta on brioche and milk bread? Why? Either sourdough or ciabatta or good old crusty bread. Pizza Margherita, served with thick slices of uncooked tomato that sink into a thick cheese goo with little to no basil. How? If you change the cheese, it is no longer a Margherita. A newly opened Asian fusion venue looks great but you could harvest its sweetness for the amount it infused into its laksas and tom yum. Cafe 55 any day! *StreetWise* reader Jack Mendes quotes: "There is an old saying, people you employ will make or break your business." During a recent visit to his 'favourite hangout' in Freo, Mr Mendes was surprised to be met by staff who reflected the cold rainy day outside: "The step has disappeared and they are serving in limp mode. I had an uneven table and nearly lost my \$70 bottle of Montepulciano." He also noticed a waitress delivering food to a table and at the same time, playing with her hair, "extremely not hygienic".

Menu Magazine editor Scott Arnold-Eyers said only a quarter of all venues in Perth have a chef. What does that mean for the customer? "They are getting cooks, who are not chefs," he said. Arnold-Eyers adds venues also had to weigh up staff working hours, "time and a half, public holidays, Sundays, lack of customers and too many venues". Fremantle has seen a proliferation of food and drink venues competing against established food venues including cafes and restaurants. "Fremantle used to be a place where people shopped and then they went to get something to eat," he said. "Now it's food, there's hardly any shopping. Food and wine were the byproduct of shopping at Myer and other retail outlets. Not anymore." Portorosa Fremantle owner Joe Napoli agreed. He told *StreetWise* bars were opening regularly in Fremantle 'including on the Cappuccino Strip'. "There are bars everywhere," he said. "Sports bars are packed during games, but it will be interesting to see how long they last." Many face the same problems. Mr Napoli said the venues have to serve food including nibbles, sandwiches and pub-style food, "which is killing a lot of restaurants". A number of locals are up for sale including on the Cappuccino Strip. He said cafes and restaurants faced the added pressure of training and retaining staff. A shortage of chefs post COVID-19 has not helped.

CHAR CHAR SHINES

THEY used to run Drover's Inn in Moora and now manage Char Char Bull Grill & Bar where Chris and Cathy Papas have created a family friendly restaurant with sweeping views of Fremantle fishing boat harbour. *StreetWise* arrived before the lunch rush when staff took the opportunity to wipe down chairs, tables and cutlery. Attention to cleanliness was impressive and comforting. And rocker Chris is selecting 80s and 90s classics at the bar: "We have moved the old Char Char from fine dining to more of a steak and seafood focus in a casual environment." The mouthwatering menu is available at charcharbull.au/menu. Chris said there is something to share, something green and something for kids.

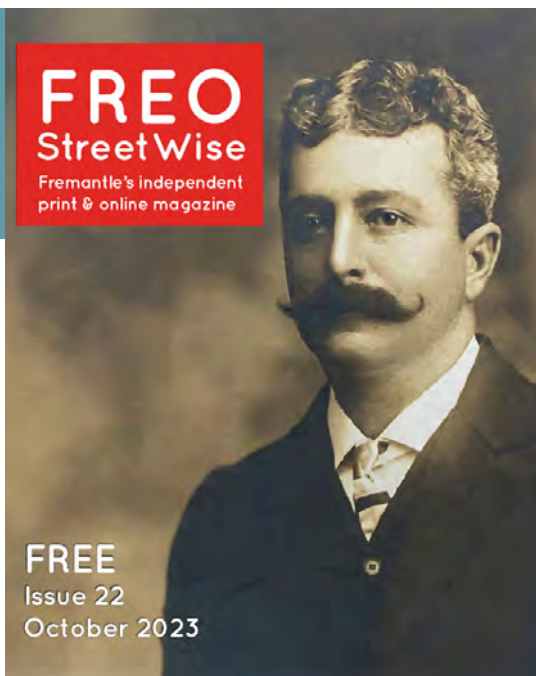
Details at charcharbull.au. Located at Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour
44B Mews Road
Contact (08) 9335 7666



DEDICATED TO SIMON

FREO
StreetWise
Fremantle's independent
print & online magazine

FREE
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US journalist Jonathon Adolph contacted *StreetWise* after having read details of the shark death of his great great uncle Simon Ettleson at Cottesloe Beach in 1925 (opposite). Part of his research into Simon's life and times, he told *StreetWise* his unfortunate relative had family links in the eastern states including John Ettelson, a prominent merchant in Victoria who was 12 years older than Simon and may have been a factor in Simon's decision to live in Australia.

"My original plan was to recreate Simon's travel route, arriving in Victoria before making our way west," he said. Jonathon's family will be met by Geoffrey Church, 74, whose father went swimming with Simon on the day of his tragic death. Jonathon said it was great to hear, "the connection to someone just one generation removed from Simon himself". Incredibly, it turns out Geoffrey's father was not the only 'eyewitness' at the beach in 1925. Geoffrey told his retired business partner Greg Bryant that he had spoken to *StreetWise* about the shark death: "Coincidentally, my business partner's old man was down there as well and saw it.

"His father was Roy, roughly a bit older than my father, but they didn't know each other."

Neither Geoffrey or Greg who went to the same school and have known each other for more than 60 years knew their fathers were on the same beach the same day Simon was taken by a shark.

"I don't ever recall over my lifetime my old man swimming in the ocean again after that," Geoffrey told *StreetWise* at Simon's grave at Karrakatta.

"He told us what happened, I was quite young. There were big crowds, it was a stinking hot day and they (his father and Simon) were reading a book. I can't recall who was reading it, but one of the books ends with a bloke who walks into the sea and never returns."

Geoffrey told *StreetWise* he recalls his mother taking him to the former WA Museum site at Francis Street to visit the shark and megamouth displays: "She said, 'that's the one that got Simon'."

