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Keep childcare open!
Photo by Murray Enders

Kensington parents are “hugely disappointed” by the closure of a childcare centre run by the Kensington Neighbourhood House, after the board declared there was declining demand and lack of funds. *Full story on page 5.*

School community wins fight against planned phone tower

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COMMUNITY

A West Melbourne school community is rejoicing after thwarting plans for a mobile phone tower to be built just metres from Haileybury College’s city campus.

A controversial plan by telecommunications giant Telstra to erect a phone tower at 1-7 Jeffcott St, West Melbourne, sparked an uproar from parents and neighbouring residents after they learned of the plans in June.

But after launching a petition, the community has been successful in its bid to axe the proposed tower – with Telstra now backing off while it reviews its options.

It comes as the City of Melbourne intervened saying the nature of the proposed tower required a local planning permit.

Concerned parents and residents rallied to oppose the

Telstra tower which they were told could have been up to two storeys high, and 12-14 metres from Haileybury’s playgrounds and early learning centre.

The community launched a petition to halt the proposed tower after citing concerns it would be unsightly and pose health risks including high levels of exposure to electromagnetic energy.

A Telstra spokesperson said it was exploring options in the West Melbourne area to build a phone tower as it was “regularly looking for opportunities to further enhance our customers’ mobile experience”.

“We look forward to working with the local council and the community throughout this process,” the spokesperson said.

Parent Darren Vella, whose children attend Haileybury College, said while he understood companies such as Telstra believed “we all have a responsibility to adopt a

Continued on page 2.

Public housing resident action groups treated like “rags”

A frustrated public housing resident has slammed new resident action groups as a “farce” amid claims her elderly neighbours are being seriously neglected, belongings are being thrown out unnecessarily, and government staff are creating a culture of fear.

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*
HOUSING

In October, the Victorian Government’s Paving the Way Forward Program created resident action groups for public housing residents living in North Melbourne and Flemington to improve communication and maintenance of amenities.

But Pampas St public housing resident Deepa Gupta, who is a member of three of the five resident action groups, said she had repeatedly asked relevant government departments to improve living conditions to no avail.

Ms Gupta said in November, her 92-year-old handicapped neighbour fell and injured herself because her bathroom light was broken for four days despite making “dozens” of calls to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) requesting repairs.

“She had made dozens of calls and was so frustrated with the rudeness and apathy being dealt out to her,” Ms Gupta wrote in the resident action WhatsApp group seen by *North West City News*.

“Being handicapped and [with] her carer on leave, she was struggling in vain.”

“This is what’s happening and they’re talking about resident actions groups – it’s a farce.”

Ms Gupta, who is from India, has 30 years of experience in public service and is a chartered accountant, as well as the CEO of not-for-profit or-

ganisation Marg Foundation.

She is also the tower champion for 9 Pampas St, having been nominated following the Victorian Ombudsman’s report into the hard lockdown of the North Melbourne and Flemington towers last year, which found human rights had been violated.

Ms Gupta said that in October, an elderly man she knew at 9 Pampas St had passed away in his flat, but his body was not discovered until seven days later in a state of decomposition.

“[The Department of Families Fairness and] Housing did nothing,” she said.

“People here are old. They need support at odd hours.”

On another occasion, Ms Gupta said a Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) employed staff member working at 9 Pampas St had allegedly “personally humiliated” her and acted towards her with “discrimination”.

“I had to take special medications,” she said.

“My psychologist told me I should report the incident to the police. I was vulnerable. I was scared. I was suppressed. I did not want to lose my roof.”

Ms Gupta said she still did not know what actions the DHHS had taken to address the incident despite reporting it in writing to the department more than a year ago.

According to Ms Gupta, the alleged abuse took place after she tried to fix up a vandalised, communal part

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School community wins fight against planned phone tower

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risk averse approach when it comes to the wellbeing of children”.
“The tower could not have been any closer to the school unless it was on the school itself,” Mr Vella said.
“It is incredulous and shameful that Telstra would put convenience and its commercial interests above the concerns of parents and the long-term interests of children especially when there are many alternative sites, which Telstra had failed to investigate for suitability, which are not so close to the school.”
“If Telstra elects to proceed with installing towers at the same site, it can expect a greater community uprising.”
Mr Vella said the concerns of the community were “effectively ignored” by Telstra, and it was “subsequently uncovered” that Telstra had entered into a lease with the owners of 7 Jeffcott St for the purpose of the towers prior to any consultation with the local community, “indicating consultation would be a tick box exercise”. But he praised the City of Melbourne’s Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece for listening to the community, saying he had been “fantastic” in investigating the matter and discovering that Telstra also failed to obtain a planning permit.
The intervention of Cr Reece came as Mr Vella said a number of parents had complained about the “defective consultation” carried out by Telstra to the Australian Communications and Media Authority, the City of Melbourne, Telstra and local and federal members of parliament.
According to Mr Vella, the Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code “expressly notes that sensitive locations such childcare centres and schools should be factored into planning and consultation”.
Cr Reece said the outcome showed what a united community could achieve and was “very pleased and grateful that Telstra has made

▲ Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece and head of Haileybury College city campus, Caroline Merrick.

the sensible decision to review its plans for a telecommunications tower of this size in this location”.
“This is a win for people power and the efforts of the local school community,” the Deputy Lord Mayor said. “Telstra’s investment in telecommunications infrastructure in Melbourne is very welcome. We will continue to work closely with Telstra to identify suitable locations and the scale of towers needed to deliver a leading 4G and 5G network.”
“We need world-class telco services and we also need to ensure the community has a voice in decisions that affect local neighbourhoods and local schools.”
In a statement, the City of Melbourne said it had “reasonable doubt” that the specific characteristics of the proposed tower’s scale and location meant the tower “is not exempt from requiring a local planning permit”.
Caroline Merrick, head of Haileybury city campus, said, “We are delighted that our community voices and concerns have been heard on this very important matter, and we are very appreciative of the support from the Deputy Lord Mayor and the Melbourne City Council.”
According to the latest research from health authorities, there are no established health effects from exposure to radio frequency electromagnetic energy emitted from mobile phone towers ●

Have your say on Kensington

COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne is inviting locals to have their say on the development of a new neighbourhood plan for Kensington by December 22.
Participate Kensington calls on input from the local community on what it would like to see more of in its neighbourhood as the city continues to emerge from the pandemic.
Through the council’s Participate Melbourne online portal, locals can get involved by completing a survey, dropping a pin on areas of need, sending in suggestions or chatting online or over the phone.
The council said it was also planning to host some face-to-face sessions, which were yet to be confirmed and subject to COVID restrictions. By completing at least two of the activities offered by the council, participants will also go into the draw to win a \$200 Discover Kensington voucher.
To have your say, visit Participate Melbourne before December 22 by scanning the QR code below ●

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Public housing resident action groups treated like “rags”

Continued from page 1.

of the building by planting flowers and putting up Christmas decorations for residents to enjoy and utilise for gatherings.

The decorations and communal items were subsequently removed.

Ms Gupta said the staff member in question allegedly targeted her following the incident by throwing out her Christmas tree outside her door.

“Small things like leaving my pen around in the laundry I would get called up about it because I’d ruffled feathers of Housing,” she said. “All the residents stopped talking to me because they thought I was going to get removed.”

On a different occasion, Ms Gupta said a resident at Pampas St was hospitalised due to illness, so she left a desk chair which he had lent to her outside his door.

But not long after, she found the chair dumped on the ground outside on Pampas St.

“With what right [do] cleaners have to throw it in the garbage?” Ms Gupta wrote on the WhatsApp group.

“How many times does DFFH want make us realise that we are at your mercy? We are beggars. Aren’t we?”

Ms Gupta said after speaking and writing to the department on multiple occasions, her co-resident was asked by a government staff member if “having a roof ‘over his head’ was not enough, and told that if he was unhappy, he could be shifted to Frankston instead.

Ms Gupta also questioned the name of the Resident Action Groups.

“DFFH Resident Action Groups – ‘RAGS’ – are we rags? In your eyes we are, but need you shove it down our throats?” Ms Gupta said.

In response to questions from *North West City News*, a DFFH spokesperson said the department always took any concerns raised by tenants seriously and responded quickly to a request from the tenant to fix their bathroom light.



▲ Tower champion at 9 Pampas St, Deepa Gupta is fighting for her co-residents.

Photo: Murray Enders.



▲ Left: The decorations Ms Gupta said were taken away.



Right: The chair Ms Gupta said was thrown out.

“

How many times does DFFH want make us realise that we are at your mercy? We are beggars. Aren’t we?

”


“A number of attempts were made to contact the person who sadly passed away. Police were then notified and discovered the man had passed away in an adjoining property to Pampas St. Our thoughts are with their family and friends,” the spokesperson said.

The Victorian Government provided background that DFFH had not received any complaints about inappropriate behaviour by staff towards Ms Gupta at 9 Pampas St.

“As many elderly people with mobility challenges live in this block, items in the walkways or common areas pose health and safety risks and are removed. Housing staff issued notices to all renters requesting personal belongings be removed from the communal area seven days before arranging for the items to be removed.”

“The 92-year-old resident’s request to repair a bathroom light was completed within 24 hours. Departmental staff telephoned the renter on December 1, 2021, who confirmed there are no outstanding maintenance issues at their property.”

“There were attempts by both the Housing Call Centre and the local housing office to contact the renter who sadly passed away, for a welfare check. When this was unsuccessful, Victoria Police were called and found the renter had passed away.” ●



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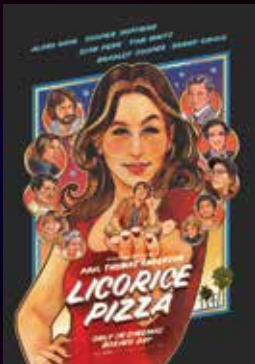
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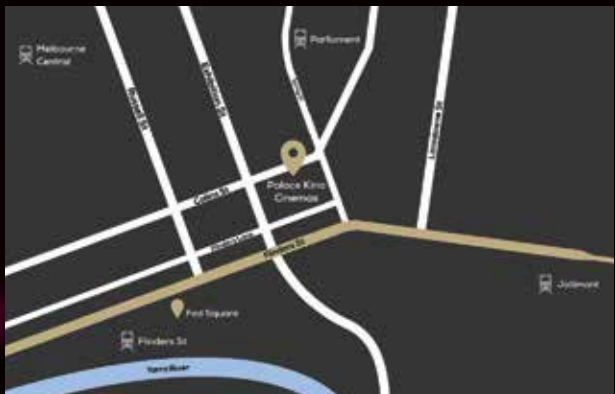
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
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FIREWORKS, FEASTS AND FAMILY FUN AS CITY CELEBRATES THE NEW YEAR

New Year's Eve celebrations in the city are set to be bigger and brighter than before, with the City of Melbourne unveiling its plans for a safe and creative night.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the City of Melbourne is delivering a bigger celebration this year so Victorians can farewell 2021 in fitting style.

'Locals and visitors love Melbourne's annual New Years' Eve celebration. The event showcases our city, our identity, and our sense of community,' the Lord Mayor said.

'Fireworks, street feasts and live music will add to the buzz, and we're thrilled to entice people in to celebrate with us in a safe way.'

Revellers are encouraged to book in to city venues and celebrate responsibly at one of the many cafes, bars and restaurants that are throwing open their doors for a night of fun and festivity.

Or perhaps plan a staycation at one of the many new city hotels and make it the ultimate Melbourne holiday. For the full program, visit nye.melbourne.vic.gov.au

CELEBRATION ZONES ACROSS THE CITY

Four ticketed celebration zones will be set up across the CBD to help manage crowds and adhere to health and safety requirements.

The zones will be at Docklands, Flagstaff Gardens, Alexandra Gardens and Treasury Gardens with family-friendly entertainment from 6pm and localised fireworks shows at 9.30pm and midnight, which are only visible from these zones.

Revellers will be entertained by performances throughout the night, including comedy and circus acts, dance workshops, big bands and local DJs, as well as food trucks and a disco-light installation.

The celebration zones will be ticketed and patrons will be required to be fully vaccinated to ensure a COVID-safe event is delivered in line with State Government requirements. Free tickets can be claimed by registering in the Ticketek ballot.

NEW YEAR STREET FEASTS

Melbourne's hugely popular New Year Street Feasts are back for another year, once again set to draw enthusiastic crowds into the CBD and reinvigorate the city's iconic streets and laneways.

In a partnership between City of Melbourne, the Melbourne Food & Wine Festival and the Victorian Government, seven outdoor dining precincts will host thousands of New Year's Eve diners at their favourite Melbourne restaurants.

Each precinct will bring together restaurants and bars from the surrounding streets and laneways, offering diners more than 30 premium venues to enjoy on 31 December.

Outdoor dining precincts will be at Docklands, Federation Square, Flinders Lane East, Flinders Lane West, Little Bourke Street, Little Collins Street and Russell Place.

Some of Melbourne's best-loved venues will feature including Chin Chin, Hazel, Hero, Longrain, San Telmo and Supernormal.

The program has something for all tastes: tea smoked duck salad and spritzes at Chin Chin; a family-friendly beer-battered fish and chips at Time Out Café; pig's head croquettes and polenta fritti at Hazel; and spit-roasted meats over the woodfired grill at Nomad's BBQ street party.

Taking inspiration from the piazzas and squares of Europe, New Year Street Feasts will open up some of the city's most popular food precincts to bring guests an unforgettable dining experience on New Year's Eve.

Bookings are essential. For the full program and to book tickets, visit mfwf.com.au



SPECTACULAR DRONE SWARM AT DOCKLANDS

Ring in the New Year by watching Australia's largest ever drone show over Melbourne. The breathtaking sky show is set to stun crowds with 350 individual drones, while also reigniting the Docklands precinct and supporting local businesses.

The spectacle will be one of the first drone shows of this scale to take place in the Southern Hemisphere.

