

# NORTH WEST CITY NEWS

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## Community rejoices as government finally reopens public housing community spaces

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *John Tadigiri*  
COMMUNITY

After being deprived of vital community spaces by the Victorian Government for more than two years, vulnerable public housing residents can finally attend support programs and cool rooms again after sustained pressure from several community leaders.

Community spaces in public housing across Melbourne including North Melbourne and Kensington have been shut since March 2020, a move the state government justified due to COVID public health directions despite many other types of public facilities and venues reopening to allow crowds back.

The community spaces provide areas for residents living in cramped housing to socialise, learn and stay cool during summer.

The prolonged closure forced community program pro-

viders to find alternative solutions which were at times inaccessible, or strenuous for public housing residents.

But in response to questions from *North West City News*, a Department of Families, Fairness and Housing spokesperson confirmed in early April the rooms would reopen.

“All public housing community rooms and cooler places are set to be reopened by April 19,” the spokesperson said.

“The programs that community groups run in these facilities are highly valued by the department and our public housing communities, and we look forward to having them back on site soon.”

While community spaces have been closed, cool rooms in public housing have also been shut forcing residents, many of whom are elderly, to sleep in stairwells and nearby parks to avoid the sweltering heat in summer, according to public housing residents and community leaders.

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## Consortium snaps up historic Younghusband stores site

*Kensington’s prized 100-year-old Younghusband wool and grains store site is set to undergo a major redevelopment as early as 2024 after a three-party consortium emerged as its newest buyers.*

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
PROPERTY

ASX-listed Australia-based commercial real estate investor Irongate Group, together with Canadian real estate firm Ivanhoe Cambridge, and construction group Built announced last month that they had snapped up the iconic red-brick buildings, which span 1.57 hectares.

It comes as Impact put the Younghusband complex on the market late last year after paying \$30.25 million for the 2-50 Elizabeth St precinct in 2016.

Impact had a vision to transform the heritage-listed site into a “beautiful industrial village” under an \$87 million project with stage one designed plans having been approved to convert the historic red-brick warehouses into a “state of art” office and retail precinct.

Stage two of the Woods Bagot-designed plans, which gained planning approval in January, proposes to partially demolish the buildings to make way for two towers at six and eight storeys high, with the latter consisting of 16,000 sqm of office and ground floor retail connections between the two stages.

The purchase of the Younghusband site is believed to be part of a \$60 million deal, with a statement released by the consortium saying, “Upon acquisition, the joint venture will immediately commence construction of stage one for delivery in early 2024.”

Ivanhoe Cambridge co-head of Asia Pacific George Agethen said, “As

we accelerate our growth in Australia, this new acquisition is another demonstration of our strategy to develop mixed-use projects at the core of urban regeneration initiatives.”

“In this context, we are delighted to start a new partnership with Irongate and Built to deliver this iconic project. We are particularly proud of the sustainable characteristics of Younghusband, anticipating our commitment to make all our development projects net-zero carbon from 2025.”

Ivanhoe Cambridge is a global real estate investor and according to its website it is “committed to creating living spaces that foster the well-being of people and communities, while reducing its environmental footprint.”

Irongate’s CEO Graeme Katz said with Built’s “unparalleled expertise” in delivering heritage assets this would “allow for the delivery of what will be Australia’s leading heritage office asset at a time where there is strong demand for market leading amenities and environmental initiatives to attract workers back to the office.”

“We are also proud to be partnering with Ivanhoe Cambridge, a very high-quality investment partner and among the 10 largest real estate companies in the world with assets owned in excess of C\$60 billion. Their investment provides validation of both Irongate and Built’s expertise.”

“We look forward to integrating this beautiful heritage asset into the wider Kensington community and

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## Community rejoices as government finally reopens public housing

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State MP for Melbourne Ellen Sandell, who has previously written multiple letters to the Minister for Housing calling for the community spaces to reopen to no avail, said public housing residents always seemed to be the “last people on the government’s radar.”

“We’re relieved that after pressure from my office and the community, the Department of Housing will finally reopen these community rooms,” Ms Sandell said.

“But it’s pretty telling that after pubs, restaurants and theatres have been open for months, public housing residents are only just now able to access their own facilities. Why do public housing residents always seem to be the last people on the government’s radar?”

Kensington Neighbourhood House (KNH) manager Rebecca Smith said the announcement meant KNH would be able to use the community spaces once again to run essential programs for vulnerable community members.

“This is great news, and a big relief,” she said. “The community spaces haven’t been open since March 2020 and it has been really difficult to cater to community needs without them. We’ve needed to run our homework program at the neighbourhood house, which means splitting the program over two sites, it’s less accessible for families and really crowded.”

Ms Smith said given how important study and literacy support was for children especially post-pandemic, KNH was excited to be able to operate closer to participants’ homes.

Erika Lodge is a community worker living at 94 Ormond St who founded a program called 78 Seniors which runs day trips for elderly public housing residents to get lunch and attend events.

“It’s great, terrific!” she said in response to the news. “It means we can get in there and do some activities and bring it to the residents of the high-rise which is better still.”

“We’ll resume as soon as possible because



you never know, they might close it again.”

The community space reopening will allow a suite of other programs to resume running.

These include North Melbourne Language and Learning which teaches English, Kensington Arabic School which usually runs Arabic classes, and residents at 9 Pampas St who are seeking to use a room there for functions.

The Chinese Friendship Association (CFA) in Kensington is another community group which has been unable to carry out its normal functions. Ms Smith said CFA was a group of 40 to 60 Chinese seniors who lived in the Kensington estate and used a space there for regular gatherings, helping mitigate social isolation and foster community ties.

KNH will also be able to resume its Healthy Living and Learning program at the Kensington public housing in partnership with Unison and Cohealth, providing weekly lunches for up to 60 people.

A Cohealth spokesperson said it was working with the support of the DFFH to ensure that the high-rise community had ongoing health and social support it needed.

“In preparation for the community spaces reopening, we are also helping community groups to develop COVID Safe plans and protocols so that they are prepared to safely resume community activities,” the spokesperson said.

After reopening, the community rooms will not require COVID marshals, intensive cleaning, and vaccine or QR code check in, unless the facility is accommodating 50 or more people ●

## Council calls on locals to “participate”

## COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Neighbourhood planning is underway across the City of Melbourne and the council is calling on locals in North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Parkville to have their say before April 30.

Through its Participate Melbourne online portal, the council is currently seeking feedback from locals right across the municipality as to the current and future states of their communities in an effort to inform new neighbourhood plans for each postcode.

“Participate Kensington” is already well advanced with the council having consulted with locals late last year. A set of 26 “draft neighbourhood priorities” are currently available for local feedback by April 19.

Among them are “Wurundjeri Heritage and Culture” and “Supporting Reconciliation”, as well as improving traffic and parking management, active and public transport, and community activation and connection.