KILLER SHARK HEAD IN SAFE HANDS

ANYONE want a shark head? Not just any head. Saved twice from landfill by the late WA shipwreck author Hugh Edwards, the well-preserved remains of the tiger shark caught in 1925 after it killed a swimmer at Cottesloe Beach is in a 'safe house' in Bunbury. Edwards wanted to gift the head of the 4.3m shark to the victim's family on its way to WA to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Simon Ettleson's death this November. Simon's great great nephew Jonathan Adolph told *StreetWise* the shark remains belong in Australia.

"As a piece of Australian history, it should remain in your country," Adolph noting that its 'handler' in Bunbury appreciated its cultural value after several email exchanges. "He suggested we should visit him in Bunbury to see the shark head and to explore the Margaret River area." Adolph has booked accommodation near Cottesloe Beach, visiting a number of sites related to Simon including his grave at Karrakatta, Metropole Hotel and Ascot racetrack. He said his family also hoped to visit the Goldfields and other WA sites with links to Uncle Simon before he moved to Perth in the years before his tragic death.

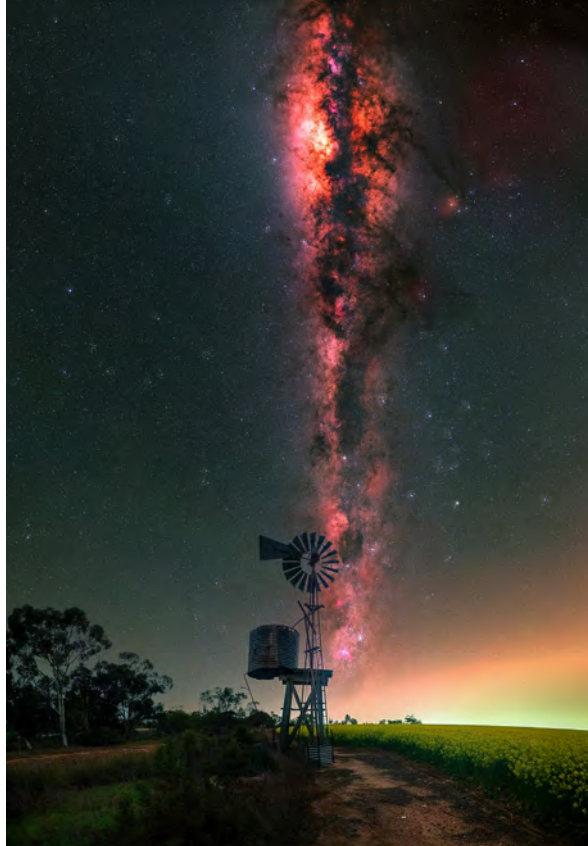


Readers can view the exclusive interview between Adolph and Edwards at www.streetwisemedia.com.au, courtesy Silver Key Films. Thanks to Leith Phillips for snapping the image above of Edwards cuddling the head of the shark in storage in Bunbury. *StreetWise* approached Andrew Forrest and local councils and life saving clubs about having the head put on display for the 100th anniversary commemoration by the family on November 22. Crickets.

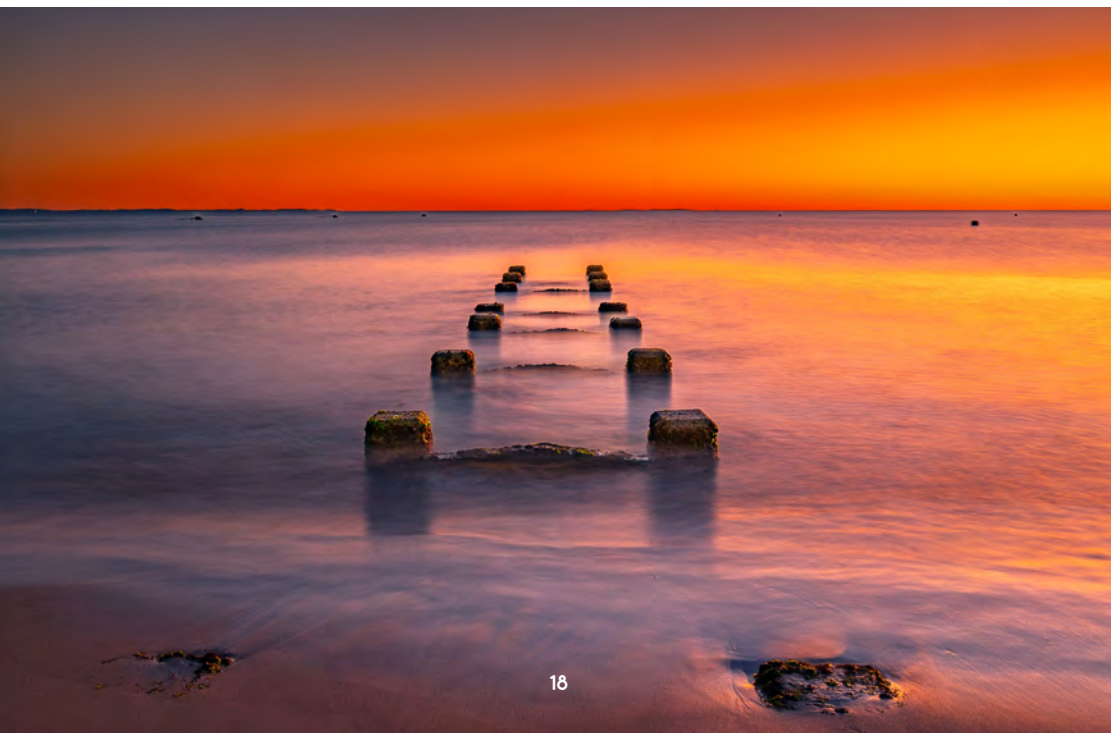


A HOBBY

'HOBBYIST' photographer Virat Shah says one of his favourite spots is Fremantle: "Love Freo, it has European and settlers vibes. "Love the architecture and history there." Virat's online sites include breathtaking snapshots of land, night and sea in WA. "Photography is a hobby and passion," he told *StreetWise*. The cover image of this edition was taken at CY O'Connor Beach where WA's first engineer-in-chief who brought water to the Goldfields and built Fremantle harbour took his own life in 1902. The horse was spooked, but unharmed, CY looking back at the port. [Additional images @viratshahphotography.](#)