'The Docklands drone swarm will celebrate our love for Melbourne and help reignite the city,' the Lord Mayor said. 'For the best view, book into the Docklands Celebration Zone and support our wonderful venues and local workers.'

The Docklands drone swarm will take place across Victoria Harbour at the official Celebration Zone, with a seven-minute show running twice on New Year's Eve, before the 9.30pm and midnight fireworks.

Celebration zone tickets are required for entry, are free and can be claimed by registering in the Ticketek ballot.



New Year's Eve in the city is being delivered through the \$100 million Melbourne City Recovery Fund – a joint partnership between the City of Melbourne and the Victorian Government.

Information and events in this publication are current at the time of printing. Subsequent changes may occur. All photos taken in line with health and safety guidelines.

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“Deep anger”: Kensington childcare closure leaves parents in the lurch

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Murray Enders*
EDUCATION

Kensington parents are “hugely disappointed” by the closure of a childcare centre run by the Kensington Neighbourhood House, after the board declared there was declining demand and lack of funds.

Kensington parent Rachel Wells said the KNH board made the decision without consultation with parents leaving more than 20 families “scrambling” to find alternative arrangements.

“There’s a lot of families in and around Kensington who are hugely disappointed by this decision particularly at a time when we know there is a real lack of childcare facilities available to families,” she said.

“Particularly for women, I think they feel like this was an opportunity to participate in full-time work. This provides and enables them to work without needing the long day care.”

In a letter sent out to a group of parents on November 26, the KNH Board said the decision was not made “lightly”, citing underutilisation, increasing compliance requirements, financial considerations, and the impact of COVID as reasons for closing.



▲ Kensington parents say they have been left in the lurch by Kensington Neighbourhood House’s childcare centre closure.

“The board recognises the high quality of the KNH Morning Childcare Program and its long history in the Kensington community. However, when looked at in the context of our overall operations, the program is no longer viable,” KNH chair Steven Weir said in the letter.

In crunching the numbers, the board said with 75 childcare spaces available per week,

even if they assumed every child would maintain their current days, and everyone on the waiting list took a place, the service would be “nowhere near capacity”.

The board also claimed that 40 per cent of the children enrolled in KNH’s Morning Childcare Program – including those on the waiting list – would be heading to school in 2023 with “few”

younger siblings to take their place.

In a letter to the board, Ms Wells expressed her “deep anger” at the decision which has left her, and many other parents, on uncertain waiting lists for other local childcare centres.

“The timing of this could not have been worse and has dealt a devastating blow to many of us,” she said.

“I, for one, am now left with no care for my four-year-old across three days next year. I need to work. I need care for my child. You have just ripped that from under our feet, with no consultation whatsoever and when we have just endured some of the most challenging years of our lives.”

As a small childcare service, the board said that KNH’s service had the same compliance requirements as large childcare providers, placing a disproportionately high burden on the organisation when childcare was not their core business.

The board also said the program had made “significant losses” in four of the past seven years.

“When the morning childcare makes a loss, organisational (community) funds are used to ‘prop up’ the program. This occurs at the expense of activities with far higher participant numbers and greater need for support,” the board said ●

New bike lanes fully funded

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*
TRANSPORT

The City of Melbourne will bankroll new Macaulay Rd and Arden St bike lanes to the tune of \$5.2 million after the state government continued to “disappoint” by rejecting any funding for the new infrastructure.

At a council meeting on November 23, councillors unanimously endorsed Greens Cr Rohan Leppert’s amendments to the quarterly budget variations to direct an additional \$1.17 million from the council’s funds towards the 2021-22 cycle infrastructure program.

Cr Leppert said this year, the council had budgeted a total of \$8.06 million for new bike infrastructure and anticipated that half would come from its own funds, and half from the state government’s Melbourne City Recovery Fund.

However, despite supporting cycling infrastructure during 2020, the state government elected not to commit any of its own money from the recovery fund towards this year’s rollout.

“The State will continue to disappoint on cycle infrastructure funding, but I’m determined

“The State will continue to disappoint on cycle infrastructure funding, but I’m determined that the council does everything we can to make local roads safer for everyone.”



that the council does everything we can to make local roads safer for everyone,” Cr Leppert said.

Following the December 2020 completion of kerbside protected bike lanes on both sides of Abbotsford St, upgrades to Arden St and Macaulay Rd are expected to be delivered during early 2022.

The new bike lanes are part of the council’s 10-year transport strategy which seeks to implement more than 50 kilometres of protected bike lanes in the municipality, making it “the country’s leading bicycle city”.

Connecting into already existing bike lane networks, the upgrades will provide safe and sustainable transport methods for commuters and benefit the environment.

Cr Leppert said most of the \$1.17 million would be spent on new safe lanes on Macaulay Rd, taking the council’s total spend on cycling infrastructure this year from \$4.03 million to \$5.2 million.

“Last night’s decision ensures that new physically separated bicycle lanes will be delivered on both Arden St and Macaulay Rd this financial year,” Cr Leppert said at the November 23 meeting.

“These are priority infrastructure projects under the council’s Transport Strategy 2030,



which implements the community’s vision for a safer, less polluting and better-connected City of Melbourne.”

For North Melbourne commuters, the new year will begin with bike lane upgrades on Arden St in the first half of the year continuing on to Macaulay Rd, which is still being designed and reviewed.

“In 2022, we will have some shiny, new, safe and physically separated bicycle lanes on the full length of Arden St and the full length of Macaulay Rd. It is exciting,” Cr Leppert said.

“[The developments] will make it safer and more convenient to ride a bicycle and it’s just going to benefit everyone.” ●



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Veteran carriage operator calls on authorities to quit horsing around on proposed CBD ban

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
TRANSPORT

A horse-drawn carriage operator, who formerly used stables in Kensington, says he has been “blindsided” by a state government proposal to ban his services from operating in the CBD. Dean Crichton, owner of Unique Carriage Hire, which has been operating for 35 years, said his livelihood was at stake if the plan went ahead – with his operations having already been “completely trashed” by the pandemic.

Under the proposal, carriages would not be permitted on public roads in the CBD area bounded by Flinders, Spring, La Trobe and Spencer streets.

Operators would still be able to drive their horse-drawn carriages outside this zone within the City of Melbourne with pre-booked passengers.

According to the state government, the current “conditions and circumstances pose risks to safety of horses, horse-drawn vehicle operators and other road users”.

But Mr Crichton strongly refuted this suggestion, saying, “we’ve never hurt any member of the public ever”.

He also accused all levels of government of not wanting “anything to do with us”, and that there had been a lack of transparency.

“I can understand if the Melbourne City Council had done a study because a carriage had killed someone or hurt someone ... [but] name one occasion where we’ve hurt somebody or it’s been unsafe, just one occasion, they can’t



▲ Dean Crichton, owner of Unique Carriage Hire, hopes the government will reverse its proposal to ban horse-drawn carriages in the CBD.

answer it,” he said.

“Yes, we’ve had a couple of horses slip over the years, but I’ve slipped over myself a few times and you can hardly say the industry is unsafe.”

“They say you had a horse die last March, and we say yep, 100 per cent, but it wasn’t safe. We had a horse die from natural causes.”

“I do this because I love my job. I’m a horse lover, not a horse hater,” he said, adding he had “a good relationship” with the RSPCA.

Mr Crichton, 56, said he owned more than 100 horses that were “cared for beautifully” at his farm in Gippsland, where he also kept five carriages worth \$35,000 each, which were “specially built and designed to run around Melbourne”.

He said his service was a major tourism drawcard with his horses “constantly being patted” and photographed – something he hoped to continue to enjoy when he handed the reins of his business to his daughter and future generations.

“Why would you want to stop that? Whichever way you look at it, it’s really wrong. Melbourne needs all the help it can get,” he said.

He said despite the city opening up, he had not returned to operations due to a lack of tourists, which had led him to cease using land in Stubbs St, Kensington, where he had allowed his horses to stay in stables a couple of nights a week.

North West City News understands there is also a yard at Barwise St, North Melbourne that once housed carriage horses, but is no longer in use.

The government will consult with operators and stakeholder groups until January 2022, before further information on the proposal to ban horse-drawn carriages in the CBD is released in early 2022.

The proposal follows a City of Melbourne initiative to stop issuing street trading permits for horse-drawn carriages in 2017, however, they were still allowed to operate as they are classified as vehicles under VicRoads’ rules.

In April this year, the City of Melbourne passed a motion calling for a forum to consider the future of horse-drawn carriages, which was held in September.

In March, a horse pulling a carriage in Arden St, North Melbourne, collapsed and died – which sparked an outcry from the community

and a demonstration outside Town Hall with concerns of animal welfare.

Roads Minister Ben Carroll said the state government had heard the community’s concerns and believed the proposal would improve safety and animal welfare.

“We will continue to work with our road safety partners, RSPCA and the community to ensure animal welfare and safety across the industry,” he said.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp agreed, saying, “we know that road and footpath space in the Hoddle Grid is at a premium, which is why we need to keep people moving as best we can”.

“We look forward to ongoing consultation with operators and key stakeholders to ensure horse-drawn carriages operate in lower risk areas,” Cr Capp said.

RSPCA welcomed the proposed ban, saying it had “long held concerns for the welfare” of horses in the CBD “where horse welfare and safety are severely compromised”.

Animal rights group Melbourne Against Horse-drawn Carriages, which garnered a 40,000-strong petition earlier this year calling for horses to be banned from all Victorian roads, also supported the proposal with campaign manager Kristin Leigh saying the city was “an inappropriate environment” for horses.

“Even if they were to adhere to [road] rules, horses are flight animals, and have often spooked and injured humans and horses over the years and that’s not something that can be managed by any authority – it’s innate to their nature,” she said ●

Hawke St linear park plan still flawed, locals say

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*
PLANNING

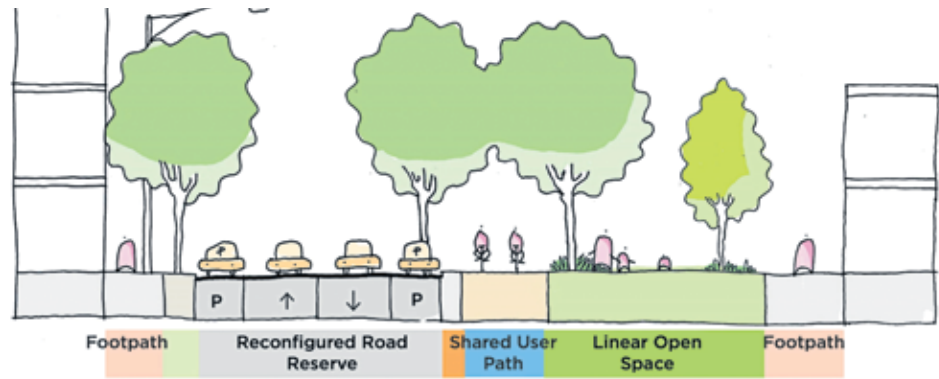
West Melbourne residents and businesses are concerned about the latest designs for a new linear park along Hawke St, which will reduce parking by increasing green space and cutting down traffic to one lane in each direction.

More than 50 locals gathered at Apollo Café in early December to discuss the most recent changes to the City of Melbourne’s Hawke St proposal, which now retains a roundabout at the corner of Hawke and Adderley streets previously slated for removal.

Tricycle Developments director and local resident, Andrew Crawford, said it was good to see the council consulting with the local community, but that it was clear there was “significant concern” about the impact of the project on reducing available parking in the area.

“As a local business owner, we are seriously concerned about the reduction in parking, particularly in the lower end of Hawke St,” he said.

“This will impact the local residents around us, our staff and our clients. It will make doing business in this part of West Melbourne harder – at a time when I thought the council was trying to reinvigorate activity off the back of



▲ An artist’s impression of the original linear park proposal for Hawke St.

COVID shutdowns.”

Stanley St resident Mary Masters told North West City News she also appreciated the council staff at the event, but said it did not “distract” from the fact the linear park was no closer to being delivered.

“It was confirmed [at the meeting] that the Hawke Street Linear Park is tapping into the very secretive Transport and Amenity Program funding, which includes a \$50 million contribution each from City of Melbourne and state

government to help mitigate the effects from the Westgate Tunnel Project,” she said.

“Most people seemed to be in attendance to understand more about the parking implications for the linear park proposal – Hawke St residents and businesses are concerned about the immediate impacts; residents and businesses from other streets are concerned about the knock-on impacts.”

“I think that most locals appear to be supportive of the park, but concerned that the

proposal is not being considered in line with wider impacts for the rest of North and West Melbourne.”

Local resident Anthony McKee said he was both pleased and disappointed by the latest design proposals.

“I am happy the council has kept the roundabout in their latest design; it is a good traffic moderator, but I am disappointed we will potentially lose more car parks from our end of Hawke St. Parking is already a problem for us,” he said. “I would be happy if they built the linear park from Adderley St through to King St, I think those residents would benefit more from it than us.”

Former Lord Mayor and North and West Melbourne Association chair Kevin Chamberlin said the linear park proposal was “crucial” to the people of Hawke St and surrounds.

“The Westgate Tunnel currently under construction will dump significant traffic volumes into North and West Melbourne, and Hawke St is seen as one of the major links to the northern CBD, Carlton and the east,” he said.

“So, it’s really important that some amenity is maintained in Hawke St for the benefit of the people who live there. Hawke St is predominantly a residential environment and should be protected.” ●

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The man behind 300,000 fish

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
ENVIRONMENT

Anthony Forster thinks like a fisherman and knows they love a good yarn.

The state's Inland Fisheries manager cut his teeth on the Maribyrnong, as a young Footscray boy.

He told his parents he would look after his sister as long as he could take her fishing.

When they agreed, he dinked her down to the river where they caught bream and mullet on his home-made rod and an eel on a piece of salami.

Those formative childhood experiences have set the scene for a life in fisheries and a leading role in the recent restocking of the Maribyrnong River with native fish.

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) has released 300,000 estuary perch during the past three years, 100,000 in the past month, with the aim of creating a self-sustaining fishery.