Key projects priorities include revitalising Moonee Ponds Creek, more affordable housing, renewable energy investment, increasing neighbourhood greening, and better utilisation and access to community venues.

Now, the council is calling on locals in West Melbourne and North Melbourne to share what their priorities are for the future of their neighbourhoods. The Parkville Gardens community is also being factored in to the “Participate Parkville” process.

Through the online portal, locals can take a survey, connect with their council neighbourhood partners or attend one of the various scheduled “pop-up” sessions and share their thoughts. The neighbourhood plans will go before councillors at a meeting later this year ●

### For more information:

[participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au](https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

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# Parkville Gardens planning in council hands

WORDS BY *Sean Car*  
PLANNING

The City of Melbourne will now be responsible for administering the Melbourne Planning Scheme and issuing planning permits in the former Commonwealth Games Village at Parkville Gardens.

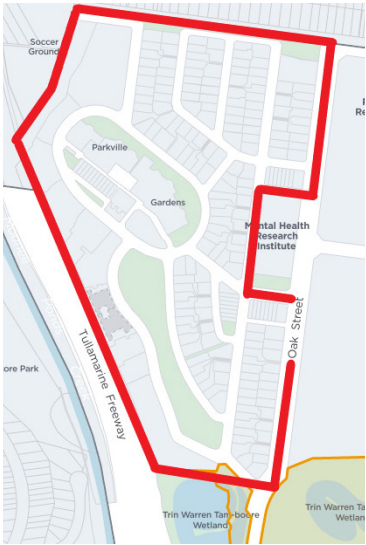
It comes after Minister for Planning Richard Wynne amended 11 municipal planning schemes to hand back responsible authority status to local councils on March 31, which included Parkville Gardens in the City of Melbourne.

Following a review by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) of sites where the Minister for Planning was the responsible authority, a spokesperson for Richard Wynne said he decided that his involvement was no longer required to fulfill “state planning policy objectives for the former Commonwealth Games Village site.”

The spokesperson said the City of Melbourne was consulted and supported the change subject to the recently issued final permit for the Freeway Apartments.

“The Minister decided that his involvement in the former Commonwealth Games Village site is no longer required as completion of the broader Parkville Gardens development is well advanced,” the spokesperson said.

“Melbourne City Council supported this change and will now administer the Melbourne Planning Scheme



as it applies to the site.”

In his regular column in *North West City News* this month, Parkville Gardens Residents’ Association (PGRA) president Tom Knowles said it had “long been PGRA’s wish” to transfer planning control to the council.

“Development in the area has been under the direct control of the Minister for Planning ever since the state government took it over to provide accommodation for athletes competing in the 2006 Commonwealth Games,” he said.

“This arrangement made it almost impossible for local residents to object to amendments to the planning scheme for the area. This return to customary processes is very welcome news indeed.” ●



## Consortium snaps up historic Younghusband stores site

*Continued from page 1.*

creating an amenity for all local residents. We will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure the property continues to be part of the community for another 120 years.”

Revitalising Younghusband will be Built’s first major development project in Melbourne, with the company having completed the refurbishment of the State Library of Victoria in 2019 and the enhancement of the Anzac Memorial in Sydney’s Hyde Park in 2018.

“Our capability as a development and construction group will allow us to unlock this opportunity and mobilise quickly to provide the project with certainty and give these heritage buildings new life respectful of their rich history,” Built CEO and managing director Brett Mason said.

“We are also excited to be working with our existing partner, Irongate and a high-quality real estate investor with global reach like Ivanhoe Cambridge.”

Kensington Association president Simon Harvey said the news of the joint venture was “certainly hopeful” but added “it remains to be seen how it develops as to whether it’s good news or not.”

“It’s important that such an iconic building is made use of by the community rather than sitting there and not being utilised because it is a wonderful building,” he said.

“I’ve heard good things about Built in terms of their work. I know nothing about the rest of the consortium but it’s certainly hopeful.”

“If there is any alteration to what has been agreed to, of course they’ll have to put in a further submission.”

“It has lots of potential – let’s just keep our fingers crossed.”

City of Melbourne’s heritage portfolio lead Cr Rohan Leppert said he would be “delighted” to see the new owners act on the live planning permit for the Younghusband precinct which supported its “adaptive reuse and conservation”.

“This will open up the site to public access, facilitate new jobs, and conserve the extraordinary heritage of this much-loved part of Kensington,” he said.

Last September, Cr Leppert told a Future Melbourne Committee meeting that a “tight arrangement” was in place for stages one and two “so that you can continue to have that masterplan precinct approach, no matter who owns individual parts of these buildings in the future.”

“We really want an owner and an applicant who is fully committed to preserving that heritage fabric, and I think we’ve got a scheme put forward here that does do that,” he said at the time.

In March, Irongate Group was bought out by property investment group Charter Hall and Dutch pension giant PGGM in a \$1.3 billion deal.

Irongate confirmed it would be pursuing the Younghusband joint venture through its Irongate Templewater Australia Property Fund.

The warehouses were originally bought by wool giant Younghusband & Co in 1902 and are one among the last remaining wool stores in Victoria ●



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# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FLOCK BACK TO MELBOURNE

Give a warm welcome to international students from all over the world as they return to Melbourne in their thousands for orientation at colleges and universities this month.

The pandemic saw half of Melbourne's 52,000 international students leave the city, but they are now returning in force. More than 26,000 students have returned since December, and this number continues to grow.

Melbourne is one of the world's great student cities and young people from across the globe flock here to enjoy exceptional education, career

and lifestyle opportunities. They love Melbourne, and the city loves them back.

International students are not only here to study. They provide skilled workers across many industries, supercharge our startup sector, and enrich Melbourne's vibrant multicultural communities.

To celebrate O-Week, we asked some of our international student ambassadors to share their favourite places in Melbourne, and what they love about their new home. Here's what they had to say.

## KIMBERLY MITCHIKO CLEMENCIO



I am from Manila, Philippines. I am studying community services and working as a project coordinator.

I love Melbourne's cultural festivals, night markets, coffee, laneways, Victorian buildings, its people and diversity. There are plenty of things to do and discover every week. There's always something new. These things make Melbourne, Melbourne – indeed one of the most liveable cities in the world.

My favourite place in the city is Melbourne Skydeck. I love seeing Melbourne in a different perspective. I always bring my friends there. I also love Southbank. I love seeing the buskers there, which makes the city feel so alive.

## TARZON BUDHATHOKI

I am from Nepal and I studied a Bachelors of Engineering Technology, focusing on telecommunications.

One of the things that I love most about Melbourne is the city's multicultural environment. It is a place where there is so much mutual respect.

Yarra Promenade is one of my favorite places in Melbourne. One of the reasons I love Yarra Promenade is because of the view of the river and the amazing night view of city lights reflected in the water.