"One of my favourite spots - Fremantle"



FOSSIL HUNTER REWRITES HISTORY - WITH TEETH

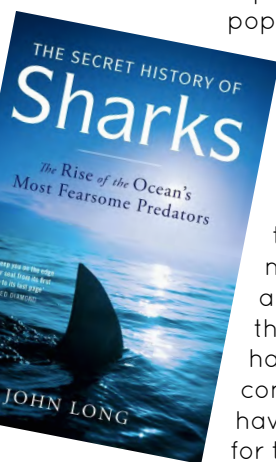
WHEN Australian fossil hunter John Long returned from his first expedition to Antarctica, news editors could not wait to get his frozen 'long johns' in a headline. When he emerged at dawn from a Nullarbor cave holding the jaw bone of an extinct marsupial lion, editors described the megafaunal haul as 'the biggest fossil discovery in a century' splashed across the front pages of Australian and overseas print and online sites. When Dr Long left WA, there was no doubt he would continue to break frontiers, this author having first met the Indiana Jones of Australian palaeontology in his office at the former WA Museum on Francis Street in Perth. It was here that Dr Long introduced this then *West* science writer to leading scientists and experts in the fossil field.



They included WA evolutionary biologist Ken McNamara and the late minerals and meteorite expert Alex Bevan who together published hundreds of papers, books and popular articles about the latest developments and discoveries from sites in WA. Three-dimensional Gogo fish fossils in the Kimberley, megalodon teeth, T-rex claws and megafaunal monsters and meteorite falls in the Nullarbor. Dr Long has been a regular contributor to *StreetWise*, having provided images for the October 2021 edition of fossilised footprints left by dinosaurs which once roamed what is today Gantheaume Point in Broome, (visited by *StreetWise* in 2021).



Carmelo Amalfi



THE oldest evidence of shark-like fishes includes a few tiny scales fossilised more than 420 million years ago near Alice Springs in central Australia. Identical to scales in living sharks, they are older than trees, insects and the rings of Saturn. Sharks have fought for survival for nearly 500 million years and today are threatened by overfishing, pollution and public paranoia. Yet they promise life-changing benefits in science and medicine. For example, nurse sharks produce antibodies against coronavirus. Understanding how could lead to new drugs to treat viruses and cancers. Whale sharks have a pigment in their eye that at certain temperatures triggers 'night vision' to hunt food in the dark at great depths, offering hope to treating night blindness. Shark skin designs also have been used in swim suits to cut drag. The technology was tested by German evolutionary biologist Wolf-Ernest Reif and physicist Dietrich Bechert who by studying hydrodynamic properties of shark's skin developed a 'foil' for ships and planes that could reduce resistance by up to 10 per cent. In 2022, German airline Lufthansa announced that all Boeing 777 cargo planes were fitted with AeroSHARK, a special film that boosted fuel efficiency and cut CO₂. Wolf-Ernest died in 2009. "It's incredible to think that because of his pioneering early work on fossil shark scales more than 40 years ago, the Lufthansa cargo fleet will now use around 4000 tons less fuel and prevent 11,700 tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year," Dr Long said. "Just think of the massive environmental savings that would be achieved if all the world's airlines adopted the use of AeroSHARK technology."



Dr Long said new discoveries continue to enrich the fossil record. Entire skeletons of sharks previously known only from a few teeth. Fossilised skin complete with colour banding and black-tipped fins. Dr Long said now was the best time to study shark fossils, with most breakthroughs in shark evolution described in his book having taken place within the past decade.

