

# bella rae

VALUE + BEAUTY + PURPOSE

SURFING SISTERS | HOW TO HOST A CLOTHING SWAP | FAMILY HOLIDAYS  
FRIENDS EPIC FAILS | SLEEPING SECRETS | GOOD GRIEF



## five writers on togs

The struggle is real! Five women write about their bather blues, swimmer stress and tog triumphs.

Dear togs,

Hello again! I hope you've enjoyed your winter hibernation at the back of the cupboard because the sun is out, the waves are calling and it's your time to shine! Don't mind my initial looks of horror in your direction. It's not you I am frowning at. It's my pale, hairy, scaly legs, but don't worry, some exfoliating, moisturising and kind thoughts will help. My skin isn't pale and ghostlike. No! It's creamy, it's soft, it's smooth and it's asking me for tender sunscreen application to stay that way.

Alright togs, it's time to hit the beach - but first hear out my hopes for our summer fling. Please cover all my boobs and bum. I am already feeling a little exposed, wearing less clothing in public than I ordinarily would, so please at least keep my most sacred private places under wraps. The waves might try to take you from me, so remember to hold on tight. You stay in place, while I move around, OK? Try to avoid creeping up into my bum, as I am sure it's not pleasant for either of us.

I have big boobs, remember? They're lovely and luscious but I'm not into bouncing them about

in front of everybody - they're not for people to gawk at! AND they need some sturdy support, so if I have to make a mad dash up the sand, away from jellyfish or sharks, I don't have to clasp them to my chest to stop them falling off. Also, thank you kindly for the thin layer of padding which keeps my nips discrete if the chill factor gets them perked up.

My pretty togs, keep in mind, context is everything. When I am hanging with my family or it's just me and the girls there is little to worry about. But around strangers and boys, I want to be considerate, and get the balance right. I am not ashamed of you, or my bangin' bod, but I don't want to be flashy or flaunty either, because I know I don't need to be! I'm counting on you to cover and support me through this season.

One last thing, which I know is really hard, but please, if you can - try to keep the sand out! Thanks for being there for me.  
Love > Henrietta Lee

Every summer, I feel the need to go shopping for bathers I actually like and feel comfortable in - does that scenario even exist?!


All I think as I navigate the car park of the shopping centre each and every year is, "As IF there's a pair of bathers anywhere in Australia that's actually going to make me feel confident and sassy! Just turn around and go back home!"

But my stubborn determination sees me in the bathers shop 10 minutes later, stalking the aisles for at least a colour and a pattern that I love.

I'm a bikini girl on the days that I feel confident and secure within my skin, and I'm a one-piece girl on the days that I feel like hiding in a towel because of my stretchmarks and not so flat tummy region!

I always pick a colour I love, or a pair with a few sparkly jewels on them because if I don't love the actual pair, there's no chance I'm gonna love them on my bod!

Every summer I remind myself that inner confidence is the sassiest thing going around. > Emma Wynne



I am very picky when it comes to swimwear, so picky that at the end of a shopping spree I often come home empty-handed. I live on the coast, where every second shop contains some sort of material to cover your bits while you're in the water, but the latest fashion is fickle, flimsy material that leaves as little to the imagination as possible and, even if you have a juicy peach of a bum, a lycra g-banger is not very flattering.

In the warm weather, I go to the beach every second day so a nice bikini is a vital part of my wardrobe. Alas due to the shortage of options and the ludicrous pricing of anything worthwhile, I'm actually still wearing the same swimmers that I've had for more than two years now. Even with their thinning, borderline see-through look, they are still more discrete than what's available today and don't force me to fork out a small fortune. I'm not a prude, I'd just like to go for a swim without having to shave and oil every part of my body in order to feel semi-attractive amongst the mass crowds, so if you see a decent alternative out there, please holler at me! > Harmony Lee

I've always loved the beach and bare-footed walks along the sun-kissed coastline. However, being 'seen' at the beach was a different story. Deep beneath the sandy surface lay a hidden fear of peer pressure, comparison and body shaming.

For years I played (and lost) the game of comparison in my head every time I went to the beach. Thoughts like "Her thighs don't touch like mine do" and "I wish my chest would fill this top like the models in the magazines" always fueled my swimwear choices.