## DAVID GUERRERO TORRES

I am from Bogota, Colombia. I studied a Bachelor of Architectural Design at RMIT University and I'm now undertaking my masters.

I love how Melbourne is active in arts and design, and how it offers so many events that invite people to share cultural experiences. Melbourne also offers infrastructure to practice any fitness activity.

One of my favorite places in Melbourne is Carlton Gardens. This place is home to two great architectural buildings: The Royal Exhibition Building and Melbourne Museum. It is a place where the old combines with the new.

I love sitting down in the shade of the trees and contemplating extraordinary views of the city and buildings.

## IVAN LEE



I am from the Philippines. I finished my Diploma of Leadership and Management and planning to do a higher education eventually for my professional growth.

I love that Melbourne is one of the best cities in the world, and I enjoy how culturally diverse my new home is – with welcoming people, vibrant places and tasty foods.

Queen Victoria Market is one of my most favourite places in the city. This major landmark has a wide variety of quality produce and food items. Aside from helping out our local farmers, you can shop here at a cheaper price.

## GIANNINA MATTO PÉREZ

I am from Paraguay and I am enrolled on a Masters of Public Policy and Management at the University of Melbourne. I love how welcoming Melbourne is to cultural diversity leading to a vast array of cuisines, arts, sports, entertainment and more, which are coupled with a brilliant provision of public services. My favourite place in Melbourne has to be the Skydeck at the Eureka Tower.

I am in love with that stunning view of the city and I strongly recommend waiting for the sunset. Another must is the Van Gogh exhibition at the LUME, describing it as exquisite is an understatement.



## ALEX FERNANDO GUTIERREZ

I'm originally from Colombia. I am an architect and currently studying an Advanced Diploma in Program Management.

I love the fact that Melbourne is such a multicultural and vibrant city. There is always something going on. Melbourne matches my personality in so many ways. I love learning about cultures, arts and so on, and I can enjoy all of this here in Melbourne.

It's hard to choose my favourite place in Melbourne, but I would choose the Shrine of Remembrance. This place not only commemorates those Victorians who gave their lives when defending the nation, but also how brave and resilient Victorians are, and we've been able to see that during the pandemic. And it is a place you where you can get breathtaking views of the city skyline, especially at sunrise or sunset.

## DON DOUGHTY

I am originally from Sabah, Malaysia, and currently studying for a Bachelors of Business Management and working with The Huddle (North Melbourne Football Club) as the international student liaison.

I was always told about the fun and chill environment of Melbourne. Since arriving in 2017, I've realised that there is so much more to it – this is a vibrant city with an inclusive culture for international students.

My favourite places in Melbourne are Eureka 89 restaurant, Arbory Afloat on the Yarra River and, most of all, Lui Bar at 525 Collins Street.

We are delighted to welcome international students back to help reignite the city and council offers many year-round programs to help them feel at home.

To find out more, visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/internationalstudents](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/internationalstudents)

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.

## DEVENDRA SINGH



I'm from Jaipur, India. I studied business information systems at Monash University before working at the Department of Health and launching a couple of startups. I also represent the community on some advisory committees.

Melbourne is just like a second home and the people here are just like family members – always loving and caring. My love for Melbourne has grown ever since I've stepped foot into this sporting capital. Festivals, sports, events and exhibitions – you name it and we have it. I love everything about Melbourne.

My favourite place in Melbourne is the banks of the Yarra river alongside Federation Square. This place gives me a sense of belonging. I sit there for hours in the evenings to introspect in peace.

## JAYDEN HUANG

I am from China, and I study at Melbourne University.

I love Melbourne because it is a beautiful city. My favorite places in Melbourne are its cafes. The coffee culture in Melbourne is great for me.

My favorite cafe in the city is Rustica Melbourne Central. They have friendly staff and great food. They are absolutely amazing.

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# Men’s Shed helps cancer patients

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
COMMUNITY

A new Men’s Shed in North Melbourne is providing cancer patients, particularly those from country Victoria, with vital social support and handy practical skills working out of a repurposed bike shelter.

Last year, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre struck a deal with accommodation provider Scape, which had no international students to house due to pandemic restrictions.

With the support from Scape, Peter Mac was able to repurpose the bike shed belonging to Scape with a workbench, tools, lights, heaters, couches, and a kitchen.

Men’s Shed project officer John Howarth said beyond teaching and helping members with DIY projects, the initiative was first and foremost about patients being around people who were going through similar circumstances.

“The thing about cancer is you have to bring yourself up the learning curve. You go to your GP, and they say: ‘you’ve got cancer,’” Mr Howarth said.

“Well, what does that mean? What’s that going to mean in terms of treatments and my family, how’s that going to change my life? What’s this funny drug they’re going to give me?”

“It’s a complete learning curve. Here, you can find someone who’s experienced radiation therapy treatment, somebody who knows where to go, who to contact. That conversation needs to take place, and this is the right place to do it.”

Peter Wright, a member of the Men’s Shed who is recovering from an operation, said he had been “bored out of his brains” and needed something to do.

“It’s not about the woodwork, it’s about the people coming together,” he said.

“That’s what the Men’s Shed is about. It’s about people who are in the cancer hospital now getting out of the room and meeting people.”

Making various items such as desks, toolboxes, trolleys, and toys are not the only



▲ *Peter Wright, John Edney and John Howarth at the Peter Mac Men’s Shed. Photo: Murray Enders.*

services the Men’s Shed provides.

Project lead Daisy Cramer said 12 patients were being sponsored by the Men’s Shed in partnership with a not-for-profit called Mending Casts to go on a fly-fishing retreat in May.

“They’re essentially a bunch of volunteer fly-fishing enthusiasts wanting to help people dealing with cancer through the therapeutic experience of fishing while standing in running water. Being in nature with a whole bunch of men who’ve been through a similar experience is a unique way to deliver a support group,” she said.

“They hold ‘courageous conversations’ and go round and tell their stories, or not. It’s a nice safe space for men to get together because they don’t usually reach out for this support.”

Every month, the Men’s Shed also has guest speakers who focus on topics around men’s health.

Since opening in December last year, Mr Howarth said anyone was welcome to join the Men’s Shed. Members of the Peter Mac Men’s Shed also automatically become members of the Melbourne Men’s Shed at Federation Square ●

**For more information:**  
[petermac.org/shed](http://petermac.org/shed)

# Affordable housing in discussion for North Melbourne

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*  
HOUSING

A council-owned car park in North Melbourne is currently under discussion by the City of Melbourne as the latest site to be converted into affordable housing.

The open-air car park at 44-60 Curzon St currently has 31 car spaces, and following parking studies conducted before and during the pandemic the space has been under-utilised, leaving it as a possible prime spot for an affordable housing project.

The announcement comes after an independent analysis reported that the city is currently short of 5500 affordable rental homes.