Shark secrets pages 22-23

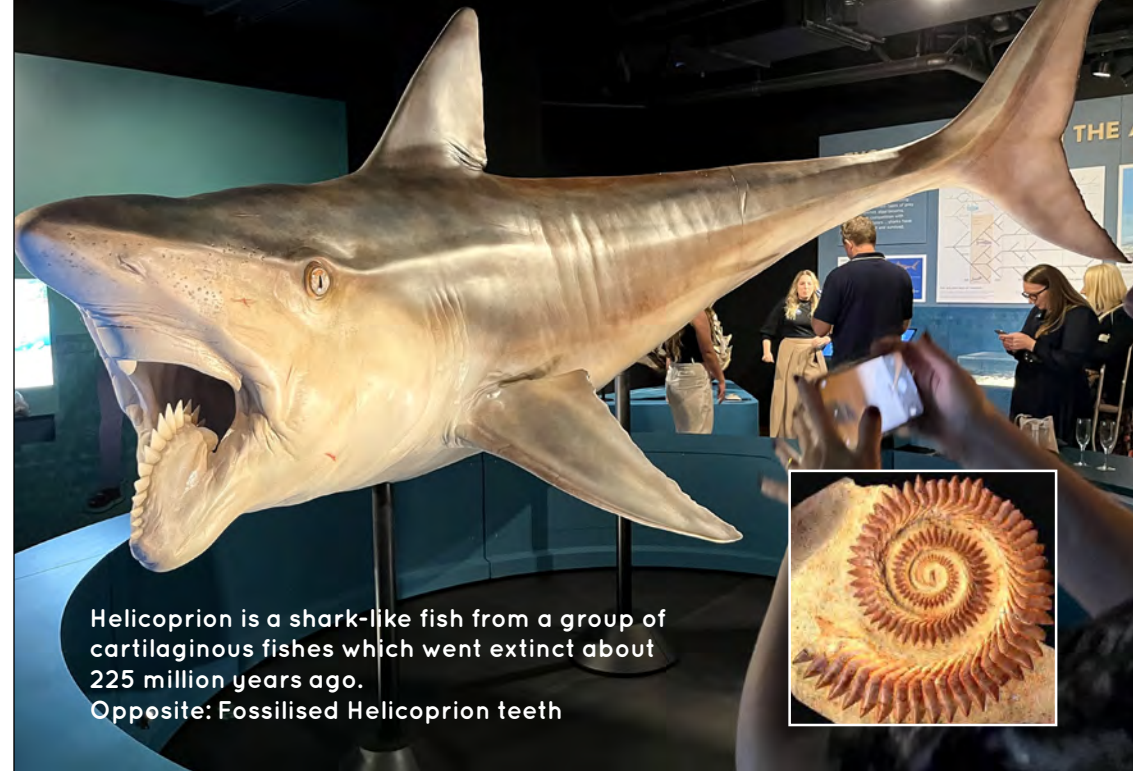


SHARKS GREAT & SMALL

NO definitive record of the evolution of sharks existed until five years ago when Flinders University palaeontologist and foremost fossil fish expert John Long was invited to complete the backstory of Earth's ultimate survivors. Sharks. Dr Long told *StreetWise* he decided to dive in. Drawing on his previous publications and groundbreaking fossil discoveries at sites including WA's Gogo reef deposits in the Kimberley, Antarctica, Asia and Europe, the grandfather of two only last year received scuba diving certification so he could marvel at great whites off South Australia and Galapagos sharks at Lord Howe Island. With an international team of leading scientists and researchers, Dr Long's labour of love has produced what he describes as a 'complete record' of the evolution of sharks. All 469 pages plus images.



'The Secret History of Sharks - The Rise of the Ocean's Most Fearsome Predator' was launched in the UK and now sits beside this author's copy of 'Sharks and Rays of Australia' by Peter R. Last and John D. Stevens. Dr Long told *StreetWise* that sharks are the only vertebrates or back-boned animals to survive all five major mass extinctions. This included the biggest, the 'Great Dying' in which global warming wiped out most life about 252 million years ago. "But sharks survived," he said. "The sharks that got through were the modern group that was very small at the time and for 140 million years after that extinction event all sharks in the ocean were mostly tiny, like under a metre." Having collected shark fossils since age seven, boasting more than 500 sharks' teeth in his collection by the end of high school in 1975, Dr Long said the first big sharks (up to 7m to 8m long) appear at fossil sites in WA where they lived in the age of dinosaurs with pliosaurs and other extinct marine creatures. The Secret History of Sharks is divided into five sections, two chapters devoted to living sharks: The First Sharks, Sharks Rule, Sharks Under Pressure, The Age of the Megasharks, and Sharks Today. The fifth chapter focuses on the plight of living sharks in the face of overfishing and pollution. Sharks are the second most threatened species on the planet behind frogs. Dr Long's new book is available online.



Helicoprion is a shark-like fish from a group of cartilaginous fishes which went extinct about 225 million years ago. Opposite: Fossilised Helicoprion teeth

SHARKS were not always 'top dog' in the evolutionary history of Earth. During the Devonian Age in the 60 million years until 359 million years ago, sharks were second to armoured placoderms such as those discovered at remote Gogo station in the Kimberley region of WA (opposite).

"In the Devonian, a meal is a meal, deceased friends and relations are not spared." Nor were early sharks. Dr Long writes the 'dark lord' of the deep was a massive armoured fish with, "the most powerful jaws of any creature on Earth at this time, 1200 pounds of bite force". He said: "It's thick, rounded bony shield enveloped its head like Darth Vader's helmet."

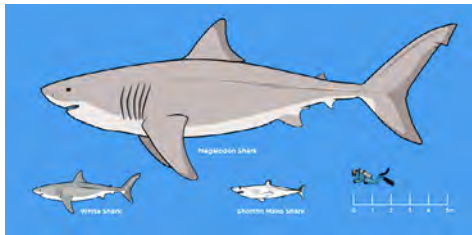


Heliocoprion (above) is something else: "The speed of the shark is astounding, akin to a piscine thoroughbred racehorse." Growing up to 9m, this sleek finned killing machine fed on squid-like nautiloids up to 1m in length. "Heliocoprion has evolved a totally new way of inflicting death on its prey - the bizarre and effective saw jaw." Remnants of Heliocoprion teeth were found on the banks of Arthur River in 1884 with 14 preserved teeth. Today, Heliocoprion remains an enigma that went extinct about 225 million years ago.

Continued next page

MEGA MONSTER

MEGALODON is the largest fish to have terrorised Earth's prehistoric waters. The extinct shark (good riddance) prowled the oceans between 20 million and 3.6 million years ago, growing up to 20m long and weighing 60 tons, with "the strongest bite force of any creature that has ever lived, a whopping 40,000 pounds per square inch". Enough to crush a four-wheel drive, Dr Long said. Megalodons looked like big white sharks, their closest living relative the shortfin mako shark. "It's mass would have been 25 times the mass of the largest white shark, maybe reaching 61 tons, much heavier than the biggest *Tyrannosaurus* (10 tons)." Megalodon teeth could extend to 18cm long and slice dolphins and whales like butter (blubber). Dr Long in his new book 'The Secret History of Sharks' says people in North America used megadolon teeth to make cutting tools between 2500 and 100 years ago. Mayans offered the super-sized dentures to the gods. Roman Pliny the Elder referred to the teeth as 'glossopetrae', tongue stones, in *Historia Naturalis* which he wrote about AD73.