If the perch were to survive, they needed habitat, Anthony said, and snags, the pieces of fallen timber that waterways authorities usually clean out, are the perfect solution.

Until recently, however, pollution had been winning out on the river with people favouring industry over fish and boating over snags.

"Historically the river has been neglected, dredged and rerouted. Fish habitat has been covered in industrial pollution," Anthony told *North West City News*.

The past 20 years have been more hopeful and "the community has taken on a conservation perspective."



▲ Fisheries boss Anthony Forster demonstrates the wonders of a snag.

Anthony said the time was ripe for revitalising the river and the VFA had received wide community support for its radical intervention.

But he reiterated that a habitat was vital. It's not enough to release them at three centimetres in size and expect them to reach two to three kilograms without assistance.

Anthony admitted it would take a while to change attitudes about natural snags. In the meantime, the VFA has constructed 33 super snags out of old trees and rocks, each 10-by-10

metres, and submerged them along the river between Flemington and Avondale Heights.

"We love snags. Fish love snags. They create great feeding and breeding opportunities," Anthony said. "The interesting thing about estuary perch is that they really love habitat more than other species. You only find them around bridge pylons."

The perch will begin their journey between Avondale Heights and Brimbank and as they grow and feed naturally they'll move down the



▲ Works on the Maribyrnong River.

river. This is the first attempt to restock a major Melbourne river since the early 1900s when estuary perch were released into the Yarra. "The time was ripe to create an urban fishery," Anthony said, one close to parks and picnic areas that families can use.

The \$800,000 project was funded by the VFA, Melbourne Water and recreational fishing licence fees. The fish will be ready for catching in around three years ●

New builder appointed for new Kensington Community Recreation Centre

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PLANNING

The company behind the Wheeler Centre development at the State Library of Victoria has been appointed as the builder of the \$42 million redevelopment of the Kensington Community Recreation Centre (KCRC).

McCorkwell Constructions won the job of redeveloping the centre, which will include a 25-metre pool, three indoor multi-sports courts, a children's water play area, and a wrap-around cafe.

It will also feature a gym, health, and wellness spaces, and three large flexible spaces as well as amenities suitable for a range of classes and community use.

Having served the community since 1976, the City of Melbourne identified a dire need to upgrade the KCRC to meet the community's diverse needs.

The existing centre will be demolished to make way for the new centre, with the project expected to be finished by 2023.

After closing its doors to the public in August, the centre has been emptied and the pool drained in preparation for works to begin.

The City of Melbourne said it had relocated most gym equipment to the North Melbourne Community Centre for members to access, while other items had been donated to community groups and local charities.

Fitness classes have been added to the North Melbourne Community Centre and Kensington Town Hall to help the community stay active while the centre was redeveloped.

Two steel sculptures of eels at the centre, which were created for the opening ceremony of the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games



▲ An artist's impression of the redeveloped Kensington Community Recreation Centre.

before being rehomed at KCRC, have also been safely removed and placed into storage.

The City of Melbourne said the sculptures would be incorporated into the new centre following demand from the community.

The redevelopment will include sustainable designs and better integration of JJ Holland Park which will not be impacted by the project.

The council said works to prepare the site for demolition would continue into early 2022 and would inform the community of updates including disruptions ahead of time, and traffic management.

The City of Melbourne endorsed the final concept design for the new centre in December 2020.

McCorkwell Constructions was announced as the preferred builder following a competitive tender process. Its projects in the past include the St Kilda Pier Kiosk and revamping Government House ●

Pressure on fish and chip shops

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
BUSINESS

The price of flake has held steady in local fish and chip shops as we come out of lockdown, despite the shortage of gummy shark putting pressure on retailers.

A piece of flake can be bought for \$7 on Macaulay Rd and Haines St and \$9 on Errol St. "I still have a supply," said Victor of the Salt Seafood & Burger Bar on Errol St.

But the shortage of gummy shark has seen the wholesale price more than double during lockdown.

A 10-kilogram lot used to cost \$80. Now the price is \$200, with a hike of \$50 in the past two months alone.

"It's hard eating into our profits but we have to complete orders," Victor said. "We'll put the prices up next year."

Fish and chip shops stayed open during the lockdown and built up clientele.

"During the lockdown we had more people, but sales weren't high," said Zac of Kensington Fish & Chips in Macaulay Rd. "They didn't have big gatherings."

A shortage of their number one seller could have sent the local fish and chip economy into a spin but the basket size is small, and these proprietors are focused on increasing it.

"I can't go dramatic," Zac said. "I want to make sure I'm not sending people away."

Elie of North Melbourne Fish & Chips in Haines St took over the business just before lockdown, having picked up the trade by working their first.

"I'm happy here," he said. "But the price of everything has gone up. I've changed the prices three times."

A box of oil was \$32. Now it's \$52. "I need eight boxes every week," he said. A box of tomatoes was \$20 to \$30. Now it's \$70. "Cheese,



▲ Zac at Kensington Fish & Chips: even butcher's paper has increased in price.

bacon everything. I bought 20 kg of onions for \$18. Today one bag cost \$23."

Some price increases are seasonal. The spring rain has interfered with the tomato harvest, some commentators say.

They are blaming container landing costs for the flake price hike and the banning of fishing in New Zealand during the lockdown. Even the cost of butcher's paper has increased.

"A lot of this stuff is coming from China," Zac said. "There's always been two options. I don't mind where I get it from. Now we have to buy Australian and it's more expensive."

He's been working at the Macaulay Rd shop run by his parents for 11 years and plans to look at the prices over the Christmas break.

Elie has increased prices on his lunch boxes from \$11 to \$12 and his dinner pack from \$30 to \$32. Victor put up his prices two-and-a-half years ago and is still holding off ●



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▲ Students at Kensington Primary School with their creative Christmas artwork.

Kensington Primary School's winning artwork brings Christmas cheer to Docklands

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
EDUCATION

Students at Kensington Primary School are all smiles after spreading the Christmas joy to Docklands with their creative work appearing on a pop-up Christmas display.

The students spent hours making colourful pieces of wrapping paper which have featured on giant Christmas boxes dotted around the Docklands precinct.

Using stencils, the two designs of traditional Christmas colours and colours of the rainbow revealed stunning patterns and shapes of Christmas trees and angels.

Art teacher Elise Andrew said she was proud of the students' efforts, adding they were "very chuffed" that their work had been chosen for public display, which was part of a City of Melbourne art competition.

"Our art show had to be cancelled due to COVID restrictions, so this really was a lovely surprise," she said.

"The events manager from Melbourne City

Council said our designs looked like they had paid a graphic designer to do them. And to then be told that both designs had been picked was an extra Merry Christmas."

Ms Andrew said the paper design was created out of hand-made printed papers made by the foundation students who were at the time exploring the art of author and illustrator Eric Carle.

"The initial idea was to have individual students submit their designs ... it then became a collaborative effort, beginning largely with a collection of students who were children of essential workers and were attending school on site."

She said due to the challenges of remote learning the students "jumped at the chance" when she was supervising the art room space during lunchtimes.

Chiara of Year 4 said it was "so exciting to know that everyone is looking at our hard work and it's an incentive to keep going with art".

"I'm really happy that it is on display, I worked really hard on it as did everyone else and it's a nice surprise," Talia, also of Year 4, said ●

Termite swarm hits Kensington

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*
COMMUNITY

An unsuspecting local couple were left running for cover after a plague of angry termites swarmed their Kensington home in November, forcing them to turn off all the lights and batten down the hatches.

Madi Thompson and her partner were sitting in their backyard peacefully enjoying the sunset one warm evening, when they decided to turn on some lights as it was getting dark.

Almost immediately after doing so, she said a dark cloud appeared accompanied by a "menacing buzz" ...

"We turned on the string lights which was super-nice for 30 seconds, then all of a sudden there were hundreds – and my partner said thousands – of flying insects," Ms Thompson said.

"At first, we thought they were moths, then maybe flies."

"We were covering our ears because we didn't want them to go in our ears or mouth."

After running indoors and shutting the door, a quick Google search revealed that the pests were termites.

"Old houses here aren't really tight, there's vents and we Googled that they could come in through down lights!" Ms Thompson said.

"We kept Googling and it said turn off all the lights off and close the doors."



"I wanted to warn people nearby because they said it's probably in a neighbouring house. I'm guessing someone needs to check their house."



Ms Thompson said around 50 termites still got into their house, forcing the couple to get creative.

"We kept the bathroom light on to attract them away from where we were sleeping, and by the morning, only around 20 were left in the kitchen and in our dog's food bowl," she said.

Ms Thompson said they called pest control almost immediately but were advised that the exterminators would not need to come for an assessment until January because it takes time for termites to damage property.

Ms Thompson followed up with a post on the Kennington Good Karma Network Facebook group because the pest control company said it was likely there was a nearby colony.

"Pest control said it was probably a nearby colony that was getting too big and needed to relocate," she said.

"I wanted to warn people nearby because they said it's probably in a neighbouring house. I'm guessing someone needs to check their house." ●

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Skydiver devastated after \$10K worth of gear stolen in Kensington

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
SAFETY & SECURITY

A Kensington skydiving enthusiast has been left gutted after a callous thief stole around \$10,000 worth of gear from his car. The victim, who wished to remain anonymous, said he had got ready to work on the morning of December 3 only to find his skydiving gear and personal belongings gone from his Holden Commodore wagon, which was parked in Collett St.

He said he didn't hear any commotion as he had been asleep at the time of the incident, which was believed to have occurred just after 1am after his neighbour checked his CCTV.

"He's got in and grabbed my rig out which is the backpack part of my skydiving gear," he said, but "lucky a neighbour found my parachute," which was discarded at the front of their property.

He said he also had two pairs of sunglasses, cash, old phones, and his trade certificate cards stolen, but his trade tools and golf clubs in the back seat were left untouched. It had been a devastating blow for the victim who said he "was angrier at myself because obviously I didn't lock it [my car], not that it makes it right."

He said his skydiving gear – which included his helmet, an altimeter, audible altimeter, and a custom-made jumpsuit – would be "useless to anyone" outside of the skydiving industry.

He said police had fingerprinted and photographed his car as part of their investigation.

"The gear is very recognisable. If anyone



▲ CCTV footage captures the moment a thief steals from a resident's car in Collett St, Kensington.

sees or hears anything related, I would be very grateful."

After viewing his neighbour's CCTV, he said the culprit appeared to "go across the road to an empty block, opened my rig out thinking it was a backpack or something and then just left it".

According to the victim, another neighbour said their car had also been targeted on the same night where their prescription sunglasses had been taken.

The theft comes as several residents have posted incidents of theft and criminal damage on the Kensington Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page in recent weeks.

One resident said they "almost passed out in shock" after discovering the windows of their car had been completely smashed at Holsten



▲ A car window was smashed after being broken into in Kensington in November.

Lane South in Kensington.

Another reported that their golf clubs were stolen from their car in Kensington while others had their number plates stolen in Kensington and West Melbourne.

Will, a Kensington resident, whose car was stolen in September and later found burnt-out eight days later, said he had recently stopped would-be thieves who tried to take his neighbour's car in November.

"I heard some strange noises out in the street," he said, which was at around 4.30am.

"I saw a couple of guys who were basically messing around with this car ... I said, 'what are you doing?' and they were like 'Oh, nothing much', and then the other guy in another car said, 'I'm having gear-box trouble'."

He said the males left soon after in another car as Will waited for police to attend.

"I went to inspect the vehicle and found they had completely smashed out the glass on the passenger's side," Will, who asked not to use his surname, said of the Honda Civic.

"Sure, it's risky," he said after approaching the males, but "I'm not letting anyone steal a car from the same spot my car was stolen from".

"It's ridiculous, there's more and more of this happening."

Melbourne North police are investigating the Collett St theft and have appealed to anyone with information to contact Crime Stoppers ●

Crime Stoppers:
1800 333 000



▲ Police hope to identify this male who they believe may be able to assist their enquiries.

Police hunt car thieves after leaving out-of-work hospitality worker gutted

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
SAFETY & SECURITY

Police continue to hunt for a duo after a car was stolen from outside a home in Kensington and used in a petrol drive-off in September.

Investigators have been told a white coloured Honda Civic hatchback was parked near the corner of Bateman Rd and The Crescent in Kensington on September 19.

Police allege two people, one of whom is believed to be a male, attended the street and used a second car to push-start the Honda before stealing it about 7.15am.

"It's believed the stolen Honda was driven to a Rockbank petrol station where the driver stole a quantity of fuel on September 21," a police spokeswoman said.

"The stolen vehicle was located burnt out in Melton on September 23."

Police have now appealed to the public for information after releasing a CCTV image of a man they believe may be able to assist with their enquiries.

The victim of the car theft, who told *North West City News* of his frustration and shock over the incident in October, said he had given a statement to police and hoped the CCTV images would lead to an arrest.

"Surely when they stole fuel they would have a lot of footage of these guys," Will, who did not wish to use his surname, said.

"I hope that maybe they get caught," he said, but added, "I don't expect I'm going to get anything out of this."

"I've accepted it's gone and if there is something [as a result of the investigation] I would

be pleasantly surprised."

"Once I heard it had been burnt-out, I just assumed they're not going to be able to be able to do anything for me."

Will, who works in hospitality, said he had lost shifts for most of this year due to repeated lockdowns and the theft of his car, worth \$5000, had been a double blow.

The 30-year-old said his savings had quickly evaporated and had recently taken on a second job with Australia Post to make ends meet.

However, his ordeal also resulted in his job application being delayed after he received a speeding fine in the days after his car was stolen – which he had withdrawn but it was another headache he didn't need.

"This year has been particularly tough. It's frustrating but there's not much that you can do about it."

The theft of his Honda was captured on CCTV by a neighbour, which appeared to show the thieves dressed in black and one smoking a cigarette.

Will said he was asleep at the time and didn't hear anything, adding his car was locked and had a flat battery.