To make matters worse, if nothing is done to change the situation Melburnians will be lacking 23,000 affordable rental homes by 2036.

“There’s a significant shortfall in affordable housing in Melbourne, and the pandemic has led to even greater demand,” the council’s health, wellbeing and belonging portfolio lead Cr Dr Olivia Ball said.

“This proposed project aligns with the council’s Affordable Housing Strategy 2030, which commits to leasing one of our sites for an affordable housing project in the next five years.”

The council’s stance to provide more affordable housing as part of the Affordable Housing Strategy 2030 has been greatly encouraged by the local community.

Following a late 2020 survey conducted during the strategy’s development, 95 per cent of respondents were in support of council-owned land becoming long-term affordable housing.

The stated priority of the housing to be offered within the next five years, while a great step forward, has only continued to cement how devastating the unaffordable housing crisis in Melbourne is.

Determined to deliver more accessible housing, the City of Melbourne is partnering with the Victorian Government to find solutions.

And while Lord Mayor Sally Capp said there was “no single solution” to solving the crisis, she



said the council was aware of the “significant benefits” affordable housing projects, similar to the one currently under discussion, could have on the local community.

“For every \$1 spent on affordable housing, more than \$3 in benefits flow into the local economy,” she said.

“We have a responsibility to make sure our city is inclusive, fair and liveable for everyone, so we’re working to increase the supply of appropriate affordable rental housing in our municipality.”

The City of Melbourne is seeking further community feedback on the Curzon St site, with results to go into consideration of the space at a Future Melbourne Committee meeting later in the year.

While nothing is finalised yet, the combination of the on-street parking already in the area, the lack of car park usage and the recently conducted survey supporting affordable housing, could work in the favour of the space being considered suitable.

Submissions on whether the car park should transition into the currently proposed 30 to 60 purpose-built homes can be submitted up until May 15 via the Participate Melbourne website.

If positive feedback is strongly received, community consultation will continue during the further planning of the building ●

**To have your say:**  
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▲ Left: Tushar Bhatnagar, co-owner of The Premises café, has questioned the timing of the street works, which has wreaked havoc on businesses. Right: Annie Mulrone, owner of the White Rabbit Record Bar, said that the noise and dust was driving customers away. Photos: John Tadigiri.

## Bellair St traders express frustration as street works hurt business

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Traders along a popular shopping strip in Kensington are reeling as street works hit their businesses, with one describing the situation as “worse than lockdown.”

Construction started on March 28 with the City of Melbourne planning to upgrade the stormwater drainage and streetscape on Bellair St, which is expected to be completed in late June.

The council said public access to shops would be kept throughout the project, and to minimise disruption, footpath works would be completed in sections while traffic controllers would also be onsite.

But traders, who have already experienced a drop in takings, say the “timing couldn’t be worse” as they begin to rebuild their businesses after lockdowns.

Karla Mallonga, manager of Fruits of Passion café, said business was hurting with sales down by more than 50 per cent because of the disruptive works.

“I’m having a headache because of it. They should have done it over lockdown,” she told *North West City News*.

“Why now when we are getting business back?”

“Customers don’t want to dine out because it’s too noisy and dusty. Also, they don’t want to come in because they think the roads are blocked.”

Ms Mallonga said trade was “so low we have to cut back [on staff],” adding it was “worse than lockdown.”

“We were just thinking if we can apply for compensation, but they [the council] said we cannot.”

Annie Mulrone, owner of the White Rabbit Record Bar which she has operated for the past 17 years, said the works had been a “bit of a kick in the teeth.”

“It is definitely impacting business; it is also really filthy, dirty, dusty, and loud,” she said.

“It’s quite a mess. I have to say the timing couldn’t be any worse. We had the longest lockdown on the planet, wouldn’t you think the stormwater drains could’ve been thought about then?”

“I’m really glad it’s getting done, don’t get me wrong ... but it’s such poor timing.”

Ms Mulrone said she had lost 20 seats in outdoor dining and while she and her staff still put the furniture outside, “we have to keep cleaning it because it’s covered in dust in no time.”

However, she said they were lucky enough to have a rear beer garden “so people can escape from the dust and the noise”, but “if people don’t know about that they would probably walk or drive right past us.”

Tushar Bhatnagar, co-owner of The Premises café, said his outdoor dining setup had been taken away completely.

“I am glad they are doing this work ... I’m just not too sure why they didn’t do it in the pandemic while there was no sitting at all,” he said.

He said customers who would normally dine-in were “actually just picking up takeaway and they’re leaving.”

“No one wants to sit with a lot of construction noise happening and something out of our control.”

“I’m just hoping they are able to finish this sooner than they anticipate.”

Mr Bhatnagar said he had also spoken to some businesses on Macaulay St who relied on parking in Bellair St with “a lot of people are not coming to their shops either.”

“We’re planning to write a letter together to the council and maybe ask for a little help, if possible, in any form.”

Natalie Ragusa, owner of Aerial Studio Kensington, said, “It’s obviously annoying because parking is a struggle for my clients, and it’s loud and not relaxing.”

The City of Melbourne said the project would see the installation of new stormwater pits and pipework, as well as the repositioning of kerbing and the reconstruction of the footpath, while preserving heritage mosaics.

It said businesses were notified of the works in February, with another notification going out in March, however, the council did not respond to questions as to whether traders would be compensated.

“Renewal projects are an essential part of the City of Melbourne’s work to maintain the city, ensure health and safety and improve amenity,” a spokesperson said ●

## Traders relieved after council waives outdoor dining fees

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
BUSINESS

Hospitality traders are breathing a sigh of relief after the City of Melbourne waived outdoor dining fees for another seven months as the city recovers from the pandemic.

Permit fees for outdoor dining and busking have been frozen since the extended outdoor dining program began in October 2020 and were due to be reinstated on April 1.

But at the council’s March 29 meeting, councillors endorsed an extension of the program until October 31 after city activation portfolio lead Cr Roshena Campbell led a motion saying, “Many businesses are still struggling as we move into the winter months” and it wasn’t “the right time to impose that fee burden on them.”

“They’re concerned about ongoing consumer confidence and early this year 74 per cent of them told us they were struggling to survive.”

For Georgia Noble, manager of Auction Rooms café in North Melbourne, the news was warmly welcomed.

“I think that’s certainly great, we’re back to normal capacity now but we have an extra 50 seats outside so for them to waive the fee that’s great,” she said, adding business had picked up significantly since the end of lockdowns with the Melbourne Grand Prix providing a further boost to trade, while Easter was also building as an exciting time.

Farah Ylagan, owner of Kensington Canteen, said she had learnt of the fee waiver after being contacted by *North West City News*.

She said she had paid her outdoor dining fees in full for the year, which she conceded had been a “struggle” but added, “If I can get a refund that will be really, really good.”

While Ms Ylagan added the fee waiver was also “better initiative than Melbourne Money for my case.”

