

# In scary days, no need to add stupidity to the mix

It's been a scary few days, watching the Wyong River rise, as emergency vehicles pass by on both water and land ("Flood rescues across NSW as state turns to clean-up", July 8). The sound of sirens is constantly in the background. Fallen trees sail past in the speeding current: one day, even a small car was afloat and heading for Tuggerah Lake. Yet, as the sun emerged, so did recreational boaters. What possessed the driver of the tinny to do laps of the river as if playing chicken with the debris? Did the owner of the small runabout realise that where he had tied up was usually a park, the depth of the water there an unknown? Did the paddler consider what would happen to his kayak if it were hit by one of the many fast-moving logs? And then there's the bull sharks, and even snakes. This boatie is staying on land for now.

Randi Svensen, Wyong

## Two sides of BoJo

Two writers offer very different takes on Boris Johnson. One finds him to be an instinctive, stupid liar and a sociopath, a view robustly shared by his Conservative colleagues and many in Britain ("Downfall of an incompetent liar", July 8). The other, George Brandis, finds him to be a hugely consequential politician, an appealing winner, courageous, charismatic, engaging, the smartest person in the room ("Love him or not, Johnson was

most consequential PM since Thatcher", July 8). According to Brandis, he simply "ran out of luck". Is this the kind of surreal thinking that led to the Coalition's recent trouncing?

Alison Stewart, Riverview

Johnson has undoubtedly changed the course of Europe, but to what end: the benefit of the people of the United Kingdom, or to promote his personal political ambitions?

Gordon Lambert, Kiama Downs

## Bonk ban bonkers

Sad state of affairs, excuse the pun, when a "bonk ban" is necessary, not for a group of teenagers but for our elected leaders ("Bonk ban' to remain under Albanese", July 8). What message about appropriate behaviour does it send to our youth, given the problems already faced by young women in educational facilities. It's shameful.

Elizabeth Kroon, Randwick

## Let the dam water out

I don't understand why we need to raise the wall of Warragamba dam to mitigate the flooding of areas around the Nepean River (Letters, July 8). The Bureau of Meteorology had forecast heavy continuous rain two weeks before it happened. Why can't the relevant authority start releasing the water at that time, a full two weeks before? This would have given the dam additional capacity if needed by reducing the level by 14 metres. The river would have

been able to handle the extra flow. It would be cheaper to crank up the hardly used desalination plant if the forecast was wrong and our water supply was a bit short.

Julius Dhanu, Peakhurst

## Bishopric betrayal

By failing to pass a motion calling for women to have more senior roles in the church, many Australian Catholic bishops have shown their blind allegiance to this ancient relic of male supremacy (Letters, July 8). Parts of the New Testament do admonish women speaking publicly in the church, but Jesus liberated women from this yoke of slavery and shame that is manifest through domestic violence and sexual exploitation.

Surely these bishops have betrayed all who suffer such untold indignity by virtue of their gender.

Reverend Vincent Zankin,  
Rivett (ACT)

Thanks to your correspondent for verbalising the disappointment many Catholics, men and women, are experiencing. Could I suggest, though, that our faith is in the person of Jesus, not in the patriarchal church that has evolved since he walked among us.

Kim Crawford, Springwood

## Booze circuit-breaker

For many boozers, drinking in moderation is an impossibility ("Giving up booze for a month is no answer", July 8). In my experience, as someone who has now been dry for 20 years, the struggle to resist rather than indulge is far more difficult than giving up completely. And giving up is not easy.

Your columnist writes drinkers will feel guilty at falling a self-

imposed booze ban. Well, imagine the guilt, shame and self-loathing when you can't even manage to stop at one instead of one dozen? Abstinence is about self-denial and willpower; however, it doesn't only require these inner strengths, it builds them up. Health initiatives like the various sober months are not pointless exercises in virtuous hash-tagging. They often function as a circuit-breaker for individuals who then continue onwards in their abstinence. A sustained sobriety that not only improves their own life, but also the lives of those around them.

Michael Thompson, Bexley North

## Forestry the answer

Elevated extinction risk for any native species should be of great concern to all, and as a society, we should be doing all we can to act ("Australian panda' joins endangered list as extinction looms", July 5). However, forestry operations, rather than being singled out as a factor contributing to species decline, should be embraced as part of the solution.

The greatest known impacts on glider populations are catastrophic fires and abnormally high overnight temperatures. There is no scientific consensus that forestry has a major impact on populations: native forest harvesting is too small-scale to single out. Active and adaptive management of forests is an acknowledged method of tackling climate change and building resilience against fire through practices such as prescribed burning.

Lachie McCaw, vice-president,  
Forestry Australia