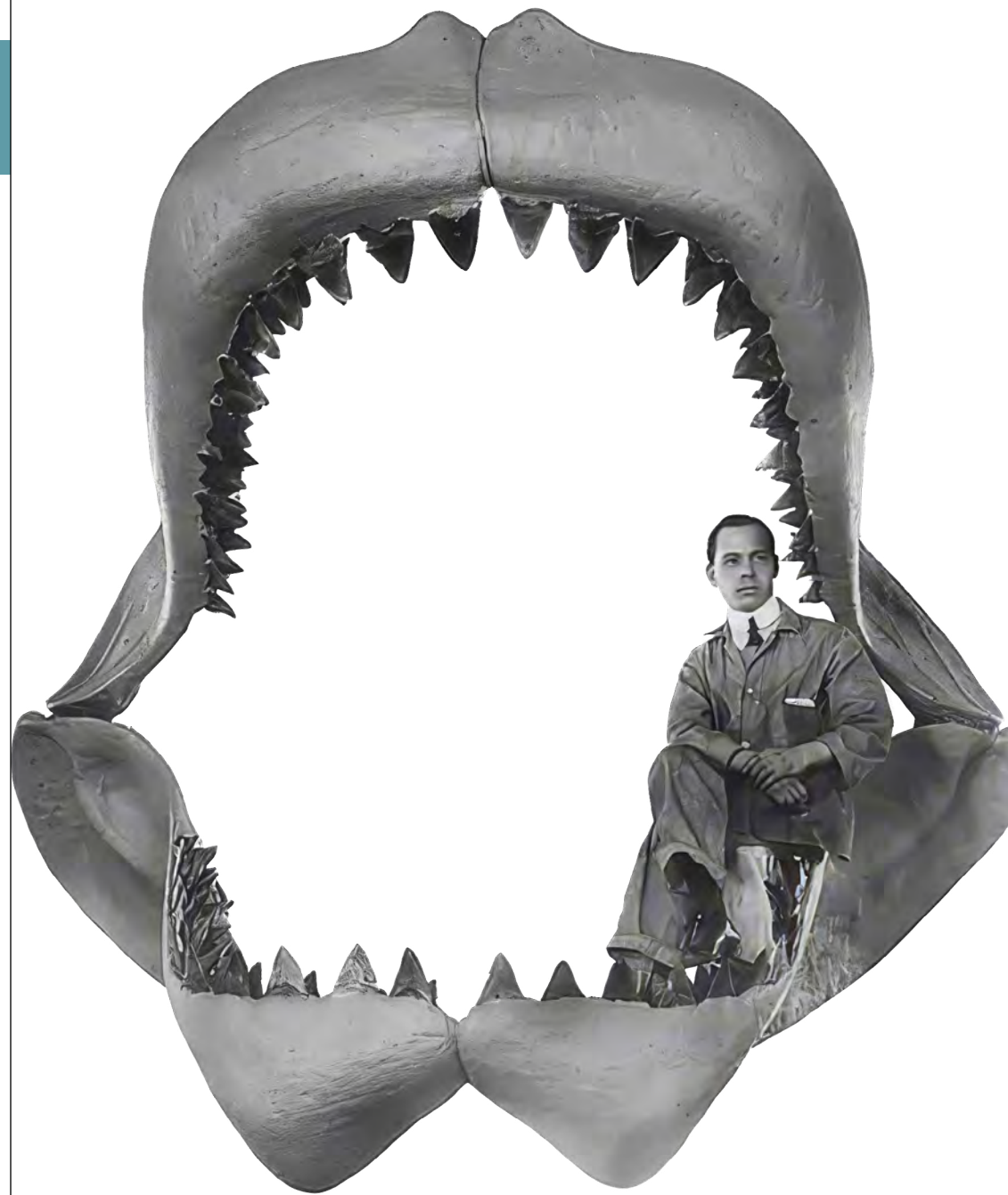
"He believed they fell from the sky at the eclipse of the moon and were helpful for appeasing 'winds' - that is, curing flatulence."

Dr Long writes the belief megalodon still exists is an urban myth and, "lacks reliable, testable evidence". Megalodon went extinct about three million years ago. With megalodon out of the evolutionary picture, it was time for white sharks to shine, he said. Today the great white is the biggest and most feared marine predator reaching up to 6m in length, with the strongest bite of any shark, "more powerful than that of any land animal alive today", including crocodiles.

Dr Long added metabolic studies showed white sharks could live a few months on 30kg of whale blubber. Disturbingly, scientists have confirmed serial killer-like behaviour in sharks when hunting prey, "keeping maps in their head of their underwater hunting grounds".

Another study into white shark vision found they did not attack swimmers and surfers because they saw them as seals, "images of humans swimming, or on surfboards being padded or towed, could not be distinguished in the retinas of the sharks from outlines of their natural prey, seals".

However, Dr Long says sharks have a powerful sense of smell and can detect, "a plume of water tainted with blood and tissue carried on a current from at least four miles away".