Police said they were looking for two people in relation to the theft of the vehicle. One of the offenders is described as male, Caucasian, about 180cm tall with black hair, and wearing a black jumper and black pants. There is no description of the second offender ●

Crime Stoppers:
1800 333 000

Calls for upgrade of "death-trap" crossing

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*
SAFETY & SECURITY

Multiple organisations connected to Royal Park are calling for a safety upgrade of the dangerous "S-bend" on Poplar Rd at the Royal Park railway station and tram intersection.

The busy intersection at the north entrance of Melbourne Zoo currently doesn't have a crosswalk or signalling, leaving pedestrians and cyclists to cross unaided.

Protectors of Public Land secretary Michael Petit said he and other groups had been campaigning to the City of Melbourne (CoM) to kick-start the safety upgrade as it was "an accident waiting to happen".

"What's missing is the way to navigate a pram, pusher, bicycle or simply safely and easily as a pedestrian to cross Poplar Rd from the tram stop and the railway station," Mr Petit said.

"Lives are and will continue to be at risk as pedestrians dash across the street for lack of a crosswalks and signalling coinciding with drivers seeking to navigate that 'S-bend' before the rail barrier gates are lowered. It's a death trap and something that needs to be fixed."

In its recent 2021/22 budget meeting, the council committed \$50,000 to upgrading safety in and around Royal Park station as part of a concept plan.

But Mr Petit said that as more visitors would be coming to visit the State Netball and Hockey Centre via the new elongated e-class trams, the work needed to be kickstarted before next year.

"Some argued that this concept plan needs to await next year's review of the Master Plan," Mr Petit said. "We should not have to wait until a family outing to the Zoo or a sport team suffers an avoidable tragedy to address this dangerous road crossing."

Friends of Royal Park secretary Kaye Oddie said that Poplar Rd also presented dangers for tram drivers.

"Tram drivers complain of poor sight lines in both directions for vehicles in Poplar Rd [and there's] no safe crossing across Poplar Rd for cyclists or pedestrians using the Capital City Trail," she said.

Other groups calling for the safety upgrade include Melbourne Zoo, Urban Camp, Protectors of Royal Park, the Royal Children's Hospital and the State Netball and Hockey Centre.

They form part of the Royal Park

Stakeholders Network – comprised of more than a dozen community groups, venues and council officers – which was created in late 2020 to address concerns related to the health of the park.

Mr Petit said that the formation of the network was a step in the right direction to ensure groups informed each other of their objectives and plans.

"In the past everybody has been going their own way lobbying for their own interests," Mr Petit said. "We came to the conclusion it would be great if we could all get together to bring up issues periodically."

The Royal Park Master Plan, which was developed in 1984 to protect and enhance the native landscape qualities of the park, was a primary focus for many members in the Stakeholders Network.

After being revised in 1997, it is due to be reviewed by City of Melbourne in early 2022.

Mr Petit said that the main concerns for Protectors of Public Lands (PoPL), Friends of Royal Park and Royal Park Protection Group was to ensure green space wasn't further diminished and that no more parking was created.

"Royal Park has gone from 10 square kilometres to 2.83 square kilometres, so we want to make sure that it doesn't get further diminished and that the premise continues to be a dark space where you can look at the stars at night," Mr Petit said.

PoPL was also keen to campaign against the East West link proposal – an 18-kilometre tollway which would connect the Eastern Freeway at Clifton Hill with the Western Ring Road at Sunshine West.

As it would also include a 4.4 km tunnel from Hoddle St in Clifton Hill to CityLink at Parkville, the link would create light and noise which would disturb the wildlife at Royal Park.

Mr Petit said that the groups would be "keeping an eye to ensure that monstrosity doesn't come back" and would also advocate for more public transport use by Zoo visitors.

A City of Melbourne spokesperson said that preliminary studies to inform the Royal Park Master Plan were currently underway, including transport assessments and conservation management plans.

North West City News understands that work on the Master Plan was deferred during the lockdown, but concept plans for the Poplar Rd intersection are currently being created and work on the Master Plan will begin in 2022 ●



▲ Wendy at Tempted with a nature guide.



▲ Party dresses are selling well at Coco Charlie.

When the Christmas spirit hit Macaulay Rd

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
COMMUNITY

The parable of the leper or outcast who approaches a village for help and is looked after by a Good Samaritan is one of the mainstays of the Christian heritage.

The Christmas spirit was definitely moving this year towards Macaulay Rd, when an unvaxxed local approached.

According to Ross Surace at the dress shop, she'd been rejected by a number of stores already when she stopped to look in his window.

"A lady came who was not vaxxed who wanted to buy something from the window," he told *North West City News*. "Every store I go to they kick me out," she said."

"She was an elderly lady. Some people are not vaccinated because of medical problems. I took the machine out into the street."

Loyalty means something in the small shopping strip on Macaulay Rd as it pits itself against a record online shopping boom this Christmas.

Locals say their shopping strip is a cut above others, despite the trucks using it as a thoroughfare.

"It's nice to have a bit more to a strip than just cafés and hairdressers," said Lou, a local who did most of her Christmas shopping here.

"There is a new florist, a couple of gift shops, Tempted and Erinbank, a furniture store and a new dress shop Coco Charlie all on the one block on Macaulay Rd on the uphill side from the train," she said.

She thought it would be nice to support the stores after COVID so she went to see what she could find and bought something from each of them, except the furniture store.

"I bought flowers at the florist, a book on walks of Victoria at Tempted. They have put camping and local walks/outdoor books in the window as we could not travel," she said.

"I bought some earrings for my sister for Christmas at Erinbank and a gift for a baby, which has a great selection of baby things, and a housewarming gift for my niece of a cheeseboard and knife set."

"At the dress shop I bought a linen top and a set of beads, on special opening discounts."

Wendy Keast at Tempted confirmed that local travel books had been their biggest seller,

including a pack of cards that gave directions to walks in Melbourne.

"One of the silver linings has been our discovery of green spaces," she said.

Ross at Coco Charlie was having a ball when *North West City News* visited. One customer bought two party dresses for a Christmas party and two others were trying on tops and shorts.

"I try and see who's around and I buy for what they like," Ross said, accentuating the local appeal of his merchandising.

"They're not fussy. A lot of girls want flowing rather than skinny," he said. He calls the local style the Kensington flow. "I'll go and get more dresses next week for New Year's Eve." ●

Whisky maestros land in Kensington

WORDS BY Jack Hayes
BUSINESS

A coffee on Bellair St, a pint at Hardimans, a parma at the Doutta Galla or waiting for the level crossings on Macaulay Rd: there are few things more synonymous with life in Kensington.

Now, you can add a glass of whisky to that list as world-class craft distillery, Bakery Hill, moves into its new Macaulay Rd home.

As mainland Australia's first whisky distillers, the family-owned and -run outfit have been producing award-winning whisky for more than 21 years out of their Bayswater North factory.

While Bakery Hill cautiously expanded, so too has its need for a new location – one that allows for a more immersive and connective whisky experience – and according to founder and whisky maestro, David Baker, Kensington has always been the place for them.

"I wanted to get a bit of a feel for the area. I went down to Macaulay Rd and sat in a coffee shop, had lunch, had a walk around and thought this is exactly what we want," Mr Baker said.

"What blows me away is the restoration of the old houses throughout the suburb, it is a beautiful place to live and will be a beautiful place to work."



▲ David Baker (left) and son Andrew (right) of Bakery Hill.

"One of the big things we have been focusing on is how we can involve the community. We want the community to embrace us, just like we have them in setting up here."

When Mr Baker started more than two decades ago, many in the industry, and some outside of it, told him he was a "bloody idiot".

They said you can't make whisky in Australia because of the heat. You need the cold, crisp conditions of whisky's homeland in Scotland.

A former chemistry teacher (cue *Breaking Bad* jokes), Mr Baker scoffed at the criticism and embarked on the daunting prospect of producing whisky by traditional Scottish methods of aging in American oak bourbon, unlike many of his Australian contemporaries who opted for French oak.

"Back then, it felt like I was creating a new industry here and in reference back to

early colonialism and gold mining, that is partly where the Bakery Hill name comes from," Mr Baker said.

"Bakery Hill was the location where miners held their meetings during the Eureka Stockade, and as the only distillery on mainland Australia it had a certain resonance, was I going to strike it rich or not?"

Ballarat's Bakery Hill has since been cleared for, would you believe it, a new McDonald's but the name lives on through some of the finest whisky in the world.

Andrew Baker, son of David and heir to the Bakery Hill throne, said their new home in the heritage M.B Wragg and Co. building, nestled between Kensington and Macaulay stations, will be a game changer for the family-run label.

I went down to Macaulay Rd and sat in a coffee shop, had lunch, had a walk around and thought this is exactly what we want.

"Where we are in Bayswater, we aren't near public transport, we are in a tin shed where the name of the game was purely about making great whisky," Andrew said.

"We do weekend tours, but it isn't a space conducive for people to come in, have a drink, have a bite to eat and do events."

"This location will allow us to do tours more often, do more cellar door tasting experiences, showcase some local beers and bring in the local community to create a bit of a hub."

The 480sqm space will allow the Baker family to take tours of the entire facility, showcasing a brand new still, whisky bar, cellar door, tasting spaces and a production area with more than 250 barrels aging in full view.

According to the Bakers, the higher ambient temperatures of Melbourne allow whisky to age at twice the rate of their Scottish counterparts.

So, a six-to-eight-year whisky, the time typically taken by Bakery Hill to age their products, is the equivalent to a 12- or 16-year-old aged Scottish whisky.

Last year Bakery Hill was awarded prestigious international publication *Jim Murray's Whisky Bible's* Southern Hemisphere Whisky of the Year for its Peated Malt Cask Strength whisky.

The Bakery Hill team take the keys to its 411 Macaulay Rd site at the start of February, with fit-out expected to take roughly two months until it's able to welcome locals at the beginning of April ●

For more information:
bakeryhill.com



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CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY

Christmas is the most magical time of the year and the city is the best place to discover all the fun and festivities. Here's your guide to the City of Melbourne Christmas Festival.

Christmas is a time for giving, and the City of Melbourne is giving families, residents, workers and visitors free events and activities to spread the spirit of Christmas.

This year's Christmas celebrations are bigger and brighter than ever with an exciting line up of new attractions, including a themed night market and a pop-up maze, right up until Saturday, 25 December.

The city will dazzle with the glow of thousands of decorations, including a 16-metre tall Christmas tree, as families and shoppers are welcomed back into the streets and shops.

This year's festival sees the return of time-honoured favourites like the Gingerbread Village and Christmas Square at Fed Square – the home of Santa's Workshop and free activities for families, and the young at heart.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp, who caught up with Santa to launch the festival, said the city will become the Christmas destination of the season.

"Our friends from the North Pole are helping us ensure the city is the ultimate destination to celebrate the festive season with family and friends as we bring the buzz (and bells) back to Melbourne," the Lord Mayor said.

"This year's Christmas Festival is expected to generate more than \$15 million in economic activity – providing the city's business owners with a much-needed boost as they bounce back from lockdown.

"We've all had a tough year and we want to make sure everyone – shoppers, families and business owners – have the best Christmas possible," she said.

The City of Melbourne has bolstered its Christmas line-up this year, adding a range of events, installations and activities to the program.

"Whether it's a Christmas catch-up at one of the city's famous eateries, a family trip to meet Santa at Christmas Square or some late-night shopping to fill the stockings, there will be something for everyone to enjoy in Melbourne this Christmas," the Lord Mayor said.

City Activation portfolio lead Councillor Roshena Campbell said the festive trading season is the most important time of the year for city businesses.

"Our city retailers have been disproportionately impacted by these lockdowns. The Christmas trading season will be critical to their economic recovery," Cr Campbell said.

"That's why the Christmas festivities will be bigger and longer than ever this year. We want shoppers and families to enjoy the best parts of the season that you don't get with online shopping. Our city will be filled with decorations, entertainment and rides to enjoy while supporting our retailers."

The Christmas Festival is part of a landmark \$200 million investment by the City of Melbourne and the Victorian Government to stimulate the economy and reignite the city.

For more Christmas Festival program information, visit whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au/things-to-do/christmas



FESTIVE FAVOURITES

Christmas Square at Fed Square

Make merry at Melbourne's Christmas wonderland at Federation Square. Christmas comes to life with festive decorations aplenty and the city's iconic 16-metre light-up tree. As the sun sets, the dazzling structure lights up with a gorgeous festive glow. Pop in to visit the big man himself and get a free photo at Santa's Workshop. New additions to the square include sparkling neon trees, giant bell swings, beautiful baubles and other glittering new decorations.



Christmas projections

The city's famous Christmas projections are back at Melbourne Town Hall with five gorgeous adornments, complete with a countdown to Christmas clock. Make it a night to remember and visit the projections at Chapter House Lane and Hamer Hall too.



Christmas Cinema

Carlton's Argyle Square has had a Christmas makeover with nutcracker soldiers, pretty festive lights, and even an icicle throne making it the perfect spot for a balmy evening movie and picnic with provisions from Lygon Street's famous delis, restaurants and gelateria. The Christmas cinema is screening silly season favourites like Elf, The Polar Express and National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation on Saturdays in December. Some bean bags and deck chairs will be available, or BYO picnic gear for the best spot. Film screenings start at 8.30pm.



The Christmas Quest

The ultimate Christmas adventure awaits with Marvel Studios' Hawkeye. Head to the Melbourne Visitor Hub to grab your Quest Card and follow the clues to navigate through laneways and arcades to find the answers, with some help from your favourite Avenger. Decipher all the clues and complete the quest for your chance to win awesome prizes.

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Your City of Melbourne community update

NEW CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL EVENTS

Christmas Carnival at Birrarung Marr

Enjoy festive thrills on the banks of the Yarra at the Christmas Carnival. Ride the ferris wheel, drive the dodgems or get the best view of the city lights as you spin 35 meters in the air on top of the Sky Flyer. Try your luck at much-loved carnival games and complete the experience with classic carnival food. Entry is free. Tickets for each ride can be purchased at the ticket box on site.

