

Cool tips to stay warm and active

Don't hibernate for the holidays. Get set for your best winter yet with our ultimate A-Z activity guide, writes **Polly Simons**

AQUARIUM

Finding Dory is finally in cinemas (see p15) and to celebrate, **SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium** and **Manly SEA LIFE Sanctuary** have launched a Finding Dory Adventure, with an interactive quiz trail and plenty of time to see Dory and his mates up close. Details: sydneyaquarium.com.au; manlysealifesanctuary.com.au

BILLY CARTS

Ride a billy cart, hop on a model train or try your hand at old-fashioned games such as quoits and sack races at the annual Toy Festival at **Rouse Hill House and Farm** on July 23-24. Don't miss the interactive pantomime, *The Tin Soldier and the Ballerina*, and storytelling sessions with children's author Ursula Dubosarsky. Entry is by gold coin donation. Details: sydneylivingmuseums.com.au

CUDDLING UP

What better way to keep warm than with something cute and furry? At the **Australian Reptile Park**, you can cuddle and pat the park's litter of five dingo puppies or check out the new Feathered Friends interactive bird show featuring Giselle the Barn Owl. Details: reptilepark.com.au

DARLING HARBOUR

The mood is icy these school holidays as Cool Yule brings frosty fun to **Darling Harbour**. Strap on your skates for a session on the outdoor ice rink, have fun in the snow pit, take a stroll through the Frosty Forest or a ride on the Cool Yule Ferris Wheel. There's even a Cool Yule Selfie Station where you can take



It's Snow Time in the Garden at Hunter Valley Gardens. Below from left: find Dory at SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium and Manly SEA LIFE Sanctuary, get your *Frozen* fix at Disney's On Ice's Magic Ice Festival, and cuddle up to feathered friends at the Australian Reptile Park.

your pictures with interactive penguins. Details: darlingharbour.com

EXPLOSIONS

Kaboom! Warm up by learning how to create computer-generated explosions and performing real life 'mini' explosions in your own film scene at **Marrickville Town Hall** on July 6. Or make vile vomit bombs, exploding pimples and more at a Gross and Gory workshop on July 4 at the **Australian Botanic Garden** at Mt Annan. Details: marrickville.nsw.gov.au; australianbotanicgarden.com.au

FROZEN

If your littlies just can't *Let It Go*, you can

catch Elsa and Anna where they belong - on the ice - as part of Disney On Ice's **Magical Ice Festival**. They'll be joined by Olaf, Kristoff and Sven, as well as friends from *The Little Mermaid*, *Tangled* and *Beauty and the Beast* (ice) dancing up a storm. Catch them at Allphones Arena July 13-17, Newcastle and Wollongong. Details: disneyonice.com.au

GALLERIES

Winter is the perfect time to acquaint yourself or your family with your closest art gallery. The **Museum of Contemporary Art** makes it easy with their Contemporary Kids programs, where gallery staff will help kids investigate artworks from the *New Romance*: art

and the posthuman exhibition and create artworks inspired by what they've seen. Details: mca.com.au

HUNTER VALLEY

It's Snow Time in the Garden at **Hunter Valley Gardens**, with dozens of snow-themed activities every day until July 17. Go ice-skating, try the extra-long ice toboggan, make a snow angel or take the snow ball challenge. There's even live ice sculpting and a silent disco on ice on Friday and Saturday nights. Details: huntervalleygardens.com.au

ICE-SKATING

Think the beach is only for summer? Think again! **Bondi Winter Magic** at Bondi Pavilion is Australia's only beachside ice rink, with ice-skating lessons every morning and the rink open until 9pm. Raining outside? Then head to an indoor rink, such as **Macquarie Ice Rink** or **Canterbury Olympic Ice Rink**. Details: bondiwintermagic.org.au; macquarieicerink.com.au; canterburyolympicicerink.com.au

JUMPING

Jumping around is sure to keep you warm as the temperature plummets. Check out **Skyzone Trampoline Parks** at Alexandria and Miranda or **Flip Out Indoor Trampoline Arenas** at Brookvale, Caringbah, Castle Hill, Punchbowl and Penrith. Details: skyzone.com.au; flipout.net.au

KEEPING WARM IN THE KITCHEN

Once upon a time the kitchen was the warmest part of the house thanks to the wood-fired range that burned all year round. Discover what it was like at **Vaucluse House**, as you make your own damper, churn your butter and make traditional lemonade. At **Rouse Hill House and Garden**, you can feed the chickens, collect the eggs and grind corn. Details: sydneylivingmuseums.com.au

LIBRARIES

Your local library should be top of your list for school holiday boredom-busting. Not only



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Torah's snow tips for first-timers

AT THE snow for the first time? Olympic gold medallist Torah Bright shares her advice:

Lessons are worth the expense
Getting a lesson is the best way to have a happy ski holiday. Instructors will be able to break down the specifics and help you on your way in no time at all. Thredbo is a perfect place for the kids to have their first taste of skiing or snowboarding. They love it and it's a program that can see your child learn and progress until they join you on the whole mountain.

It's not just about the mountain
Go online to thredbo.com.au to check out what might be going on during your stay. Apart from the skiing, snowboarding, tobogganing, snowball fights, restaurants and night life, the flare run every Saturday night is one of my favourites. The fireworks are always a crowd pleaser too!

Don't forget sunscreen
One thing that people underestimate or don't think about is the reflection of the snow on your eyes and face, which can leave you burned like you have never been burned before. It is very important to make sure you wear sunscreen and have proper eyewear or goggles.