“It’s mostly takeaway ... so I don’t really reach the \$40 spend, although I have it here no one really uses it. I think a discount on the rates would be better.”

Under the mid-week Melbourne Money scheme, which finished April 11, diners were allowed to claim 25 per cent off their bill when they spent between \$40 and \$500 in cafes, restaurants and bars.

Rick Sciberras, owner of Rick’s Place restaurant in Kensington, said while the fee waiver on outdoor dining was welcomed, he expressed disappointment that he had to ask the council to remove his parklet due to flooding issues.



▲ Kensington Canteen.

“We got rid of it because when it rained the footpath would flood ... they didn’t put anything in for the water to run underneath it,” he said of the parklet which involves re-purposing on-street parking bays into outdoor dining areas.

“Because we’re on a hill the water would hit against it and spill onto the footpath.

“They wanted to charge us \$1200 a year to have it. It’s just ridiculous so I just told them to take it away.”

He said while he would’ve liked to have kept it, he was “forever cleaning up a big mess every time it rained.”

Michael Cardamone, owner of Amiconi Restaurant in West Melbourne, said while it was grateful the outdoor dining fees had been foregone, he hope they could be relinquished in the long-term, maintaining that “hospitality has been hit the hardest in every aspect.”

Cr Campbell said outdoor dining “has been critical” for small businesses that had been “hard hit” by the pandemic.

“Not only has it been a safer environment for many of them to trade in, it’s allowed them to trade through restrictions, including density limits, and help them – many of whom had suffered severe impacts to their cash flows over the past two years.”

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the outdoor dining program had delivered an additional 18,000 restaurant seats across 1500 businesses while creating 100 new jobs.

“We want to entice more people to our city and help traders serve as many customers as possible, and outdoor dining is one way we can do that.”

Meanwhile, applications have opened for small businesses to apply for grants between \$500 and \$5000 for air ventilation and filtration equipment to improve ventilation and help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Applications close June 24 ●

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# A bold, colourful vision for West Melbourne

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
ARTS & CULTURE

West Melbourne’s Marylin Monroe may have caught your eye as you stroll down Stanley St.

But for Kirsten Mann, the striking image painted on her garage door is just the tip of the iceberg of what she envisages West Melbourne could look like.

After returning from a holiday to a small town in South Africa, Ms Mann was blown away by the “gorgeous” artwork she saw painted on the outside of houses and shops there.

“There were five streets filled with gorgeous graffiti – it was spectacular!” she said.

“I thought what a difference when the whole neighbourhood makes a commitment to bring creativity and colour.”

A user experience and product manager by trade, Ms Mann is used to conceptualising designs and experiences for people, so she quickly got in touch with June Chen, a well-renowned Melbourne artist who has had her works displayed at the National Gallery of Victoria in the past.

“We were talking about Marylin Monroe and how everyone knows she’s a beautiful, iconic lady,” Ms Chen said.

“But not many people know her true story.”  
“So, we thought this would be a fun way to create some awareness.”

Ms Mann is often asked by curious passers-by why she chose to paint the movie star on her house.

She explains that contrary to what people think, Marylin Monroe wasn’t just a pretty face.



“She was one of the first women to have her own production company,” Ms Mann said.

“A lot of people don’t realise that she was a strong, trailblazer at a terrible time for female actors.”

Monroe broke away from the iron grip of the big five production companies in the US in the ‘50s to start her own company, won a lawsuit against them, then was subsequently given a

pay rise and the ability to choose which movies she acted in – unheard of at the time, according to Ms Mann.

“Imagine if the neighbourhood was filled with art and people like this,” she said.

“People could see them and discover things about amazing people they had no idea about.”

Ms Mann’s house is a microcosm of what she thinks West Melbourne could potentially look like.

It includes a hot pink gate, a giant painting of a woman roller-skating in her courtyard – a beloved hobby which she enjoys being reminded of while she works – and a spectacular “light forest” hanging from her ceiling.

But when it comes to recreating her experience of the little South African town fittingly named Woodstock in West Melbourne, Ms Chen is fully on board.

“We’re open to more ideas, it’s what art is, it’s about fun collaboration,” she said.

“I’m interested in making neighbourhoods more colourful and putting thought-provoking images out there.”

Ms Mann said it would be “awesome” to plan artwork for other houses in West Melbourne and would instantly be able to give anyone “at least 20 ideas.”

“I just remembered this beautiful suburb of colour and I thought, imagine if we could have this in Melbourne?” she said ●

To get in contact, email:  
[info@junechen.com](mailto:info@junechen.com)



## Council endorses North Melbourne Heritage Review

WORDS BY *Sean Car*  
HERITAGE

The City of Melbourne has rung in a new era of heritage protections in North Melbourne after endorsing the first review of the area’s heritage assets in nearly 40 years.

At a Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting in Parkville on April 12, councillors voted unanimously in favour of endorsing the North Melbourne Heritage Review following “very extensive and inclusive” consultation with the local community.

Conducted by architects Lovell Chen, the review recommended a number of interim and permanent heritage controls for the area under planning scheme amendments C402 and C403, respectively, which will now go before Minister for Planning Richard Wynne for approval.

While the previous heritage study of North Melbourne, which was completed in 1983, identified “almost exclusively Victorian and Edwardian era architecture” the latest review has assessed existing controls in addition to considering interwar, post-war and postmodern buildings.

A council report tabled at the April 12 FMC meeting said, “the outcome of the review reflects the unique, diverse heritage character of North Melbourne”, and recommended heritage overlays and statements of significance to four new places:

- The Albion Hotel, Curzon St.
- Hotham Gardens – Stage One (various sites), O’Shannassy St.
- Harris Street’s Plane trees
- Flemington Bridge Railway Station, Boundary Rd.

The review also recommended revising the North and West Melbourne Precinct boundary, as well as its statement of significance to include new information about Aboriginal heritage values.

A total of 143 properties will also have their heritage categories changed as a result of the review, including 10 properties “where substantial alterations of demolition has occurred to be downgraded to non-contributory”, meaning a place which does not make a contribution to the cultural significance or historic character of the heritage precinct.

The review also recommended introducing a new statement of significance for North Melbourne Primary School on Errol St ●

# Electric motorcycle company revs ahead after revolutionary motorbike wins top honours

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
DESIGN

A West Melbourne-based electric motorbike manufacturer is celebrating after its high-tech electric motorbike took out the top prize in the prestigious Victorian Premier’s Design Awards.

Savic Motorcycles, which has produced the Savic C-Series, which is Australia’s first emissions-free, full-sized, high-performance electric motorcycle, won the overall award and product design category after being hailed as “immaculately designed in every sense of the word.”

“The attention to design details – from its elegant lines, handcrafted chrome and aluminium finishes right through to the design of their website and branding – it is clear this Victorian company is leading by design in everything they do,” chair of the Victorian Premier’s Design Awards Celina Clarke said.