After years of this, I finally had had enough of the pressure that ruined my holidays. I decided that wearing a bikini, a one-piece, a throw-over or any other beach getup should never be about trying to fit in, flaunt it or cover up flaws. I am nowhere near a C cup, but here are my two 'Cs' for swimwear etiquette that helped me be more body positive at the beach.

I've struggled with body image and the way I look for most of my life. So I've never really looked forward to swimsuit season. Trying on new bikinis usually ended up with me crying in the changing rooms while looking at all the parts of my body I hated the most. This often caused me to avoid swimming and the beach. I'm the one sitting off to the side of the pool, or under the tree at the beach, fully clothed, watching my friends enjoy the water.

Comparison has been one of my bad habits. I found myself looking at the girls with the perfect bikini bodies and feeling mega insecure because I didn't look like that. But comparison is such a killer! I had to learn to quit comparing my body to the other girls, because we're all different shapes and sizes which makes us all beautiful in our own individual ways. Comparison was stealing my ability to have fun with my friends and feel confident in my own skin. Although I still struggle when swim season comes around, I have to continually remind myself that I am me and I am beautiful. It's a time to enjoy, not dread. > Kristie Hillway

Confidence is the first secret. I had to stop letting my insecurities or the magazines decide what I wore to the beach. In other words, I began to find confidence in myself as a person.

Secret two is company. Once upon a time, I would change my outfit to 'fit in' with the company I was with. I tried to wear revealing pieces to get my boyfriends' attention or act over-confident and fashionable for my friends. This chameleon act was exhausting, and was a result of peer pressure and low self-esteem.

I've now stopped hiding what I see as flaws and stopped seeking the undesirable attention and wandering eyes of strangers for approval. I've also learnt to be respectful of my own company and comfortable in my own skin (or swimwear). The beach can once again for me be a place of sand, sun and serenity. > Sarah Kronk



## surviving a road trip with your dad

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**So, my dad and I drove 4000km from Alice Springs to Launceston via King's Canyon and Uluru. And unbelievably, I survived.**

Here are my top tips to help you survive an outback adventure with your old man.

1. There is usually no radio coverage, so download some good music before you go or be stuck listening to your dad's "Best of the 80's" CD on repeat.
2. In the outback, drivers usually give a little wave to everyone they pass. If you are the passenger try waving too and see what happens!
3. Go to the toilet any chance you get. You never know how far it is going to be until the next servo or roadhouse.
4. Stock up on lollies and mints, but remember – ration them carefully or you'll run out!
5. Don't even bother trying to play car games like Spotto or Punch Buggy – nobody takes their yellow car to the desert!
6. Make sure to stop and stretch your legs, and enjoy the view (even if it is endless red sand, it's better than a dashboard).
7. Chat to the others in the car (in my case, my dad). You'll learn amazing things spending that long alone with them.
8. Crows will move off the road if they see you coming, but cows won't. It's the passenger's duty to keep a look out for wildlife on the road.
9. Don't pass up an opportunity to watch the sunset in a new place. Everywhere you go has a different and beautiful evening show to put on!
10. Roll your eyes at your dad's endless bad jokes!

## Calling my younger self!

June 2017

Liz Schultz writes a letter to her past self, who had blue hair, and slightly more pimples.

It's been a while, but not so long that I've forgotten you. You may be surprised to hear I'm still wearing printed tees and finding deep meanings in words.

I'm coming to you from a future you're not going to believe! So much has happened. It'll make your head spin just thinking about how far you've come, despite the feeling of being bounced around by the waves. Here's some things I need you to know.

**Please take care of yourself.** You give and give so much away. To your family, when they ask you to help around the house and work on the farm, you may do so grudgingly but you give it your all. To your friends, who are walking through broken families and broken selves. Your heart is big and full of love. Don't lose that, but don't forget to leave a little piece for yourself. It's OK to say no from time to time. Give yourself time to just be, instead of doing so much and getting all worn out and sad.

It can be as simple as realising you enjoy certain things, but not others. Not liking cinnamon because the smell gets up your nose and makes you feel sick is a good thing to acknowledge. Don't let people diss you because you do or don't like certain things. (That time you said you liked heavy metal was a lie. We both know it. You would have earned more respect if you'd just admitted you're not a fan.)

Saying 'no' isn't a bad thing, and I encourage you to stand by your word, but on the other hand – beware of saying no just to keep yourself safe. (Don't be a chicken!)

When you take a leap of courage and jump into the deep end of opportunity, sure it might feel risky, but wild and amazing things can happen.