Skiing or snowboarding?
I get this question a lot and I always say it does not matter. Do what you feel would be best for you. I love being able to do both, each offers such different things to me. You have a lifetime to learn more skills if you'd like to challenge yourself more on the mountain.

does it have the best selection of books, but most offer a range of holiday activities too. At **Marrickville** libraries, you can make your own *Frozen*-inspired Elsa crown, while **Campbelltown** has dinosaur-themed activities, jewellery making and coding classes. Details: marrickville.nsw.gov.au; campbelltown.nsw.gov.au

MUMMIES
Did you know that you don't have to travel to Egypt to see real mummies? **Nicholson Museum** at the University of Sydney has a big collection and on July 12, you can learn more about Ancient Egypt and the process of mummification at a free children's day from 10am to 4pm. You can even handle some real Egyptian archaeological artefacts. Details: sydney.edu.au/museums

NAVIGATORS
Direct from London comes the award-winning exhibition *Ships, Clocks and Stars: The Quest for Longitude* at the **Australian National Maritime Museum**. Telling the story of how seafarers learnt to navigate long distances, kids can handle artefacts at a daily Cabinet of Curiosities session or explore a submarine after hours at a family torchlight tour. Details: anmm.gov.au

OUT OF TOWN
The holidays are the perfect time for a road trip and a visit to the **Bathurst Winter Festival**. Take a spin on the outdoor ice rink, snuggle up to watch *Frozen* (again) or watch the roving entertainers at the gourmet food festival. On the way home, get your photo taken in a cave with Santa at Jenolan Caves' annual Yulefest celebrations. Details: bathurst.nsw.gov.au; jenolancaves.org.au

PARRAMATTA
The capital of the west is getting its winter sparkle on with the arrival of the **Parramatta Winterlight** festival at Prince Alfred Square. Don your skates for a few spins on the giant outdoor ice rink, check out the Alpine Winter Village and snowflake garden and even pick up a few tips as professional ice dancers perform for the crowds. Details: winterlight.com.au



Go ice skating at Prince Alfred Square for Parramatta Winterlight festival.

Q is for (AVOID THE) QUEUES
School holidays are peak time for many of Sydney's big attractions, but nothing will ruin the holiday vibe faster than having to queue for hours to get in. Save yourself the hassle (and a few bucks) by booking online first. At **WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo** in Darling Harbour, you can save up to \$50 by booking online. At **Taronga Zoo** it's up to 20 per cent on a family pass.

RHYTHM AND RHYME
Poetry slam or spoken word poetry is taking over the world and now you can learn to do it yourself as part of the Way Out West Festival for Children at **Casula Powerhouse** on July 13-16. Kids can learn the secrets of Australian Poetry Slam Champion Zohab Khan before they perform their own creations. Details: wayoutwestfestival.com.au

SNOW (OF COURSE)
Winter holidays means a snow trip and **Thredbo's** Kids' Snow Festival is the place to be. As well as some of the best runs on the mountain, Olympic gold medallist Torah Bright and other champions will be sharing their tips to take your skills to the next level. There are also twilight snow tubing, movie and pizza nights. Details: thredbo.com.au

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TELESCOPES

Winter is often the best time to view the Milky Way, so make the most of it with a trip to **Sydney Observatory**. Family tours start at 6pm Monday to Saturday and run for 90 minutes including a visit to the Planetarium, a dome tour and telescope viewing. Details: maas.museum/sydneyobservatory

UNDERWATER

David Attenborough is inviting you to head underwater these school holidays as part of a special virtual reality experience at the **Australian Museum**. Don the VR headset to travel alongside the world famous naturalist as you explore ancient oceans and interact with sea creatures, or discover a 360 degree seascape of colourful corals and darting fish. Details: australianmuseum.net.au

VIDEO GAMES

Instead of sitting on the couch all holidays, create your own video games. At the **Powerhouse Museum**, you can become a master of Minecraft and learn mobile and virtual reality game design, while at the **ANSTO Discovery Centre** in Lucas Heights, you can learn game design using Microsoft Kodu and how to code using Scratch. Details: maas.museum; ansto.gov.au



WINTER FESTIVAL

Winter is coming to St Mary's Cathedral with the annual **Sydney Winter Festival**. As well as a giant ice rink, there will be downhill toboggan rides, a snow powder pit, inflatable zorb balls on the cathedral water feature and for adults, a European-style food market. Details: winterfestival.com.au

X is for (E)XERCISE (NOT X-BOX)

Winter is the perfect time to get outdoors and learn a new sport. At **Sydney Uni Health and Fitness**, you can choose from AFL, basketball, cricket, tennis and soccer to name a few, or have a go at all of them with a multi-sports camp. At **Sydney Olympic Park**, you can try skateboarding, BMX, circus skills and archery as well as more traditional sports. Details: susf.com.au; sydneyolympicpark.com.au

Sydney Winter Festival at St Mary's Cathedral, virtual reality experience at Australian Museum (top left) and star gazing at the Sydney Observatory (below).



YUM!

Winter means one thing ... hot chocolate, toasted marshmallows and other yummy foods. While everyone has their favourites, we love the thick Spanish hot chocolate at **San Churro**, peppermint hot chocolate at the **Guylian Cafes** at The Rocks, Circular Quay and the Darling Quarter and anything from **Max Brenner**. Details: sanchurro.com; guyliancafe.com.au; maxbrenner.com.au

ZOMBIES

Do you know what to do when the zombies arrive? Find out at **Centennial Park** on July 8, where you'll learn about disasters, make basic generators and water filters and learn how to communicate in code in case of a crisis. Or else join in their Kids vs Wild workshops on July 5 and 12 where you'll learn how to make a fire. Details: centennialparklands.com.au



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