Lead designer of Savic Motorcycles Dave Hendroff said, “The team at Savic Motorcycles is truly grateful, and at the same time very humbled, to receive this prestigious award.”

“Dennis Savic and I share a passion for motorcycles and timeless, classic design, which was the inspiration for our first C-Series. ‘C’ stands for ‘Café Racer,’” he said.

“Our bike was inspired by the legendary café racers of the 1950s and ‘60s. This genre of custom motorcycle is based on a production machine modified to look like the Grand Prix racers of that period.”

“We designed our bike from the ground up to reflect that classic retro style but using the very latest electric technology to power it.”

Founder and CEO of Savic Motorcycles Dennis Savic said it was “amazing” that the team had “received so much recognition for all the hard work they’ve done over the past few years.”

“We have a long way to go, but the future is promising and we’re all really excited about it.”

Creative Industries Minister Danny Pearson said Savic Motorcycles was an “exceptional example” of Victorian design and innovation, with their “focus on ground-breaking industrial design and aspiration to revive Australia’s automotive industry with a new generation of technology, design and engineering.”



▲ Dennis Savic with an award-winning electric motorbike.

The lithium-ion battery powered bikes come in two models including the Alpha priced at \$26,990 which has a three-hour charge time and a zero to 100km/h time of just three seconds.

The Delta is \$19,990 with a 3.8 charge time and a zero to 100km/h time of 4.5 seconds ●



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# Good news for recycling glass

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge  
SUSTAINABILITY

A new glass recycling plant has been put through its paces over the past three months and the guys down at the Dynon Rd depot are pleased with its performance.

Citywide showed *North West City News* through and the remarkable plant will turn even the most contaminated glass into small usable particles.

A high temperature burner is the secret to the process, according to commercial waste manager Travers Martin.

“It burns off the sugar residues which can’t be used in asphalt,” he said. “The process here is an absolute first. Plants haven’t been able to do this before and bring out this quality.”

A truck came to pick up 20 bags of glass particles weighing 3.5 tonnes for use in the manufacture of asphalt pavers for bicycle paths in the CBD, the result of one day’s work.

Even the pick-up guys were on board with this striking example of the circular economy.

Ironically, most of the glass ready to go into the plant comes from the CBD in the form of Heineken stubbies, picked up from bars and restaurants.

The circular economy aims to recycle materials and keep them out of landfill but even the greatest optimists would not have predicted a bar to road cycle that was so useful.

Legislation has forced municipalities to deal with glass recycling. In the past only the clean, clear bottles were reusable. Now thanks to this technology, glass from co-mingled bins and



▲ Waste manager Travers Martin at the Dynon Rd plant.

highly contaminated material can be processed.

Citywide will be inviting other councils to bring down their glass waste to be processed by the plant.

“It needs ‘food,’” Mr Martin said. He is particularly proud that the glass is replacing sand in asphalt production, reducing the construction industry’s voracious appetite for virgin sand.

“I think it’s a great opportunity for us and we’re looking at Dynon Rd as a circular hub,” he said. “We’re paying much more attention to the end product.”

The new plant will also play a

significant role when Victoria’s container deposit scheme begins in 2023.

“We are in the middle of a generational change right now in how we deal with waste and recycling products,” Citywide operations executive Duncan Reid said.

“We have quite literally reached a tipping point where we are rightly assessing the recyclable value of existing products.”

“The circular economy is all about examining every waste product we can possibly divert from landfill and repurposing it in a sustainable way.”

# Residents express dismay after thieves take off with parcels

WORDS BY David Schout  
CRIME

A Kensington resident has been left furious after heartless thieves stole a food box parcel from her doorstep, which was later found ripped-up and discarded a few houses away.

Kim, who asked not to use her surname, said the package was usually left at her front door in Kensington Rd.

“Initially I thought we had already brought the box inside or it was somewhere else in our front garden – but no,” she said.

“It was actually a couple of days later as I was walking home; I saw the ripped-up box a few houses away in their front garden.”

“The box clearly says, ‘Marley Spoon’ on the side and upon checking I saw my name and address.”

“This is a box of food to help feed my family during the week, so it’s a cruel kind of thing to steal,” she said.

“At the same time, maybe they really needed it. I know some people are doing it tough.”

“It just seems to be so common for the neighbourhood – letters and packages going missing but also just anything that isn’t nailed down put the front of your house is fair game.”

Meanwhile, a North Melbourne resident said she had recently been robbed of parcels containing fabric and medication.

Beck, who also asked not to use her surname, said thieves had taken off with both parcels from her Melrose St home.

She said one of the missing packages was an express post satchel



containing a skirt, which was ready to be collected by a courier outside her front door.

“I only realised it was missing when I saw the courier turn up at the gate and said he was booked to pick up the parcel which was no longer there.”

Beck said she was “shocked and a bit annoyed” because it had “some fabric in it which was of value to me, but unlikely to whoever stole it.”

“I went around the block later that day and found it – a box ripped open, and contents gone. We don’t have CCTV, so we never reported it.”

“I’ve never had this before despite receiving and sending parcels over the years,” Bec said, adding she was now more cautious and taking parcels to the post office.

An Australia Post spokesperson said theft of parcels and mail after delivery was a criminal offence and encouraged customers to contact the police if they suspected their mail had been tampered with or stolen.

“Customers concerned about mail security can sign up for a free MyPost account and choose to have their parcels redirected to a Post Office, a PO Box, or use one of our free 24/7 parcel lockers.”

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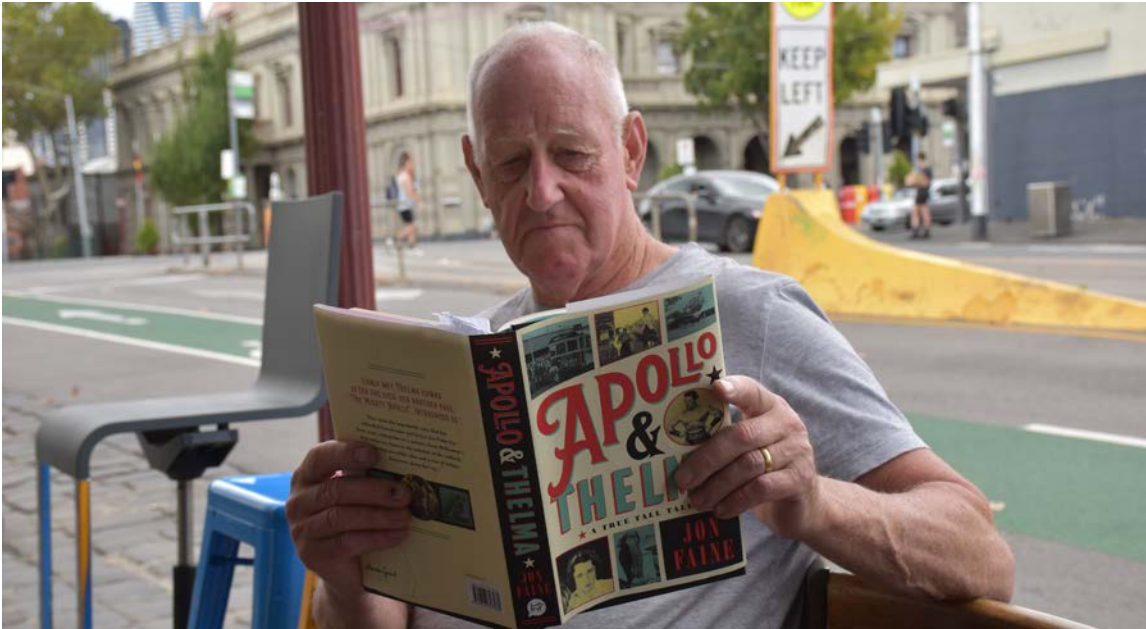
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▲ Ray Walters delving back in history and (below) the Mighty Apollo gym in Hawke St.