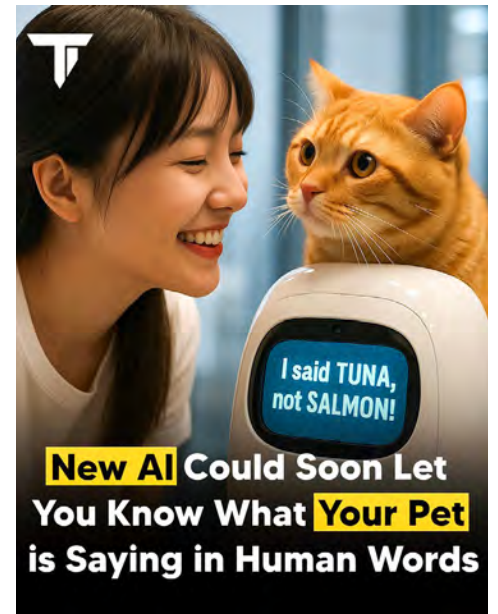
Photograph of a man inside the jaws of *Carcharodon megalodon* by Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images)

SCIENCE, NOT WAR

CHINA'S international ranking as a leading science innovator has in the past decade jumped from 20th to 10th on the Global Innovation Index. China also published 360,000 journal articles, with 649,600 citations in 2022. In 2023, Chinese research produced 25 per cent of all science articles, the largest contributing nation. In 1990, they produced less than two per cent in 'Web of Science', an online database of international articles. The reason. China invests heavily in research and development, education, intellectual property and procurement of industrial and military products. Since 1990, national spending on R&D rose from less than 0.6 per cent of GDP to over 2.2 per cent in 2023. The OECD average is 2.7 per cent.



WAR and world politics have dominated public attention in 2025. Trump tariffs, Gaza, Ukraine and state and federal elections in which shrinking coral reefs and renewables featured front and centre. That while nations dealt with death and economic jitters, researchers every day in laboratories worldwide try to make the world a better place. Many of the breakthroughs have been by young people such as Turkish student Elif Bilgin, 16, who found a way to turn banana peels into biodegradable plastic. By 2030, Japanese scientists expect to perfect a new drug for "growing a new smile". And as if AI (artificial intelligence) isn't scary enough, Australian-based Cortical Labs launched the first commercialised biological computer made of human brain cells. This 'synthetic biological intelligence' fuses organic neural networks with silicon hardware. It paves the way for a new era of computing in which machines, "think more like we do". Speaking about thinking, scientists announced opening the door to telepathic communication by linking unconnected neurons across distances instantly as one unified system. European scientists turned lead into gold using the world's biggest atom smasher and Italian scientists transformed light into a solid. And in Japan, researchers are perfecting 'levitating' homes to keep them safe during earthquakes using air bags to lift houses. Homes using this technology remained undamaged during a 7.3 magnitude earthquake in 2021.



But great breakthroughs come with great risk. Just as Einstein warned about the power (and abuse) of the atomic bomb, scientists warn against the misuse of innovations designed to help humanity. In China, military scientists reportedly are testing new genetic therapies to protect soldiers from lethal environments using DNA from eight-legged tardigrades, a



microscopic organism (also known as 'water bears') renown for their ability to endure brutal conditions such as dehydration, freezing,

boiling, crushing pressure and even radiation in space. By injecting human stem cells with their DNA, Chinese soldiers will be able to endure nuclear warfare.

BERTHA BREAKS BARRIERS



A staged re-enactment of Bertha driving a Model III with her two sons.
Credit: agefotostock/ Alamy Stock Photo



Karl Benz (in white suit) with family and friends
on a motoring outing in about 1894

AT 5am on August 5, 1888, Bertha 'leadfoot' Benz decided to take it to the limit when she commandeered her husband Karl's newly invented Benz Patent-Motorwagen and drove the 100km from Mannheim to her mother's home in Pforzheim in southwestern Germany with sons Richard, 13, and Eugen, 15. Bertha, 39, became the first person to complete without a licence the world's first 'road trip' (lasting 15 hours) in the first three-wheeled open-air single-cylinder, 1.6 litre engine-powered carriage, or automobile. She drove back to Mannheim several days later and urged her frantic husband to add a third gear to overcome steep inclines. Until then, motorised trips were short affairs. On the road, the automotive engineer applied her ingenuity and determination to solve problems (not to mention keeping two children amused) including using her hatpin to unclog a blocked fuel line, a garter to insulate a frayed wire on the spark plug and leather strips from a cobbler's shop to fit the brakes to wooden blocks, inventing brake pads. Bertha sparked a revolution. With no fuel tank and only a 4.5-litre supply of petrol in the carburettor, Bertha had to find ligroin, a petroleum solvent used for cleaning. This solvent was available at apothecary shops.

Bertha filled up at the Stadt-Apotheke in Wiesloch, south of Heidelberg. This pharmacy is the world's first filling station, and it's still there. Karl died in 1929. In 1933, a memorial for the father of the automobile was unveiled in Mannheim. Unfortunately, 84-year-old Bertha drove into a political pothole when she succumbed to Nazi propaganda and the rise of Adolf Hitler she reportedly described as the 'saviour of Germans'. Realising he was preparing the country for war, Bertha distanced herself from the Nazis, which honoured her as a 'brave German mother'. Today, Mercedes-Benz says Bertha and her sons played a historic part in the triumphant advance of the petrol-powered automobile.