Floating art installation on the Yarra River

Santa and his Christmas dolphins have landed in the Yarra, with a 27 metre floating sleigh lighting up the river at Birrarung Marr. Created by the quirky minds at Melbourne creative studio, A Blanck Canvas. If you're lucky you may even spot Santa and his dolphins cruising the Yarra river throughout December.

Christmas night market at the Queen Victoria Market

Venture out under the starry lights of String Bean Alley for a festive night market. Bring the family or meet up with friends as you meander the open air laneway, picking up locally-made gifts and unique Christmas trinkets, before indulging in delicious street food from some of the city's best food trucks and carts and refreshing summer drinks at the Brick Lane Bar. There's festive fun for everyone, complete with Christmas carollers, fake snow, a giant gingerbread person to snap a picture with and even a special visit from Santa.



A maze to explore at Docklands

Help Santa find his elves. Make your way through this giant present-themed maze for a chance to win one of four amazing prize packs thanks to The District Docklands, including family passes to Imaginaria, O'Brien Ice House, ArtVo, Chipmunks Playland and more.

Elfie selfie stations

Snap a selfie with an elfie to unlock a magical Christmas world and create an animated augmented reality Christmas card to share with all your friends. Find Merry at Fed Square, Jingles in Bourke Street Mall and Jolly at Southbank. Can you get a pic with all three?



FLASH MAKEOVER FOR MELBOURNE'S LANEWAYS

When was the last time you got lost in Melbourne's laneways?

World renowned and locally loved, Melbourne's laneways have been transformed into an outdoor art gallery by teams of artists - ready for visitors to rediscover our colourful and creative city.

This is the largest revitalisation of CBD laneways in Melbourne's history, with more than 80 creatives commissioned to create works in 40 laneways.

As an added benefit, the program enhances public amenity and safety through increased lighting and other upgrades.

Creative Melbourne portfolio lead Councillor Jamal Hakim said arts and culture have always been an integral part of our city's identity.

If you love the sights and sounds of the laneways, you can also take home your very own piece.

The Flash Forward Store, at 261 Little Collins Street, is now open and stocked with records and one-of-a-kind artworks produced by the creatives behind Flash Forward.

Cement your reputation as the trendiest gift-giver ever with unique masterpieces by brilliant Melburnian creatives

You'll also be supporting these artists, with 100 per cent of the sale going directly into their pocket.

Flash Forward is a City of Melbourne project, supported by the Victorian Government's \$500 million Working for Victoria Fund.

For your ultimate guide to Flash Forward, visit whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au



Ulster Lane
Work by Drez



Rainbow Alley
Work by Gonketa



Tattersalls Lane
Work by George Goodnow



Langs Lane
Work by Shawn Lu



Bourke Place
Work by Tayla Broekman

Information and events in this publication are current at the time of printing. Subsequent changes may occur. All photos taken in line with health and safety guidelines.

KEEP IN TOUCH

To stay connected with all the latest news from the City of Melbourne, follow us on social media and subscribe to *Melbourne* magazine online at magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au

You can also join conversations to influence plans for your neighbourhood through Participate Melbourne at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au

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COUNCILLOR PROFILE

“Happily exhausted”: Lord Mayor absolutely loves her job

The final subject of our Councillor Profile series doesn’t need much of an introduction. Lord Mayor Sally Capp has become the face of our city during her three-and-a-half-year reign in the top job, and she continues to prove why she’s the right leader during a crisis.

WORDS BY *Sean Car*

Irrespective of the news medium, the event or the local encounter, Sally’s glowing and calming presence has been felt positively right across Melbourne and beyond during the pandemic as the city has grappled with world-record lockdowns and economic devastation.

But never one to panic, Sally has always exuded coolness during the crisis and through an innate ability to connect with all walks of life and champion all things Melbourne, she’s provided the energy and drive needed to lead the city through its current challenges.

“I’ve had to be a very fierce advocate for our city over the last 20 months in particular, really push my way into state and federal government as well but be willing to stand up on issues and projects that are important for the city,” she told *Southbank News*.

While some may be tired of hearing the phrase, “bring back the buzz”, to Sally and her fellow councillors, it’s become a mantra engrained into every aspect of the City of Melbourne’s recovery effort, and for good reason.

And in the pursuit of “the buzz”, it’s the responsibility of a leader to sell more than just hope, but to deliver outcomes – something she sees as one of the key strengths she has brought to the role of Lord Mayor.

“I’m a pretty practical and pragmatic person. I’m really keen to know that the work we do here makes a difference in the community,” she said.

“I think it really helps that I’m not a politician per se. I came into this role just to focus on Melbourne and put all of my efforts and energy into that, I’m not distracted by much else.”

“If it’s good for Melbourne, then we should do it.”

As referenced, Sally doesn’t see herself as a politician “per se”. She entered the arena after a decorated career in the private sector, which most recently saw her serve as Victorian executive director of the Property Council.



Beginning her career as a solicitor, she’s held senior roles with ANZ and KPMG, was the first woman to hold the post of Agent-General for Victoria in the UK, Europe and Israel, and was CEO and COO of the Committee for Melbourne and Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, respectively. She’s also a mad Collingwood supporter, having been the first woman to serve on the club’s board.

It’s that strong blend of real-world experience that is perhaps why, in her words, she sees herself as being able to relate to people more readily through strong communication, “being myself” and “leadership in action”.

And through not only being the first woman directly elected as Lord Mayor of Melbourne, she said she had sought to further change perceptions of the role by always being “accessible and approachable.”

“It’s being someone that others can relate to. I think a lot of people can see themselves in me, which is a nice thing and vice versa,” she said.

“So, when I do meet people it’s often one of the first things they say to me is that even they feel like they can approach me in the street. It’s not always nice things they say to me, but they can approach me!”

“We are a local government at the end of the day. It is important that I can represent the city up and out but it’s absolutely important that, in doing that, I’m representing who we are as a community and what our aspirations are. That can only come by being really embedded in the community.”

Having initially risen to power unconventionally in a by-election following the fall of former Lord Mayor Robert Doyle in 2018, she said the biggest learning she had taken from her first political campaign was that “it’s dangerous to make assumptions”.

While her Property Council tag may have raised the eyebrows on a few voters from the outset, she said she was proud that the feedback she generally received from locals was that she had since proven those perceptions wrong.

Just as comfortable at a business lunch as she is a residents’ group meeting, she said she valued the importance of always being curious, asking questions, and “to investigate and explore issues.”

“You almost have to be indefatigable in doing that because we end up with a better outcome,” she said.

“Now I don’t mean extending to over analysis leads to paralysis at all, but I do think making sure we’re taking all of the advice we’re given internally and externally, but that we check in with the people we represent, is absolutely vital.”

And having taken over a quite different Town Hall in 2018, she has also very much been the public face of cultural change at the City of Melbourne as the organisation recovered from allegations of sexual misconduct against Mr Doyle, and the ensuing Freckleton report.

By fostering a culture where “people can call out things where they see it” and “feel safe to actually speak out”, she said a lot of work had been put into addressing workplace issues,

which in turn, had also created an environment of improved accountability.

“I think that sort of culture also helps with accountability and there are times over the past three-and-a-half years where I’ve had to say we were wrong. Or I got it wrong,” she said.

“It’s appropriate we’re held to account as an organisation, as individuals and we should welcome that because, let’s face it, nobody’s perfect and nobody gets it all right the first time around. But it’s about being in a relationship with our constituents where they can call us out on issues, and that we listen and respond.”

Despite not being a politician as such, she said her greatest political strengths were “that I don’t give up” and that, while acknowledging the inherent difficulties, she was a “a big consensus builder”.

As for the biggest buzz she gets out of being Lord Mayor?

“Overall, it’s people. I really get a lot of energy from being around people so that gives me a real buzz.”

While the pandemic and the city’s recovery remain front and centre on her radar of issues, she said continuing efforts in ending homelessness and solving the housing crisis were close to her heart. So too, responding to climate change.

And while she wouldn’t buy into questions about running at the next election or not, she said she “absolutely loved her job” and despite its skewed work-life balance, she was “happily exhausted”.

“I’m fitting a lot of life into 24 hours in the day,” she said. “It’s my absolute joy to be frantically running around town attending as many things as possible.” ●



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NORTH WEST CITY LOCAL

Celebrating 30 years of Women’s Circus

Kensington local Jenny Pitts has, like many of us, remained constricted to the confines of her home for the duration of much of the past two years. But that hasn’t failed to stop her from embracing her creativity and talents as a performing artist with the Melbourne Women’s Circus.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jenny spent 16 years as a member of the Women’s Circus, describing herself as a visual artist, physical theatre performer, singer, dancer, and filmmaker.

Based in Footscray, the circus offers multiple classes such as juggling and manipulation, ariels, acro-balance, and more. Both the classes and live performances are gearing up for a grand reopening to the public in early 2022, with a mid-March window specified for the return of classes.

As members recently celebrated 30 years of the wonderful Women’s Circus, despite doors largely remaining shut for the anniversary, Jenny screened her own special tribute video,

which premiered at the members’ celebration.

During the two-minute video, Jenny sets the mood with some music by Mary Black, before manipulating gravity’s effect on balloons of all colours.

As the circus family prepares for its grand return to the stage, Jenny has been expressing her creativity through other outlets during the trying lockdowns.

Doing her own small part, Jenny did what she could to lighten the mood of her neighbourhood.

“I have been doing what I can to connect with the local community, and provide small positive community experiences, through various types of artworks and activities,” she said.

She began with a display of alternating art exhibits featuring on her street-facing corner wall, “for locals to view on their daily COVID compliant exercise outings”.

These COVID-busting breaths of fresh air also inspired Jenny to create a makeshift performance and arts studio in her own home, which she’s used to film studio-quality features in comfort. These features, though constrained by the limits of technology, are boundless in their creativity.

Of the content that Jenny had filmed far throughout the lockdowns, one in particular has proved itself to be an exemplary success. *Unravelling in the Time of COVID* documents



the effects of a pandemic on a performer, and the limitations of the human mind in times of hardship.

The film was released to critical acclaim as Jenny submitted it as a competitor in Pinewood Studios’ “Lift Off” International Online Film Festival.

“I have just been informed that my film has

been selected as one of the finalists,” Jenny told *North West City News*.

With lockdowns seemingly fading into obscurity as the world learns to live with the coronavirus, Jenny and the other talented performers and teachers of the wonderful Women’s Circus are looking forward to an exciting, in-person 2022 ●

The festive season is upon us!

How good to welcome the start of summer, the promise of Christmas, and freedom from lockdown with an open-air jazz concert!

Thanks to Christmas Festival funding from the City of Melbourne, that was the good fortune of Parkville Gardens residents on the afternoon of Sunday, December 5. Throw in blue skies, warm sunshine, a grassy reserve and picnic fare with friends and family, and you have perfect conditions to enjoy two local jazz combos making great music.

First up mid-afternoon was the Juliarna Clark Quartet – Juliarna doing the vocals, backed by husband James on double bass, Joe Ruberto on keyboard and Rodney Gilbert on drums. Wonderful performances from them all, including toe-tapping standards and seductive French classics. From late afternoon to early evening, it was modern jazz from the instrumental ensemble Breakout – Colin Garrett on sax, Malcolm Hornby on keyboard, Malcolm Abbott on drums and Stan van Hooft on bass guitar. It was an entertaining mix of music, ranging from original compositions to arrangements of Beatles and Abba songs. All up, a lovely relaxing and enjoyable way to come out of a challenging year.

The final highlight of the year was the annual general meeting of the Parkville Gardens Residents' Association, held on the evening of Thursday, December 9 at the Reggio Calabria Club. There was a good turnout of long-term and recent members plus a couple of new faces. On the meeting menu were the usual ingredients – reports from the president, secretary and treasurer, open forum for questions and suggestions, and the election of committee members.

It gave us the opportunity to look back on a year that was remarkably successful, given the 108 days of lockdown. Funding from the City



of Melbourne enabled us to have a community picnic in March, a children's Easter egg hunt in April, a community dinner in June and the jazz concert in December. Additional funding from the Children's Week Council made the children's orienteering adventure in October possible. All in all, much to be thankful for.

The good news continues with fresh faces replacing retiring members Prue McKeown, Uma Lyengar and Chris Chen, along with Michael and Monika Saunders who are currently overseas. The new-old team consists of Tom Knowles (president), Faye Ryan (secretary), Sharon Khoo (treasurer), Michael Thom, Ian



Aitken, Uddika Kahawatte, Nick Png and Jose Torres.

We look forward to serving the Parkville Gardens community and enhancing the neighbourhood in 2022. We'll be doing our best to make progress with the ongoing issues of development plans and powers, school zoning, traffic and parking, communication and community engagement. In the meantime, we wait with bated breath to hear whether our application for funding from the City of Melbourne for a series of events in 2022 has been successful or not. We hope so! ●

Residents can find us:
facebook.com/groups/pgrass or
[email secretary@pgra.org.au](mailto:secretary@pgra.org.au).



Tom Knowles
TOM KNOWLES IS THE PRESIDENT
OF PARKVILLE GARDENS
ASSOCIATION.
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ARTS HOUSE

Arts House set for a “colourful” return in 2022

After a tumultuous couple of years full of uncertainty, the Arts House is proud to announce its 2022 season one shows.

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*

Confident that now is the time for performing arts to shine once again, Arts House artistic director Emily Sexton is looking forward to the shows with certainty in announcing a full program of shows between February and May 2022.

“It is an absolutely wonderful feeling to be back. I think we are all grateful to the Victorian community for getting out and getting vaccinated and making these events possible,” she said.

Reopening to the public with a fully sold-out season, the first couple of weeks in December has given the Arts House a glimpse of what is to come in the new year.

And Ms Sexton is in awe of artists’ “grit and determination” in such times.