# Rollicking tale of local strongman

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge  
HISTORY

A new book has everyone talking in Queensberry St about the feats of a local strongman known as the Mighty Apollo.

This is a truly local story with a pinch of tragedy, a touch of fame and a stolen fortune.

Locals love their history, and the Mighty Apollo grabbed the limelight back in the '50s.

He ran a gym called the Mighty Apollo in Hawke St, West Melbourne and the building is still there with its faded letters asking for someone to tell its story.

Broadcaster and columnist Jon Faine has taken on the task with graphic black and white pictures of the strongman pulling a tram with his teeth and supporting the weight of an elephant on his stomach.

The book reveals that the elephant punctured the Mighty Apollo's bowel, but this did not stop him from claiming to be the world's strongest man.

The tragic underscore to this story of ambition, as told sensitively by Mr Faine, is that the man behind the façade abandoned his three sons to state care.

Local businessman Ray Walters remembers Apollo sitting outside the town hall, a rather tragic figure.

"By this time, he was ageing. He had a bad heart," Mr Walters said. "The tram was at the corner, and I went over and gave him a bit of rope."

It was a different era, Ray said of the showmen who trained up in gyms. Ray was one of them. "Gyms in those days were run by people like that. Now they are social. I used to train in the police gym. They played volleyball with medicine balls."

*Apollo & Thelma* tells the tale of the man behind Apollo, Paul Anderson, and his sister Thelma through the eyes of the young Jon Faine when he handled Thelma's estate as a novice lawyer for Barker Harty & Co in Collins St.

Like the feats of the strong man, the tall story was an art form and Faine has fun with his rollicking account of an ambitious small man who wanted to be larger than life, and his wayward sister.

"I simply could not reconcile the diminutive man in front of me with the claims of incredible strength



photographically portrayed on the walls," he wrote.

"In every meeting at his gym, Apollo was totally self-absorbed. He loved talking about himself. He was not just the embodiment of vanity – he transcended it."

His sister, equally colourful, ended up running a pub alone in the Top End and when she died in 1981 police found more than \$50,000 in cash on the premises, just one of the stashes she was hiding from the tax department.

Unfortunately, the young copper on duty could not resist temptation and stole the money with an accomplice. He was charged but just half was recovered.

Jon Faine is a smooth talker and tells this tale well. He was sent to Darwin to sort out Thelma's estate and had moved into broadcasting before it was finally resolved.

He never gave up his interest in the case, however, and in this book he finally has a chance to do a character study of Apollo.

He finds that the small strongman's ambitions overrode his duties as a father, but Faine is delicate about protecting the feelings of the sons and was keen to see they got their rightful inheritance from their aunt.

The boys' mother Rondahe was the beautiful female accompaniment to the Great Apollo's act. She disappeared early in their lives.

"They were a kind of Tarzan and Jane performance with the lady in a leopard skin," Mr Walters said. "It was an era than came out of the circus."

The last words on the issue must go to the Mighty Apollo himself who explained in a news broadcast why he got into body building: "I was sick and tired of being called a peewee and a nugget."

*Apollo & Thelma*, Jon Faine, Hardie Grant, 2022 ●



▲ An artist's impression of the proposal.



▲ Following the fire in May last year.

## Fire-ravaged shop could be turned new development under new plans

WORDS BY Brendan Rees  
PLANNING

A Kensington shop that was gutted by fire almost a year ago could be transformed into a five-storey mixed-use development under plans being considered by the City of Melbourne.

The barber shop at 496-498 Macaulay Rd was left blackened and charred after flames tore through the building during the early hours of May 21, 2021.

An assembly of fire trucks was called to the blaze at 3.30am, which took firefighters about an hour to bring under control.

At the time the cause of the fire was unknown, and police deemed it as suspicious.

However, the owner is now seeking a building permit to develop the site into a new shop and 16 apartments under an \$8 million plan.

The application proposes to partially knock down the building to make way for a new commercial shop with parking as well as 10 two-bedroom apartments and six one-bedroom studio apartments with balconies.

Currently, the building is two storeys, but the owner wants to extend it by three levels under the proposed revamp, taking it to five storeys while keeping existing characteristics of the façade in the rebuild.

According to the plans by Dreamworx Drafting and Design, the development would "maintain the neighbourhood character of the area" and be "designed to have similar attributes including materials, architectural design and setbacks with what is being seen in the local area."

"While differing colour schemes and layouts are used the overall scheme will be complementary to what is being seen in similar style

of developments in the surrounding area, while still being of an aesthetically pleasing and practical design," it said.

"We believe this approach will provide reasonable dwelling diversity while still being harmonious in design and presentation."

A City of Melbourne spokesperson said the application would be carefully considered by council officers, adding it was "important any redevelopment is appropriate and respects the character and heritage of the area."

"Kensington is one of our most popular residential neighbourhoods, and Macaulay Rd is a thriving hub for businesses," the spokesperson said.

Kensington Association president Simon Harvey expressed concerns the development was a "total overkill" with his organisation likely to submit an objection.

"We are looking very carefully at the development; it's clearly a clause for interest and possibly a concern to the community given its position and given the semi-iconic status of that particular [shopping] strip – that feel for that strip should be preserved at all costs," he said.

Mr Harvey said there were a "lot of issues" in relation to the proposal that "are questionable, but we haven't considered it as an organisation yet – we will probably have an objection of some sort."

"It's such an important little precinct so that's our perspective and we'll be looking at the development in the light of that."

The applicant's name in the planning permit application was redacted, which the council confirmed is their right unless they provide permission to make it public.

Victoria Police said the status of the fire investigation remained ongoing ●



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# Craft back in a big way

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge  
ARTS & CULTURE

The magic of objects tells the story of Neo Ceramics in Abbotsford St, a pottery studio with a master craftsman in the background creating opportunities for locals to get involved in the ceramics craze.