**Try new things.** There will be plenty of times when mates ask you to join them on a random outing and you get real nervous, because it's something new for you. It's OK to be nervous, but don't lose out to your fear. I'm sad to say you will struggle with this, to the point where a dear friend invites you on an adventure and when you say "no, thanks," he'll say, "I knew you'd say that." Your heart will sink and you'll realise you let fear rob you of a bunch of fun you could have had. Your mate will forgive you, and you will get braver!

You'll get so brave (and this is a spoiler alert) you will go live in New Zealand for nine months! Let that sink in. How flipping cool is that!? You get to live in Middle Earth with some of the coolest people you have ever met who will be friends for years to come.

Life takes some crazy and unexpected twists and turns but figure out who you want to be and work towards her. That warm and loving, hippy, nerdy lady is a bright one!

Be brave, young one. Your future is colourful but don't be in such a hurry to grow up.

Love from,

The Future You.



# different doesn't matter

There's no putting this girl down – she can't hear you.

**Hannah is a bright, bubbly 17-year-old who loves playing sport and going to the beach. She enjoys school, works in a kitchen for her hospitality traineeship and sometimes babysits her younger brother and sister. She is like any other girl except... she was born deaf.**

My family moved to Australia from Papua New Guinea when I was seven years old. In Brisbane I got my cochlear implant, which allows me to hear some sound, and helps me with my signing and speech.

**Do you know how life would have been different if your family had stayed in PNG?** It's hard to imagine really. We would have been in a different house, near the ocean maybe, with lots of boats. Living conditions would have been different. We brought some of the culture with us, of course – some recipes and my mum designs PNG style clothes, which are very colourful and artistic. There is a tradition of body art in PNG. My grandma has tattoos all over her body.

**Would you like to get a tattoo?** Yeah, I wouldn't mind. I'll get it when I finish grade 12.

**How would you describe what it is like to be deaf?** I really don't know. My friends sometimes say I don't look like I'm deaf. Some of my friends don't know how to sign. Sometimes they write things down. I have an interpreter at school. Sometimes my friends' sign language improves and I teach them to sign and our communication becomes better.

**So you have become a teacher as well?** Yes I suppose.

**How do people respond when they realise you're deaf?** Sometimes they don't care. They don't have time to communicate with me. My friends often help. Sometimes people make a mistake and don't realise I'm deaf.

**Have you ever felt left out because of your hearing?** Not really, no. I've got plenty of friends, and quite a mixture! We have fun. Every now and then I wish I could hear more but mostly I'm happy with who I am.

Some of my friends get teased or bullied because they are deaf. They can get very emotional.

**I say it doesn't matter that you are deaf. Teach your friends to sign and separate yourself from people who put you down. I try to be positive. You've got to pick the right kind of person to be friends with.**

Some people can be selfish or nasty, so yeah, you pick who you associate with.

**How would you encourage somebody who is struggling with their deafness?** I'd say to them, *"If you're a bit depressed, it's OK. Don't worry about whether you're deaf or can hear. There is a lot to be thankful for. You've got hearing aids. You*

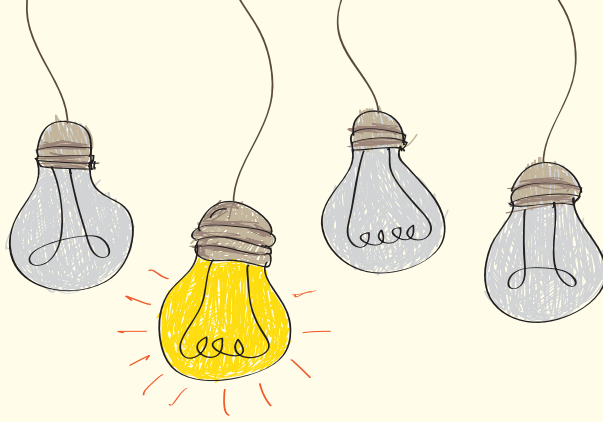
*can hear some sound or use lip reading. Focus on the good."*

**What do you do for fun?** Hang out with friends. Go out shopping or to the movies or dinner. Spend time with family. Go to the beach.

**What would you like to do after school?** I am not sure yet. Maybe I'll work in fashion. I'd love to go to the Olympics and compete in athletics, that's one of my future goals. I'm thankful for my hospitality traineeship – provided by Uniting Care. I am learning useful kitchen skills, although they're not used to having a deaf person in there!