“It’s really interesting to see just how powerful and urgent the work is that the artists are creating,” she said.

“It really matters and feels quite profound to be able to get together and do what you love. It is a very special time”.

YES by THE RABBLE is one of the productions that has battled the continuous tiring dilemma of being rescheduled due to lockdowns and restrictions.

Known for provocative performances, *YES* will explore complex dynamics of power,



▲ We Take Back Our Mother Tongues: FAMILI. Photo: Dissident Media.



▲ Make Your Life Count by Sarah Aiken. Photo: Gregory Lorenzutti.

consent, truth and knowledge. Confronting unexpected moments in life through highlighting that there is not always one solution for every situation.

Partnering with their neighbours, the Arts House will also host leading Australian dance company Lucy Guerin Inc with their “evocative and poignant” dance and scripted word piece, *Flux Job*.



▲ Hercules by Daniel Schlusser. Photo: Daisy Noyes.



▲ Flux Job by Lucy Guerin Inc. Photo: Gregory Lorenzutti.

Among the shows affected by COVID and announced to be joining them in the first season are *Make Your Life Count* by Sarah Aiken and Collaborators, *We Take Back Our Mother Tongues* by FAMILI and *Hercules* by the Daniel Schlusser Ensemble.

“Everyone has shown remarkable resilience in adapting to the different kinds of conditions we have been working under. But [digital] has

unfortunately not been the same as being in person,” Ms Sexton said.

Although celebrating the moments of live performances that digital cannot compare to, the Arts House will be continuing with its Makeshift Publics digital program in 2022, showcasing conversations with Melbourne’s most critical artists and cultural leaders throughout season one.

“It has been so rewarding to work online and to be able to have conversations across the country and internationally. We have all seen the potential that digital practices can offer, and we want to keep going and supporting artists in exploring that,” Ms Sexton said.

“There are now a lot of different ways we can connect, and it was always an interest of ours even before the pandemic.”

A much-anticipated work of the Arts House has also featured in *The Time of Refuge* publication. Working on it for six years, Ms Sexton said there were proud to be sharing it in person with a launch set for March.

“The work was a deep investigation into creativity and the climate crisis. And in terms of emergency disaster preparedness, we are all actually knowledgeable about what it means to live through that and live through multiple crises,” she said.

Excited to share with the public everything that has been worked on throughout the pandemic, Ms Sexton believes there “is something for everyone”.

“There’s a lot of reasons to step outside of your home and start experiencing life in colour, not grey,” she said.

“We are doing some exciting work inside the building to transform how it feels. It really is an enjoyable time and makes you feel like you are living again.” ●

What have we learnt?

We can ask this question of ourselves – individually, personally. We can ask the question of (or about) our workplace (or employer). We can also ask it about our governments – local, state and federal.

Perhaps it is little early to be totally clear and categorical about lessons learnt, but I do believe it's important to ask and answer the question – before too long – so that the lessons don't dissipate into the never-never.

COVID has “thrown the cat among the pigeons”; if our health, finances, or family life and relationships have suffered, it's been very challenging, and for many of us it continues to be! As chairperson of the Kensington Association, I want to ask the question about our local government – the City of Melbourne (CoM). As residents of the CoM we have unique connections, because we have the CBD under our local government umbrella. We are all (more or less) aware of the very challenging scenario that presents itself to our councillors. They have been thrown the task of bringing life and prosperity back to the city centre; we wish them well. How about the management, support and services provided to other precincts, like Kensington? Is there evidence of lessons learnt?

I think the signs are very good! I invite readers to access Participate Melbourne where you will immediately notice a particular focus on Kensington – “Participate Kensington”. You will find different ways to participate and, “help ... make Kensington the best it can be and shape the development of our neighbourhood plan ...” You need to respond before December 22!

It continues ... “we want to hear what you learned during lockdown, what you love about Kensington and your priorities, aspirations and wishes for this unique part of our city.” I really like this. We often feel – us minions – that we are being told what is good for us. This is the CoM's community and city services reaching out to us, displaying good community development principles, and – as a parallel community development document says – “... activating communities to lead their own change”.

When we read such words, the cynics among us (no we're not, just healthy sceptics!) say “nice words!”. But, no ... whoa back, hold on a minute! ... the CoM is putting money behind their rhetoric. Up to now there have been four “Community Engagement Partners” covering the whole CoM area. For example, **Melanie Del Monaco** has been covering three different neighbourhoods – Kensington being one of them. She is now the community engagement person exclusively for Kensington. One gets the sense that someone has learnt something more about the importance of “community”. The community development vision reads:

“To enable a just, inclusive and sustainable society where communities are empowered to engage, participate and shape their own city.” Furthermore, the following questions are posed to help consolidate that vision ...

- How do we build a deeper understanding of community needs and strengths and priorities?
- How do we activate communities to lead their own change?
- How do we ensure the participation of diverse voices, views and people?
- How do we create safe spaces for community to connect and get support when needed?

Excellent stuff! Back in August (*North West City News*, issue 07), in writing about



adaptation following COVID, I opined that – “The future for local communities is fascinating to reflect on [following COVID]. If there is a trend for people to be more confined and connected to activities in their communities ... then that is a healthy trend”. The “healthy trend” I am thinking about is where a community evolves to foster a sense of belonging and safety, and also to provide increasingly diverse local employment opportunities. We do very well with our eating and drinking places, and Kenso village has some diverse shopfronts, but there is much more that we can do. What about art and cultural precincts, for example – places and activity centres that connect us to our history, our indigenous peoples, and activates our creative instincts?

We know Kensington is a diverse community, we know it will change and diversify more; The Macaulay Structure Plan has more or less ensured that will happen. Melanie has an exciting

job ahead of her, she has already forged connections with groups such as the Kensington Neighbourhood House, the Vennie, Unison housing, Rotary, Transition Town Kensington and the Kensington Association. Having Kensington as the focus of her attention will make a big difference for us and for her ... but ... yes there is a but ... the second of the previous dot points is critical. As Kensington grows and further diversifies, the direction, priorities and vigour must come from us. Melanie (and other community leaders) can facilitate, but we must respond. The “lessons learnt” need consolidation •



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ABORIGINAL MELBOURNE

A Very Koorie Krismas

The city will be celebrating Christmas with an Indigenous twist this year thanks to the Koorie Heritage Trust (KHT) which is also throwing an end-of-year art exhibition showcasing more than 100 works by Aboriginal artists.

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*

KHT chief executive Tom Mosby said A Very Koorie Krismas at Federation Square would feature roving performances over three days celebrating indigenous culture as well as a Koorie Klaus wearing a Santa Claus outfit in the Aboriginal flag colours.

“Basically, Koorie Krismas is our way of contributing to the holiday season from a distinct Aboriginal perspective,” Mr Mosby told *Docklands News*.

“It's all about putting our indigenous communities in the centre of what's traditionally a European celebration.”

Mr Mosby said there would also be a Koorie Art Show at Federation Square kicking off on December 4 showcasing artwork from more than 80 indigenous and Torres Strait Islander artists.

“It's an opportunity for people to see the style of art that's produced in Victoria which is different to other Aboriginal art in other parts of Australia,” he said.

“People tend to lump Aboriginal art into one thing, like dot painting, but it's all unique here in Victoria.”

The Koorie Art Show is an award exhibition, with \$38,000 up for grabs including a \$10,000 top prize sponsored by Creative Victoria for the best work of art. There will be a best emerging artist award as well as a reconciliation prize.



Mr Mosby said all the artwork would be for sale, and included 3D sculptures, jewellery and printed photography.

“When people come to Koorie Klaus, it'll encourage people to come to see the art at KHT, so if people are looking for a Christmas gift, they can come in and pick something up from the gift shop.”

fedsquare.com/events/a-very-koorie-krismas •

For more information:
koorieheritagetrust.com.au

ROTARY CLUB - FLEMINGTON & KENSINGTON

The National Youth Science Forum

The forum is a highly sought after, two-week program on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) for students entering Year 12. It runs in January in all capital cities and is supported by Rotary, the major universities, science and technology businesses and organisations and the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources.

engineering. It allows them to wider their horizons and consider the unusual and innovative.

The Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington has sponsored local students to participate in the NYSF for the past 15 years, enabling any student the opportunity to apply, be selected after an application and interview, and go on to study science. Some of our students are now genetic researchers, vets, nurses, engineers, in the RAAF and the Navy, software and game designers.

During the past four years we have funded five candidates from Mount Alexander College and this year, two additional students, Inas and Zoe will have the opportunity to explore their options.

We congratulate them and wish them an enriching experience in January 2022 •



For more information:
rotaryflemington.org.au or email
info@rotaryflemington.org.au



METRO TUNNEL

A very sparkly Metro Tunnel Christmas with The Huxleys

If you’ve ever wanted to see two crocs sharing a prawn cocktail, glittery gumnut babies and kissing emus, then The Huxleys have your Christmas wishes covered.

The Melbourne-based artists, known for their dazzling and surreal fashion art performances, have transformed the Metro Tunnel construction fencing at City Square and Scott Alley into a glittery wonderland of Australiana-themed Christmas characters, accented with coloured neon lights.

After what Will Huxley describes as a “tough year”, the pair wanted their Metro Tunnel Creative Program Christmas artwork, *As Camp as Christmas*, to bring joy, magic and humour back into the city.

“We love how camp, decorative and over-the-top Christmas can be,” he said. “But Christmas can be Northern Hemisphere-centred. We wanted to celebrate the beauty and uniqueness of Australian flora and fauna.”

The pair cites Australian fashion designers Linda Jackson and Jenny Kee as their inspiration for the work, along with the stories and artwork of May Gibbs. They worked with illustrator Manouri Peiris on the artwork, and neon

and “shimmer wall” studio Electric Confetti on the installation.

“Manouri took our brief and initial sketches and did some gorgeous illustrations of some of the flora and Christmas elements,” Will said.

“It was a long process designing the work and then creating each costume, the makeup and then photographing the elements, before finally bringing it all together, incorporating our elements with Manouri’s illustrations.”

In addition to the artwork along Swanston St, The Huxleys’ characters also appear with outré dance moves in a Christmas carol music video, playing on screen at Federation Square and at the Metro Tunnel information centre, Metro Tunnel HQ, on Swanston St.

But it wouldn’t be a Huxleys Christmas without a live performance – and to that end they are hosting roving disco carols on Thursday, December 16. Pop along to City Square at 5pm and you might be lucky enough to nab a festive gift.



▲ The Huxleys at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Photo: Jo Duck.

There are more Instagrammable Christmas city highlights nearby at Flinders Quarter, between Flinders, Collins, Swanston and Elizabeth streets. Shops are decked out with handmade wreaths by artist, designer and stylist Kitiya Palaskas. Below street level at Degrafs St, Campbell Arcade is now a Christmas wonderland, with real pine trees and coloured festoon lighting.

For a special Christmas selfie, there are three giant postcard artworks by local label La La

Land. And for the kids, find free Australiana masks to colour in at Metro Tunnel HQ – and see your handiwork up on the screens by sharing with the hashtag #MetroTunnel ●

For more information:
metrotunnel.vic.gov.au

STATE MP

What really matters to our community?

In late November and early December, I held pop-up offices in Kensington, North Melbourne and Carlton. It was so great to meet so many of you and hear what’s important to you in our local community.

In Kensington, I was joined by Rhonda Pryor, Greens candidate for the federal seat of Maribyrnong, and in North Melbourne and Carlton I was joined by Greens federal MP for Melbourne, Adam Bandt, along with some wonderful volunteers who helped us out.

We heard from so many people on so many different topics. One thing that was abundantly clear is that locals love our community! And so do I.

The issues people raised were very varied, but the most common issue raised with me was people want more action on climate change and protecting our environment here in Victoria. Other issues raised included wanting more services on the 402 bus route, specific council issues that we will follow up for residents, and people wanting to know what might be in store for the next phase of the pandemic (fingers crossed for no new COVID variants needing lockdowns or school closures, please!).

I’m following up all of the matters people have raised with me and I wanted to let everyone know that you can always raise local issues with me at office@ellensandell.com. It’s our job to stand up for you and the things you care about, and we love doing it.

Looking back on 2021, it was definitely an unusual year, but we had some great community wins, including:

- \$7 million for repairs and upgrades at Kensington Primary School.
- Safety improvements at Docklands Primary School, including a crossing supervisor and 40km/hr speed signs.
- \$13 million extra funding for midwives and maternity care in our public system.
- New programs to support public housing residents and give residents more of a genuine voice to government following the 2020 hard lockdown.
- Solving local issues like getting the SA border open to City of Melbourne residents and getting rapid antigen COVID tests to North Melbourne Primary School when they needed them.



▲ Ellen Sandell MP and Adam Bandt MP at a pop-up office at Arden Gardens shopping centre in North Melbourne in early December.

The Greens in Parliament have also maintained consistent pressure and accountability on the government for stronger climate action and more public housing for the 100,000 Victorians who are currently on the waiting list.

I know 2021 has been pretty tough, but it has certainly made us all even more aware of the things that are truly important in life: a close-knit, safe community, good health, open-space and pockets of nature, stable jobs, and being able to hug our family and friends.

I hope you’ll all be able to take a breather over summer and have a relaxing Christmas and New Years with those you love. We sure need it!

I look forward to continuing to work on the things that are important to you, me, and our community in 2022. Look after yourselves and have a safe and happy summer ●



Ellen Sandell
STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE
OFFICE@ELLENSANDELL.COM

SATELLITE FOUNDATION



Creativity and connection for mental health and wellbeing

Satellite Foundation connects and empowers young people with a parent/carer who experiences mental health challenges.

We encourage young people and their families to stay connected, be creative and keep well, so they can realise their full potential.

By using the power of creativity, Satellite fosters a community of young people who can share their stories and connect over similar experiences.

Satellite offers programs and workshops for children and young people aged from eight to 25 and has two programs starting in January and February 2022.