Bertha Benz (3 May 1849 - 5 May 1944)

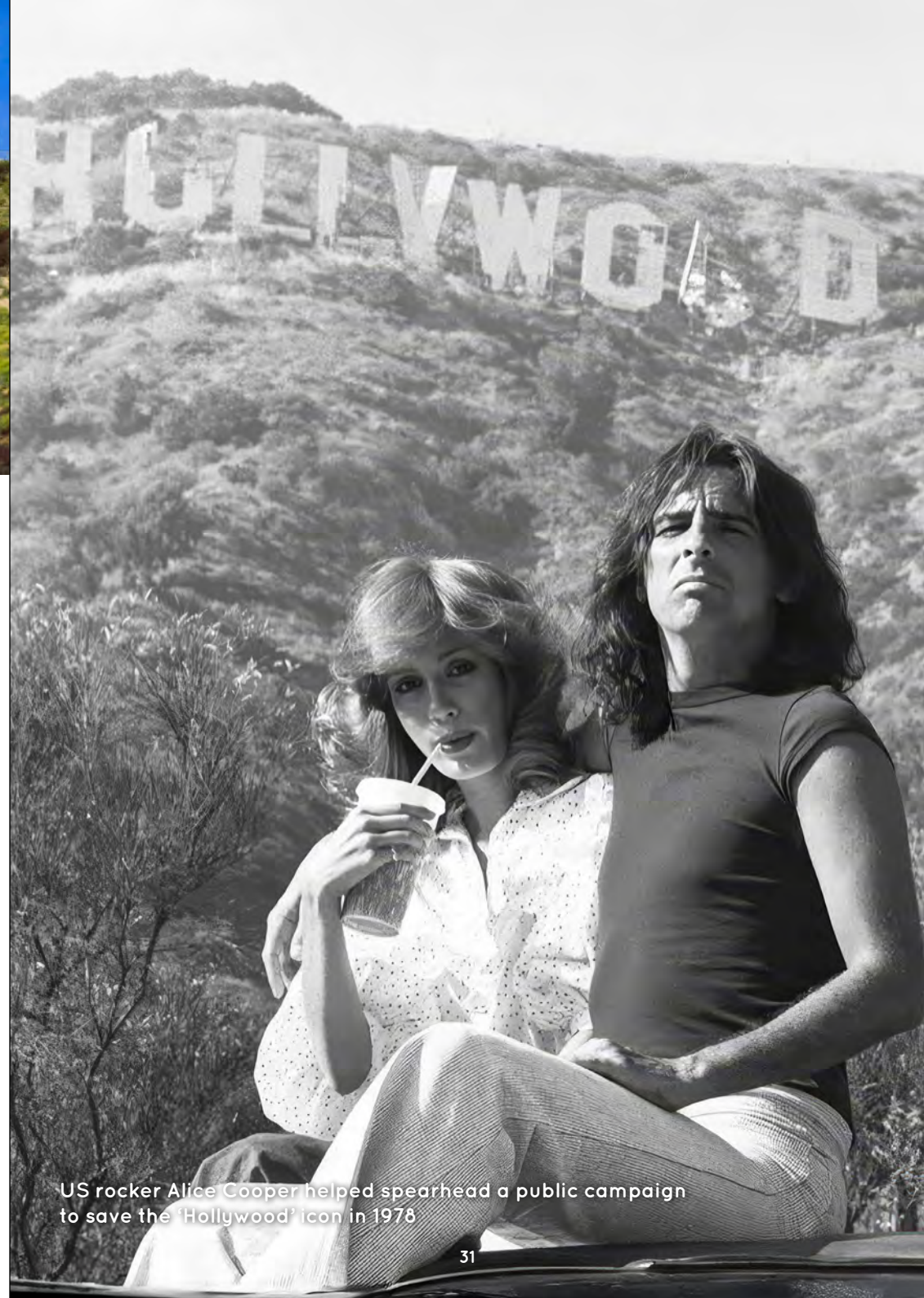


WOULD you offer to save one of the nine letters in HOLLYWOOD? In 1978, US rocker Alice Cooper bought the third 'O' as part of a campaign to rebuild the storm-damaged real estate ad on Mt Lee, the tallest peak in LA. Alice paid \$27,777.77 in honour of Groucho Marx. Alice claims Hugh Hefner bought 'H' when it appears the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce paid \$27,777 to replace 'Y' it dedicated to Hefner at a Playboy mansion fundraiser on June 29, 1978.



Hugh Hefner

'H' was inherited by Hollywood publisher Terrance Donnelly (In 1932, 24-year-old actress Peg Entwistle climbed to the top of 'H' and jumped to her death). The first 'O' was bought by Italian film producer Giovanni Mazza. Warner bought the second 'O'. Les Kelley bought the first 'L'. Gene Autry bought the second 'L'. And Andy Williams 'W'. 'D' was donated by Dennis Lidtke. The 'Hollywood Nine' raised \$250,000 to rebuild the revered symbol of promised dreams and shattered hopes since the 15.2m by 137.2m 'HOLLYWOODLAND' was erected in 1923 by *Los Angeles Times*' Harry Chandler. The letters 'LAND' were removed in 1949. Vandals have altered the sign to read 'Hollywood' and later 'Holywood' to commemorate a visit by Pope John Paul II. A new sign was unveiled on November 11, 1978. A project spokesman said: "It's undoubtedly the world's largest sign ... as long as Mount Lee is gonna be here, the sign is gonna be here."



US rocker Alice Cooper helped spearhead a public campaign to save the 'Hollywood' icon in 1978

CHEERING HISTORY

CHEERLEADING 'US style' has its roots in the late 1860s. Princeton and Rutgers universities marked the day with the original cheer, 'Sis Boom Rah!'. From as early as 1877, Princeton had a 'Princeton Cheer' reported on February 22, 1877, March 12, 1880, and November 4, 1881, in issues of *The Daily Princetonian*. This cheer was yelled from the stands by students attending games and athletes. They cheered, "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! Tiger! S-s-s-t! Boom! A-h-h-h!", which remains in use today, now referred to as the 'Locomotive'. It was not until 1898 that University of Minnesota student Johnny Campbell directed a crowd to cheer, 'Rah, Rah, Rah! Ski-u-mah, Hoo-Rah! Hoo-Rah! Varsity! Varsity! Varsity, Minn-e-So-Tah!', making Campbell the very first cheerleader. The birth date of organised cheerleading is 1898.