**Where does your strength come from?** The good people in my life. My parents and teachers. My athletic coach. My dad encourages me to practise, not be lazy, to keep going and not give up.

**Hannah's mum says:** Hannah amazes me. She said herself, she has never felt different, even though she's been deaf since she was born. We really appreciate that she's grown up to be a girl who loves to be warm with people. When she's upset, it's really easy to know, it shows on her face. Otherwise she's happy. We say if she can be positive the way she is, it makes us glad. As her parents, we are so blessed. We feel it's a different experience having a child like her, it helps us to appreciate our lives too.



## no way is that ok

bella rae counsellor Anne shines a light on some tricky boy behaviour.

Dear bella rae,

*I am going out with a really nice guy, who I love. But in the last few weeks at times he has gotten quite angry with me. Sometimes I feel like he is trying to control me, he doesn't like my friends and doesn't want me to see them so much. Recently he has been a bit rough with me, just mucking around and play fighting, but kinda mean too, and once he caught me off balance and I fell over. I cried and screamed at him and he said he would never do it again. I think he's just trying to show that he loves me. My mum and my friends don't like him though and keep telling me to drop him. They say I have changed since we started dating, but I can't see what they mean. I know they can't see the good side of him. He's sweet and fun and we have really good times together.*

*I wish he would stop pressuring me to have sex with him though. He says it will be fun, and if I really love him I would do it but I always thought I would try and save sex for when I marry someone. Sometimes he tries to feel me up or hugs me super tight and that makes me feel uncomfortable.*

*Do you think I'm being a prude? How should I handle this? I don't want to lose him.*

You are asking an important question and I commend you for your honesty and the willingness to stand back and look at the whole picture.

I can't tell you what to do in this relationship but I can give you some

pointers which may help you make some wise decisions and avoid being hurt.

I think it's a red flag that your mum and friends don't approve of your relationship and it's easy to brush their opinions aside. They may or may not be right but if they really love you, is it possible they can see something you can't?

I ask that because it is NEVER right for a male to be aggressive physically or verbally with a female. Domestic violence is a huge issue in our country because it so often starts out in minor ways as you have described, but invariably grows into worse and worse forms. If you're seeing anger (or frustration, ignorance, trauma, whatever) influence his behaviour towards you already, chances are this will intensify the further you go in your relationship. If I were you, I wouldn't wait to find out if "just mucking around" turns more violent in time.

Concerning sex: it is not cool that he is pressuring you. Stick to your guns, girl! You've got your values – don't be persuaded by what others think or want. It's all too easy to be swayed and to lose something of your own identity to others. If you want to save sex for marriage that is your choice, and it's a great one! No STI's, no unwanted pregnancy, and the chance to really get to know someone and commit to them before getting intimate. If a relationship isn't working, having sex will not fix it!

If you can tell this guy clearly where you stand on the issue of sex before marriage,

(or any other issue for that matter) you will know whether he is wanting you for his sake or has a concern for your wellbeing and integrity, by whether he can respect your decisions and opinions. I am sorry to say I feel this guy is unlikely to respond well, but this is not all guys, many guys love and respect women beautifully. Don't settle for less.

**Real love is unselfish and wants the best for the other person, regardless of whether our own needs are being met. Real love does not manipulate or control. Real love is not possessive or jealous of our relationships with others.**

Do you think your boyfriend may need to mature in his love for you? You say you don't want to lose him – do you think you also need to mature in love?

As a beautiful young woman with great potential and years of good healthy relationships ahead of you, please ask yourself is it worth risking a relationship that could damage your present and your future.

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*If you identify with something in this story and would like to chat more or ask question contact bella rae's trained counsellor. Write to [counsellor.anne@bellaraemag.com](mailto:counsellor.anne@bellaraemag.com)*

*Or you can contact the 24/7 free national hotline for young people up to 25 years of age on 1800 551 800 (Kid's Help Line) or the national domestic violence hotline on 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 7328). Also check out [www.ourwatch.org.au](http://www.ourwatch.org.au) for more info on domestic violence.*





Not the most ideal partnership in the wild but for a while Mungi and Tingo the dingo were best friends.

Mungi means 'lightning'. She was dropped off to the vet clinic during a lightning storm.