At Home with Satellite: January school holidays

At Home with Satellite is a fun, creative program that offers connecting activities for children and young people aged eight to 14 years old that runs each school holiday. These workshops combine a curated selection of activity-based self-care packs and online workshops (two-part series) that provide opportunities for artistic expression, sharing of experiences and peer connection within a facilitated group program.

Create and design your very own instrument in our “Music and Me” Workshop, and explore how music feels, sounds, and means different things for everyone. Or create a collection of images, words, and doodles for inspiration in our “Dreamboards” workshop (for ages 12 to 14).

These At Home with Satellite workshops are both a two-part series that take place on Mondays January 17 and 24.

Music and Me: 10am to 11am (ages eight to 11) via Zoom

Dreamboards: 1.30pm to 3pm (ages 12 to 16) via Zoom

Both workshops include a bonus voice lab session on January 28!

Satellite Connect: Make new friends and connect with others

Satellite Connect is a primarily online, free program for young people aged 18 to 25 years old. This six-week program provides opportunities for young people to be heard and the power of their experiences to be shared through a supported and positive platform. Participants meet, interact and collaborate, practicing personal development skills to help build confidence and peer connection. Satellite Connect ends with a free, in-person overnight retreat at the beautiful Coastal Forest Lodge in Bellbrae, Victoria!

Monday, February 21 to Monday, March 28, 6.30pm to 8.30pm via Zoom for a total time commitment of 12 hours.

All programs are FREE. Find out more information and register your interest online ●

For more information:
satellitefoundation.org.au



Faces of North West City

What’s your Christmas tradition?



ANTHONY
My Christmas tradition is normally spending time with family. This year we’re going over to our aunt’s house and we’re having family Christmas there at Yarra Junction.



KIERAN
I go back to the country to spend it with friends and family in Charlton, about halfway to Mildura.



RUBY
On Christmas Eve, my family and I all watch *Elf* together, and that’s it! And then we have a big lunch on Christmas day, then we go swimming and have a few beers.



RHIANNON
We go back home to Brisbane and have lunch with our family down at the beach.

ENVIRONMENT

Consider a more conscious Christmas

“
Before you say “Bah Humbug” – this article is about some tips and suggestions for lessening the negative impact on our planet rather than cancelling Christmas.
”

For those who celebrate Christmas, it is generally a time of festivities and joyful gatherings. It doesn’t have to be a time of extravagance and increased consumption.

Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree

At this time, it’s traditional to decorate the Christmas Tree with all sorts of shiny baubles and handcrafted decorations possibly from the children’s many years at school. If you have a plastic tree, try keep reusing it for as long as you can and repair it rather than throw it away.
Every year people buy real Christmas trees, which end up in landfill a few weeks later. Not only is this a tremendous waste of resources, but it also has a substantial impact on the environment. When the trees are cut we reduce their ability to take up carbon and then by cutting them down and transporting them we increase carbon emissions.

In the UK you can now rent a living fir tree for the festive season but, alas, this is not available in Australia yet. So, consider growing your own (in a pot) if you have the space or creating a makeshift one.
What is a Christmas Tree without lights? Consider LEDS, they use 80 per cent less electricity and solar fairy lights.
Christmas wrapping
Buying new is best avoided. Use up what you have, buy recycled wrapping paper or at least go for non-laminated free from plastic, glitter or foil as these cannot be recycled. Brown paper packages with a sprig of fragrant foliage (from your garden) always looks and smells good and can be composted.
Furoshiki is a traditional Japanese cloth for wrapping Christmas gifts. It is a simple single piece of cloth tied in a knot and there is zero waste. Avoid sticky tape by using cloth ties made from old clothing or recycle ribbons/ties.
Decorations
Reuse Christmas decorations each year. If you need a bit of a spruce up in this area, forage and make your own from materials around your home and garden. Buy second-hand. There is an abundance of ideas online on how to DIY eco-friendly decorations. If you need to buy – look for ethical and environmentally-friendly products.
The big lunch and/or dinner
Buy local seasonal food and don’t waste it. Food wastage and packaging going to landfill, increases significantly around Christmas time. In the UK at Christmas time (I could not find figures for Australia) five million Christmas puddings (many with plastic packaging) and two million turkeys get thrown away.

Maybe go a bit more vegetarian – do you really need three types of meat on the Christmas table? By reducing your meat intake it’s good for the planet, good for animals and good for your health.
Gifts
Many unwanted Christmas gifts are thrown away each year. Think about buying something the person really wants and something of quality that’s useful. Consider the end of the gift’s lifecycle – can it be repaired, reused, repurposed, and finally, is it organic? It should be able to naturally degrade and compost back into the earth.
Consider making your own presents and remember there are many sustainable, ethical and eco-friendly gift ideas online. Buy second-hand gifts from eBay, Facebook Marketplace or a special piece of antique glass or ceramic item – (keep in mind carbon footprint) local is always best.
Experience gifts such as tickets to a nature reserve, Australian walking tours or an online weaving class with a First Nation’s woman. Visit facebook.com/wayapawarr
Give something back
Christmas time is an opportunity for us to consider our blessings and those who do not have as much as us. Consider gifting money to maybe a single parent or woman trying to create her own economic independence by starting a small business in a third world country who is negatively impacted by Australia’s high carbon footprint. Check out [KIVA.org](https://www.kiva.org) and Oxfam unwrapped.
You might want to consider gifting closer to home, gifts for the homeless for those women and children seeking shelter from abusive relationships, a local refugee family. Do research to

ensure your money or gift goes directly to those in need rather than supporting a hierarchy.
Possibly gift to those organisations helping to bring down carbon by directly planting more trees (Plant It 2020) and protecting old growth forests.
Take a moment in the busyness of the season to stop and remember the many gifts of our home, Earth – the forests, beaches, seas, parks and rivers we will enjoy over this summer period.
Have a conscious, wonderful and safe joyous festive season ●



Jacqui van Heerden
CO-CONVENER OF TRANSITION TOWN KENSINGTON
[JACQUIVANHEERDEN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:jacquivanheerden@gmail.com)

What goes up must come down

If you’ve been to Melbourne Zoo lately, you would have been greeted by beautiful, shiny bubbles floating past as you walked through the main entrance and into the grounds. As fun and pretty as they are, those bubbles actually represent a very serious message about marine life and how our actions can have a huge impact on animals.

WORDS BY DARCIE CARRUTHERS,
ZOOS VICTORIA
SENIOR MANAGER CONSERVATION CAMPAIGNS

Balloons are usually associated with celebration, festivities and good times. But many people aren’t aware that balloons are actually the single deadliest item when ingested by seabirds. A few years ago, Zoos Victoria and Phillip Island Nature Parks initiated the “When Balloons Fly, Seabirds Die” campaign off the back of evidence from the CSIRO that identified the top three deadliest forms of marine litter to wildlife. They are: fishing line, plastic bags and balloons. Our existing “Seal The Loop” campaign was developed to help address the effect of fishing line entanglements on marine wildlife, and there was already government action around plastic bags. But we noticed there wasn’t much being done about balloons. And that’s how the When Balloons Fly, Seabirds Die campaign was born.



In 2019, the University of Tasmania and CSIRO assessed the cause of death data for 1733 Australian seabirds across many different species, including shearwaters, petrels and albatross, and found that the item that was most likely to result in death, when ingested, was balloons. Unfortunately, when used outside, balloons can escape from us and make their way into the marine environment, where they can stay for a very long time.

What goes up, must come down.

When a balloon bursts and ends up floating on the surface of the ocean or waterway, animals can mistake it for food – eating it themselves or feeding it to their young. This is exactly what is happening with the Flesh-footed

Shearwaters at Lord Howe Island.

Located just off the coast of New South Wales, Lord Howe Island is home to an incredible population of Flesh-footed Shearwaters (also known as mutton birds). The birds are a migratory species that travel to the island to lay their eggs in sand dunes. Unfortunately, many of the adults there are skimming balloons and other items off of the water’s surface, returning to Lord Howe Island, and feeding those items to their chicks. Our campaign collaborator from the University of Tasmania, Dr Jennifer Lavers, studies the birds and the contents of their stomachs every year. She has consistently found that balloons and their attachments (the clips and string) are some of the most identifiable items eaten by the birds.

Seabirds and turtles are the animals most affected by balloons and other soft plastics because they are the ones that are most likely to mistake these items for food, being surface-foraging species. A seabird is up to 32 times more likely to die if it swallows a soft item, like a balloon, than if it swallows any form of hard plastic. Items such as cling wrap, food wrappers, as well as balloons, can be lethal to wildlife.

So, what does that mean for all of us here in Melbourne?

On July 1, 2021, it became illegal to release balloons into the environment in Victoria, under the state’s new and revamped *Environment Protection Act 2021*. Zoos Victoria was able to play a vital role in bringing about this change by working with other state government agencies to highlight the dangers that balloons pose to wildlife. They were incredibly receptive to the evidence we presented, the success of our When Balloons Fly, Seabirds Die campaign, and the incredible response we received from the community.

As we head into summer and spend more time outdoors doing the things we love to do as Victorians and Australians, it’s important to keep in mind how our actions can have a massive impact on marine wildlife. And by making some small changes in our lives – such as swapping balloons for bubbles – we can greatly reduce harm to precious wildlife.

If you’re heading out over summer and having a picnic or a day at the beach, try to bring cutlery, cups and plates that you can use again. If you’re celebrating outdoors, think about blowing bubbles instead of using balloons. And, if you do come across a marine or aquatic animal that is injured or in distress, you can call Melbourne Zoo’s Marine Response Unit on 1300 245 678. Together, we can help protect these beautiful animals and our environment ●

HISTORY

Arden

There would be few residents of the suburbs covered by this community newspaper who are not able to get to Arden Street without the help of Google Maps.

WORDS BY Felicity Jack

It is a road that leads west to Footscray and beyond and passes the home of the North Melbourne Football Club, the popular swimming pool, and the Limerick Arms. It merges into Courtney St at the Wreckyn St roundabout, but from here you can see the old Meat Market building.

When I first became a resident of North Melbourne in 1994, the Meat Market was a Craft Centre where you could watch crafts-people work. The Bulla Cream Factory was on the corner of Leveson St and I could hear the chains being pulled to open the huge doors at around 4am every morning, and then the noise of churning as the vats were cleaned.

I was curious about the name of the street. Several of the streets of North Melbourne have a literary background. Sir Walter Scott was born at Abbotsford and is buried at Dryburgh Abbey near Scotland’s border with England. And Byron St is named after the famous poet. So, I assumed that Arden St was associated with the idyllic Forest of Arden in Shakespeare’s pastoral comedy, *As You Like It*. Researching further, I discovered that the street was named after George Arden who, at the age of 18, launched Melbourne’s first newspaper, the *Port Phillip Gazette*.



Not much is known about George’s upbringing, but he does have a distant link with England’s literary heritage. He was the second son of Major Samuel Arden of the British East India Company and belonged to one of the three English families whose male line could be traced from before the Norman Conquest. His family claimed kinship with Shakespeare’s mother. He landed in Melbourne in 1838 and, within two weeks of his arrival, had launched his newspaper. It was the first legal publication in the colony. He was evidently a man of strong passion; an illustration of his character is conveyed in this extract from a letter to a friend whose hospitality he had abused, taken from the Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB): “In writing my thanks for your friendly care of me on a late occasion, I take the opportunity to ask yr forbearance for the annoyances I must

have caused to Mrs H and family, by my fooleries and devilries. I return at the same time a card case which Mrs Arden says was found in my pocket, on my recovering from my outrageous debauch; but of this circumstance I offer no explanation, simply because, I am ashamed to say, I cannot.”

George’s monopoly of the newspaper industry didn’t last long, and other newspapers began to compete. George’s vitriolic and passionate temperament led to his decline as a businessman. He became bankrupt and, in 1852, he went to the goldfields to try to regain his fortunes through mining. It didn’t go well. In 1854 he was found dead on Bakery Hill in Ballarat. According to the ADB, “he was dismissed by his peers as a man of talent and power cut down by his own intemperance”.

The Arden Precinct is a new urban renewal



initiative of the state government, centred around the new Arden Station. It is envisaged that the precinct will house around 15,000 residents and provide 34,000 jobs. The development is expected to take place over the next 15 to 30 years.

In the meantime, the Hotham History Project, in conjunction with Metro Tunnel Creative Program and the North and West Melbourne Association, is involved in providing historic information and images for several large hoardings to be erected in Lauren St, close to Arden Station, early in the new year. These will bring to life some of the history of the area.

It is to be hoped that the Arden Precinct will, at some point, acknowledge the man who gave Arden St its name ●

Pet’s Corner

Meet Mordy, the smart pup!

“

Mordy, a six-year-old standard poodle, recently learned how to open the door to the courtyard all by himself, forcing his owner, Maria, to keep it locked.

”



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN TADIGIRI

Maria said Mordy was certainly a smart pup. “One of his favourite things to do is chase his ball,” she said. “If his ball is in sight nothing else matters, as I’m sure you saw at the park.” “Mordy is a pretty easy-going pup and doesn’t dislike much ... except for birds. They are his mortal enemy, and he keeps our courtyard clear of them!” Maria first met Mordy when she moved to Australia in August this year. “He has been my partner’s family pet since he was a puppy and it’s obvious he’s a member of the family!” “Mordy isn’t a big eater when it comes to the healthy stuff like breakfast and dinner. However, he loves his treats!” “My partner’s dad even makes him his own peanut butter cookies ... spoil! Also, when it’s hot out he loves munching on ice cubes.” Although living in an apartment with a larger dog isn’t ideal, Maria said they made it work. “We’re lucky to have a large courtyard for him to play in

and are within walking distance of an off-leash dog park at Clayton Reserve. Mordy keeps us both active every day and we often meet other pups and chat with their humans while out and about!” she said. “Although Mordy isn’t the most social and usually doesn’t care much for other dogs, if you throw his ball for him, you’ll be his best friend.” “He’s often shy when meeting other dogs and people but will warm up quickly!” Recently, Maria said her partner took Mordy bouldering. “He loved hanging out and watching everyone climb up the wall and fall to the mats. Mordy also loves going to the beach and running around the sand. He’ll run into the water and quickly run out as the wave chases him,” she said. “North Melbourne is very pet friendly and a great place to raise a dog! There’s a lot of cafes and parks to bring your pup to and a lot will have facilities like water dishes and doggy bags.” “Although there could be more bins for when you’re out and about with the pup ... overall we love living here with Mordy and he’s become quite the city pup!” ●

NATURE

This bird is a lady

Everybody knows and loves ladybirds. In fact, they are probably the most universally accepted insect species, bringing more smiles to more faces than any other.