IN 2000, there were three cheer teams in Australia. Today there are more than 200, with Australian Cheerleading Association membership jumping 23 individuals in three teams to more than 1150, with about 200 including males.

1899: University of Minnesota students organised cheers, fight songs, and raised school pride. This was the first (all-male) cheerleading squad.

1903: Gamma Sigma is named the first cheerleading fraternity.

1923: At Minnesota, female students are allowed to cheer and bring tumbling and gymnastics to the routines. It took time to get used to as many school manuals and newspapers in the late 1920s still referred to cheerleaders as 'chap', 'fellow' and 'man'. Women cheerleaders were overlooked until the 1940s when collegiate men were drafted for WW2, creating the opportunity for more women to join sporting events.

1956: Professional cheerleading kicked off in the 1950s. Lawrence Herkimer, a former cheerleader at Southern Methodist University and **1950:** inventor of the herkie jump, invents the first pom pom.

1973: Cheerleaders start supporting women's sports.

1983: Cheerleading becomes an international sport hosting all sexes. The 1980s saw the beginning of modern cheerleading, adding difficult stunt sequences and gymnastics into routines.

1997: Fifteen states in the US consider cheerleading a sport.

CHEERS!

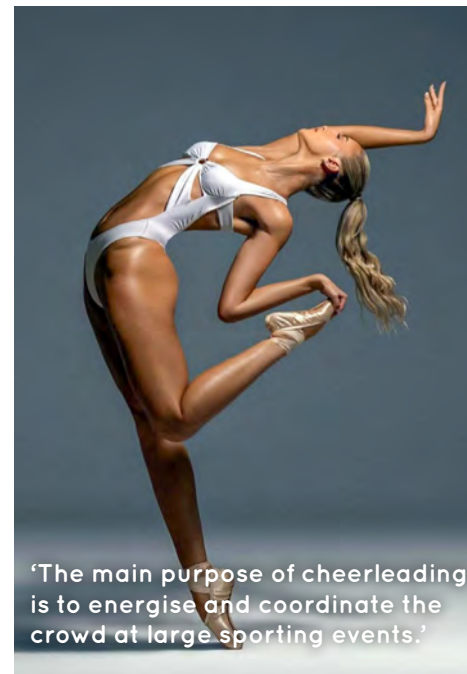


POM poms, spirit wands, mini skirts and cowboy boots. According to the archives, the first cheerleaders were American blokes (minus the pom poms and mini skirts). Females were not allowed to cheer until 1923. Today, the popular 'entertainment' is international. In Australia, cheerleading has boomed in the last 20 years, a few thousand in 2008 to more than 60,000 competitors now registered with the Australian All Star Cheerleading Federation. This year, Perth's Faith Ward, 22, was announced as one of six rookies to join the 36-member Dallas Cowboys.

'Flexi Faith', who has more than 200,000 followers on TikTok, moved from New Zealand to Australia when Faith was 10. Cheerleading was not a thing then.

At 18, she began working as a professional dancer performing on cruise ships. 'America's Sweethearts' support one of the biggest sports franchises in the world worth more than \$15 billion.

The all-female squad recently received global popularity in the Netflix behind-the-scenes series 'America's Sweethearts: Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders'.



'The main purpose of cheerleading is to energise and coordinate the crowd at large sporting events.'



STOCKINGS ARE BACK!

WOMEN *should* be allowed to don a Santa suit insisted the late 'Father Christmas' Cockburn councillor Laurie Humphreys. The then 87-year-old child migrant who bellowed Christmas greetings and handed out gifts until he passed away in 2012 said female Santas would be cool rather than serve as helpers and elves or pixies.



"Once you put on the suit you become the person so it doesn't matter whether you are male or female," he said. "Some grandmothers would make great Santas."

In a 2022 article in the Australian online magazine *The Mandarin*, Marguerite Johnson says between 1930 and 1950, women repeatedly played the role of Santa Claus: "So the figure in the red suit could be gender-neutral today."

In 1930, *The Daily Pictorial* published a photo titled, 'Sydney's Woman Santa'. The caption stated: "Mrs Thelma Lewis, of Randwick, believed to be Australia's only woman Santa Claus." In 1935, Queensland's *Daily Mercury* reported on aviator Nancy Bird Walton, 'The Angel of the Outback', who brought a female Santa to north-western NSW.

Johnson says these women broke the rules of socially acceptable behaviour. Bird was temporarily suspended from flying in 1935 when a politician claimed ladies were not "biologically suited" to fly. During WW1 and WW2, women often assumed the merry role out of necessity. Johnson notes that the reception in the US to female Santas was not pretty.

A 1941 article in the *St. Louis Star-Times* insisted: "There is one male domain, however, that should be defended at all costs ... A woman Santa Claus? Heaven forbid! That would be stretching the credulity of guileless little children too far." Comedian Bob Hope played with the idea, "a lot of the Hollywood actresses are playing Santa Clauses this year and when you think about it, it isn't as silly as it sounds after all. "Who can do a better job of filling a stocking than Betty Grable?"

HO! HO! HO!



"Once you put on the suit you become the person so it doesn't matter whether you are male or female"

WOMEN in Australia continued to work as Santas after WW2. A 1949 article in Brisbane's *Courier-Mail* reported on a 'Mother Christmas' who visited a child care centre, having "invaded man's realm". In the US, the few women Santas employed in department stores were either sacked or encouraged to seek other employment. In 1999, a female Santa sued Walmart in Louisville for unfair dismissal after a customer complained it was a man's job. She lost. In 2018, in Gisborne, New Zealand, Santa Claus was a 'female, regional, Maori, queer' while in Park City Mall in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 'Tranta Claus' (a transgender Santa) came to town.





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