## when lightning strikes the homeware isle

wildlife warrior Xanthe tells a true tale of her young wallaby's shopping escapade

It was an unfortunate day, the day I was escorted out of the Tupperware section of a well-known, national department store (whose name we won't mention here) with a crazed marsupial under my arm. My baby wallaby Mungi had to be fed five times a day and couldn't be left alone for a minute. This is why she had tagged along on our supply run to the city.

Putting her in my backpack seemed the obvious answer, so with celery on hand I found myself walking into our city's largest shopping centre. We managed to make it through sushi and school shoe shopping before my supply of sweet potato bribes ran out.

When we stepped into the department store, I noticed they had strung up some eucalyptus branches as part of an Australiana theme they seemed to be having, and I knew we were entering dangerous territory. With incredible

agility, Mungi undid the zip on my bag, launched herself into the air and skidded across the lino in one swift movement. Searching for the source of the tree smell, she frantically started bouncing around at full speed, doing hot laps around the kitchen department and then straight into the leg of a help desk worker.

Bright red and with Mungi under my arm chewing on a wooden spoon I made my way to the front desk while the woman yelled about the importance of "etiquette, sensibility and not letting animals run wild... Simply not natural! etc."

But before we could reach the front desk an unexpected lifesaver appeared – a large crowd of tourists. Due to the sheer quantity of people wanting wallaby selfies the assistant manager, fuming by this point, marched off to find her boss. While she did this I excused myself from the situation by suggesting I, Mungi,

and the tourists leave the store as I knew a place on the other side of the centre with better lighting for photos. So with a mob of smartphone wielders, a wallaby chewing on a half price sticker and a clean criminal record I walked straight out of the store; and to this very day have never returned.

### More about Mungi and the writer Xanthe:

Mungi was released at Sheoak Nature Reserve, Mt Malloy last year and now has a baby herself. I (Xanthe) help my parents with our community vet clinics in Cape York and Tonga. Raising orphan wildlife has always been part of family life. My siblings and I were raised onboard a yacht and we sailed from NZ up to the Pacific islands running vet clinics in communities. At times we have had baby fruit bats hanging from the boat and a myriad of other cute little orphans.



## jason daniels

a sweetheart with a sweet-as sound

At just six months of age, this boy was already tapping along to the beat of any tune he heard. At age four he began taking piano lessons and it wasn't long before he'd also mastered the drums and guitar.

As Jason recalls, one of his favourite childhood memories was dressing up in Hawaiian t-shirts with his two sisters, cranking up their Beach Boys cassettes and dancing around the kitchen table.

Music was in his blood from the get-go. Having known from a young age that this was his calling in life, Jason transferred from high school to music college in Sydney when he was 16. After this, he completed a stint with a youth mission program that took him overseas. It was here that Jason's songwriting really took off, and upon returning home he decided he would get serious about his music.

Now 21 years of age and living on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Jason plays 2-3 gigs a week, performs at a bunch of festivals, and is about to release his first EP - 'For When I'm Lost.' While he still

enjoys performing solo, Jason now has a backing band which even includes his own little sister on harmonies and percussion!

With inspiration coming from the likes of John Mayer, Jason Mraz and Jack Johnson, Jason describes his music as energetic and fun, but at the same time not afraid to ask questions.

*"So much music today is only surface deep. You have a great time but as soon as the song's over, you're looking for the next tune. I want to write songs that people will really think about. A lot of my music is based around the theme of worthiness."*

**"I hope my songs will be uplifting to the listeners and remind them that it's OK to be themselves and let loose a little bit."**

Jason believes that music is a universal language and a special way to connect, sharing his message with all sorts of people. *"What I love about music is that everyone can relate to it. It's in every single culture in the world. It's just something that's naturally in us,"* he says.

While the future looks bright for this aspiring young artist, the road to get where he is today hasn't always been smooth. A lot of hard work, long hours and persistence have been poured into Jason's musical career. *"I remember when I first started doing this for every one good gig there were about ten bad ones, where nobody would show up. But it's those gigs that really refine your musical craft and your patience, so I don't take any of those gigs for granted."*

When Jason isn't busy writing and performing amazing music, you can find him teaching music lessons, surfing or shooting a few basketball hoops.

You can follow along with Jason's musical journey, and check out some the upcoming gigs and festivals he'll be performing at by searching for @jason\_daniels\_music on Instagram

Also, keep your eyes peeled for Jason's upcoming EP 'For When I'm Lost', due for release at the end of September.

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