WORDS BY Howard Birnstihl

Kids have always loved them for their colour and their spots and for the way they trundle along like miniature mechanical toys. And they fit perfectly on a child’s fingertip. Gardeners like them too as they are aphid eaters, but birds like them as well and, of course, they’re easy to spot, if you’ll forgive the pun. Speaking of spots, the common variety have 18. I’m told the less affluent European variety can only afford 15. A couple of years ago, walking the dog up through the Parkville Gardens, passing what amounts to a virtual forest of She-oaks, I was amazed to find ladybirds in plague proportions. More accurately, I discovered thousands upon thousands of their tiny iridescent yellow eggs laid in batches of 20 or so, often in hollows on the rugged bark, but more often waving in the breeze on their spindly needle-like leaves [called phyllodes], far too spindly to support most predators, insects or birds, not game to venture out on a limb, so to speak. As I had known little about the habits or life cycle of



the wrong colour. Insipid yellow, they dry out their wings, their black spots slowly developing along with their more sumptuous and luridly familiar orange. They feast on tiny insects and more than the occasional aphid and virtually from the day they reach adulthood they enter the mating game. Eggs are laid methodically as in some assembly line process. A couple of days later the eggs hatch and off we go again. Sixty trees each with about a dozen batches of 20 eggs every week for the summer. I’ll leave you to do the maths. Like the silver eyes, thornbills and other small grey birds, I return each summer for the feast, although why this mass production should take place in this sparse grey green forest is a mystery to me, if not to the birds. As stated, the physical environment is ideally suited to the egg laying process but in all the time I’ve been roaming there I have yet to see a single aphid. I guess ladybirds are more intrepid travellers than I’ve ever given them credit for, my particular swarm setting their GPSs and heading off through the buffeting wind for a km or two to seek out the rose bushes in your garden and mine. The more ladybirds, the less aphids. The less aphids, the more the roses of North and West Melbourne thrive. If you would like to see more of my work, scan the QR code below or check my YouTube channel under my name ●



Kensington’s new strength studio is a dream come true

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*

For Emily Bakyew, opening a strength studio in her garage in Kensington was a no-brainer.

She wanted to create an environment she would feel comfortable exercising in; a welcoming place where locals of all abilities could gather to lift weights and banter with each other – no grunting or lycra.

And now, nine weeks after opening, her Everyday Strength Studio has far and away exceeded her expectations.

“My model is you come and see the same people every week, no surprises,” she said.

“If other commercial spaces have made you feel anxious, and if you don’t know if people there are going to be nice, here, we say ‘hi’ and talk to people.”

“Now I pinch myself every day when I open the garage door, it’s what I’ve been dreaming about and now it’s real.”

Ms Bakyew instructs three groups of four locals, running six sessions of strength training a week based around squats, deadlifts, and bench press.

But long before starting up the business, Ms Bakyew loved strength training. Her garage was already kitted out with gym equipment including a squat rack, bench press and bars with weights.

All she did to start up the business was duplicate each piece of existing equipment.

“The feedback I get is that it’s casual, small, friendly and that it’s welcoming and not intimidating,” she said.

“It’s not a big space, there’s no weird and wonderful machines.”

“If you’re nervous, everything starts with a six-kilo kettle bell – it’s like picking up a grocery bag. [We] get to know each other, there’s banter – it’s pretty cool!”

Ms Bakyew said her partner often heard laughter booming out from the garage when clients were over.

“It’s not meant to be just sweating, grunting and lycra, I tell people to wear whatever they’re comfortable with – it’s meant to be fun!” she said.

In the past, Ms Bakyew has had a sore back. But since she started strength training, her

pain has disappeared.

“I thought that was going to be one of those things I had to just accept, but I don’t have that anymore,” she said.

“My body feels great – it hasn’t been about aesthetics; it’s about how I feel.”

“It’s never been about hitting a certain number, it’s for my body, mind and confidence. There’s something very empowering for people to go ‘wow, I just picked 40kgs off the ground, or I just put 20kg above my head’”.

The Department of Health recommends that adults aged 18 to 64 years old exercise most days, made up of two-and-a-half hours to five hours of moderate intensity physical activity across a week and include muscle-strengthening activities as part of your daily physical activity on at least two days each week.

Ms Bakyew bases her program duration and intensity on these recommendations, also using her knowledge of powerlifting and her tertiary qualifications in sport and recreation and education to tailor programs to her client’s abilities.

She also juggles her part-time job working for a not-for-profit at CERES Environment Park looking after operations and booking excursions for school students – work she said she “loves” in combination with the strength training.

And it’s a combination which makes sense when you consider Ms Bakyew’s varied background, which includes working as a qualified secondary school teacher, ski instructor, a management consultant at a top tier accounting firm, and a powerlifting coach.

While Ms Bakyew currently runs one program, she will start up another type of training session at the start of next year for people over the age of 50, or for people recovering from injury.

It’s an idea inspired by Real Strength in Castlemaine which runs a program called “It’s Never Too Late”.

“They [Real Strength] realised there was a gap in the fitness and health industry for people who were not yet ready for strength and balance classes but didn’t feel comfortable at a commercial gym and who were told by medical professionals that they should be doing more exercise,” Ms Bakyew said.



“They’ve [Real Strength] got these incredibly strong older people, and the health benefits are incredible. [It’s helping with] everything from aches and pain, back pain and people have been saying: ‘I’ve been able to get off my blood pressure meds’”.

Ms Bakyew said they had also seen a reduction in stress from “meditation in movement”.

Halfway through the interview with this publication, a lady walking her dog stopped outside the strength studio’s open roller door to have a look inside and ask where she could find out more information about the home gym.

Ms Bakyew immediately jumped up and told

the local she was welcome to come down and train and handed her a business card with a smile.

“I don’t want this to be a 12-week thing,” Ms Bakyew said.

“It’s a forever thing, it’s keep coming back, it’s part of your lifestyle.”

“I want to help the community.” ●

For more information:
Everydaystrength.com.au

PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS’ NETWORK

Public housing tenants come together to improve their housing

I welcome the state government’s program to have structured consultation with public housing residents in Flemington and North Melbourne. This should occur on all public housing high rise estates.

The Pave the Way Forward Program (PWFP) can be seen as responding to the Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass’s recommendation in her report on COVID-19 lockdowns of high-rise public housing in 2020.

No apology has ever been received despite it being asked for by many who were adversely affected by the lockdowns.

There is a simple but often unrecognised fact and that is: people will welcome a chance to have a say about their circumstances and how they can be improved but only if governments listen.

Outgoing Minister Richard Wynne has said that the state government was giving public housing residents the “power” to make decisions about their housing and local neighbourhood.

“From after-school play programs to digital literacy courses and employment pathways, these programs will ensure public housing residents are not left behind as we recover from the pandemic,” he said. My hope is that the new incoming Housing Minister follows up on these promises.

After discussions with Minister Wynne in September about safety concerns, and ways to empower residents at the Carlton high rise

estate, he has still not responded. I think we deserve to be informed if there has been any progress on the issues we raised.

The respect for governments is at an all-time low in Australia for a host of reasons but I hope this time around things will be different.

There are many immediate maintenance issues to fix in all buildings:

Lifts are forever breaking down, many residents are left to wait a very long time to get simple things fixed (leaking taps, heaters not working and many other issues), communal washing machines not working. Drying rooms are filthy, and recycling is almost non-existent.

Don’t demolish public housing and replace with private and community housing

One of the locations included in the PWFP is Holland Court which has had 198 of its dwellings demolished to be redeveloped and replaced with community housing and private rental accommodation.

The government is saying that this is only the start of demolition and redevelopment at Holland Court in its recent report on local community consultation. engage.vic.gov.au/holland-crt-and-victoria-st-flemington-housing

The developer is being given land for free, with all that will be built being handed over to the government 40 years after construction is completed.

This concept is being marketed as a plus, but it is extremely difficult to comprehend what this will actually mean in 40 years.

Will all the community housing and private tenants and residents supported under the National Disability Insurance Scheme be evicted and public housing residents return?

I frankly can’t believe the government’s plan. I think what we have at Holland Court is just one next step in a strategy to move completely away from public housing provision: housing that is the most affordable for very low to low-income households and can be extended to many in desperate need of secure accommodation.

The government will release its 10-year strategy soon and I will not welcome it if public housing is not given priority.

The state government must decide to introduce mandatory Inclusionary zoning into all property developments in greater metropolitan Melbourne that will deliver contributions to new public housing stock as part of its new

plan instead of demolishing existing housing.

Public housing on SBS

Readers of my monthly column may have started to watch this new series on SBS sbs.com.au/guide/article/2021/10/25/julie-goodwin-jenny-leong-mp-and-caleb-bond-ask-themselves-could-you-survive

It is tracking the experiences of three very different people – a NSW Greens MP, a journalist, and a cook/TV personality – living for a few weeks on social security benefits and in public housing.

The detail is graphic and alarming on the actual money hundreds of thousands of adults and children have day to day to survive on in what should be a caring country.

One can only imagine what it is like in private rental housing and be on social security benefits ●



Cory Memery

CORYMEMERY@YAHOO.COM


What's On: December - January

COMEDY UPSTAIRS

Bobbie Peels, 351 Queensbury St, North Melbourne

Saturdays: Dec 18 – Jan 29, 6pm to 8pm. FREE for all ages


Melbourne's best comedians each week taking risks and having fun. Happy hour 4pm to 7pm at the bar with \$8 pints.



SCIENCE GALLERY MELBOURNE

Enter from Grattan Street
Science Gallery Melbourne
700 Swanston Street
Parkville 3052, free.
Open January 20.

Science Gallery Melbourne involves, inspires and transforms curious minds through arts and science.




TREASURES OF THE NATURAL WORLD

Melbourne Museum

Everyday until January 16 2022.

Some of the world's biggest, rarest, oldest and most fascinating treasures have landed at Melbourne Museum, all the way from London.




CHRISTMAS CINEMA

Argyle Square, Carlton

Dec 18, 8.30pm. FREE for all ages

Come see The Polar Express in a cosy bean bag (some provided at the space!) at Argyle Square's Christmas Makeover, dotted with nutcracker soldiers, festive lights, and an icicle throne. BYO picnic gear for the best spot!

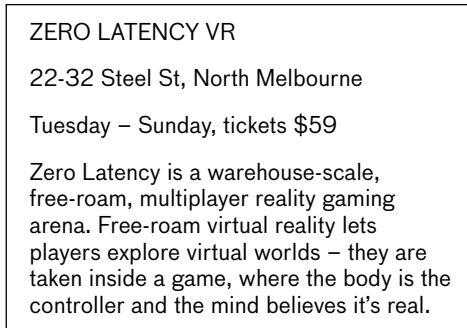


ZERO LATENCY VR

22-32 Steel St, North Melbourne

Tuesday – Sunday, tickets \$59


Zero Latency is a warehouse-scale, free-roam, multiplayer reality gaming arena. Free-roam virtual reality lets players explore virtual worlds – they are taken inside a game, where the body is the controller and the mind believes it's real.



FUTURE U

RMIT Gallery
344 Swanston St
Open until February 26, 2022
Free

Future U explores what it means to be human during a time of rapid technological acceleration.




CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR

Bellair St, Kensington

December 18, 9am to 4pm. FREE

Shop for handmade goodies and stocking stuffers at the Christmas craft fair.

whatson.melbourne.
vic.gov.au/things-to-do/

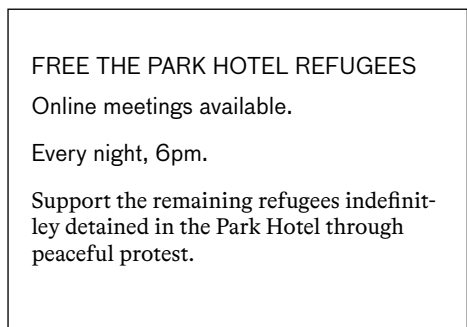


FREE THE PARK HOTEL REFUGEES

Online meetings available.

Every night, 6pm.

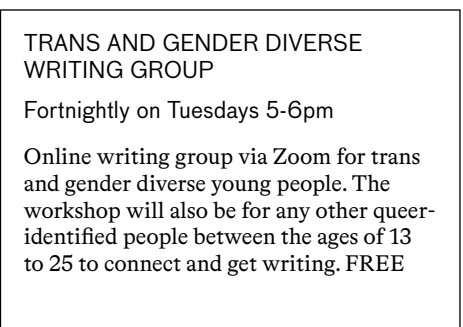
Support the remaining refugees indefinitely detained in the Park Hotel through peaceful protest.



SANTA SHOP

Hardimans Hotel, 521 Macaulay Rd
December 20-22, 10am to 1pm. FREE


Santa is visiting Kensington this Christmas! Pop in to meet and greet the man of the moment, Santa! Let him know what's on your list and get a free photo as a memento.



TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE WRITING GROUP

Fortnightly on Tuesdays 5-6pm


Online writing group via Zoom for trans and gender diverse young people. The workshop will also be for any other queer-identified people between the ages of 13 to 25 to connect and get writing. FREE



PARKVILLE TENNIS CLUB

Parkville Tennis Club
151 Royal Parade
Parkville 3052
Monday - Sunday, 6am - 11pm

Parkville Tennis Club on the edge of the central city is small and friendly, with three synthetic clay courts.



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