There are just eight places left in next term's classes which offer beginners' lessons in how to throw objects on a wheel using stoneware clay.

Jack Balfour is the man behind the business and his pitch is working with inner city dwellers.

"We've just about spent as much time as we can behind screens," he said. "We're so removed from process and making, whether it's food or goods. We get everything from overseas."

The rows of students' work on the shelves and the tentative first tries waiting to be fired tell the story of the desire to do things well.

"We've got a disconnect from nature, and process gets people back to craft," Jack said.

There's no denying that there's been a ceramics surge during the past six years as people return to small handmade objects to decorate smaller living spaces.

Ceramics were big back in the '70s and '80s but arts funding was slashed leading to just two places you could study the craft in Victoria, at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and in Ballarat.

Jack's approach to getting ceramics back into the picture is to build skills first. He did an apprenticeship with Ken Boyd and thinks of himself as a tradie.

The "neo" in the name of the shop is not a trendy prefix but a reference to neodymium, a rare earth metal used in his favourite glaze which creates a pearly white translucent effect.

This creative technical approach to work leads to experimentation such as the strange little objects that form part of a Metro Tunnel project.

Jack is using slate and other recycled materials such as wire which he melts down as glazes, fiddling with their chemistry. An exhibition of this work at Craft Victoria is scheduled for October.

Jack trained in industrial design and did



▲ Jack Balfour welcomes students to Neo Ceramics.



▲ Two of Jack's pots.

pottery on the side. He still works as an art technician at a school and runs courses in the evenings and on weekends.

It's a busy life but after lockdown when the shop was just a pretty reminder of the power of craft Jack is throwing himself back into process.

"I couldn't do anything during the lockdown," he said. The only support from the government was a \$32 reduction in his rates.

His rent was deferred, thanks to an arrangement with the landlord, and he paid it in a lump sum when he was back up and running.

The quality of his offering is there in the shop for passers-by to see with some lovely little sustainable porcelain works also offered by potter friends.

"There's a lot to learn," he tells students as they arrive. "There's the compression of the clay and the movement of the wheel."

Novice potters arrive ready to give it a go with 64 students already signed up for classes from Monday to Thursday and two on Saturdays ●

# Cheeky parrot returns home thanks to a heartfelt community effort

WORDS BY Brendan Rees  
COMMUNITY

A mischievous parrot that went missing from her Kensington home has been reunited with her frantic owners after being found just a few blocks away.

Relieved owner Rishada Cassim said Lola, a pineapple conure, had escaped their family home in Lincoln Mews on March 22 after having nudged her way past the front door as Ms Cassim's partner Tim Hutton took out some recycling.

"She just panicked, I wasn't there but Tim described it as her just screaming and flapping around and eventually flying away," Ms Cassim said.

Although shy, Ms Cassim said Lola was also "super sassy and super clever", and had recently taught herself a "new trick" which involved her tucking in her wings "like a little bullet" and squeezing her tiny body through household doors – a manoeuvre the couple immediately feared she had used to fly out the front door.

Panic-stricken, the couple door knocked and handed out posters in their neighbourhood in the hope of finding Lola whom they had adopted from the Kiwi New Life Bird Rescue in Wandin.

They also borrowed a ladder from a neighbour to climb their roof as Mr Hutton, with binoculars in hand, called out tirelessly to Lola who is believed to be eight or nine years old.

"We were so worried, and we heard it start to rain; it was very sad thinking about Lola, this tiny bird," Ms Cassim said.

"Even though we were desperate for her to come home, she just wouldn't know how."

After more than 24 hours had passed and still not a sign of Lola, Ms Cassim had relented to the fact that they "might not get her back".

But much to the owners' astonishment, they received a call from a stranger named Nick, who believed he had found their lost bird after posting a photo of Lola on the *Kensington Good Karma* Facebook, which attracted multiple responses and the couple's contact number.

After giving a description which included a



▲ Nigel (left) and Lola (right) with owner Rishada.

ring around Lola's foot, Ms Cassim replied, "Oh my goodness, you have our bird. We were just so excited and desperate."

After racing to Nick's apartment building, the couple found a frightened Lola hiding behind a pillar on a sixth-storey balcony in Altona St, Kensington.

"He said she flew straight into his apartment and shooed her out ... but she preceded to sit on his balcony, staring at him through the glass door," Ms Cassim said.

"The fact that she approached Nick at all just tells me that she was feeling pretty desperate at that point."

Oddly enough, Ms Cassim said Nick looked "almost identical" to Mr Hutton which "made sense that Lola decided this is the person she is going to trust."

While a little exhausted, Lola was given the all-clear from the vet and has since enjoyed some "calming" space at home while reconnecting with her "big brother" Nigel, a 13-year-old parrot, also living with the family.

"It was a real community effort, and we couldn't believe how people had related to the story and how much they cared," Ms Cassim said.

"Thank you to everyone that was so kind to us." ●

# A community pantry with a paw-sitive spin

WORDS BY Kaylah-Joelle Baker  
COMMUNITY

After noticing an increase in locals asking for cat and dog food, the McCracken St Food Share Pantry has partnered with Pets Of The Homeless Australia (POTH) and extended their pantry goods to now include pet food.

Announced on Tuesday, April 5, the provision of the pet food is a first for the free food pantry, and project coordinator for the Food Share pantry team Danxia Yang said the team was "very excited to have POTH onboard."

With pet owners often being considered as people without housing struggles, who aren't struggling with the bare necessities, this latest partnership has gained some attention due to the dismantling of this concept.

"We sought out Pets Of The Homeless because visitors to the pantry were often asking for it and pet ownership is basically unjustifiably stigmatised," Ms Yang said.

"People see having a pet as a luxury, but pets are very important in all our lives and they provide so much companionship and love. Having a pet also does wonders for your mental health."

Connecting with the McCracken St Food Share Pantry for "personal reasons" that saw the cause resonate strongly, Ms Yang is passionate about



the need for community pantries to tailor their supply to their specific community's needs.

She added that the local community's support of the pantry "is beyond heart-warming" and the reason behind why they could continue to provide additional support.

Grateful to assist with the pantry, POTH founder Yvonne Hong said she was "happy to support" a space

where people who are "in genuine need of help" could access the support without feeling judged.

"To be able to ask for help is not easy for a lot of people, and I think the pantry offers something different where you can just go up and get what you need," Ms Hong said.

Alongside the pantry, POTH is already supplying pet food to more than 50 organisations and assists

“Having a pet also does wonders for your mental health.”

with veterinary care, emergency boarding and foster care, with the end goal always being to "reunite" pets with their owners.

The idea for the organisation first sparked when Ms Hong used to live in the city, as she noticed people were more likely to stop and talk to homeless people if they had a pet.

Knowing full well that pets are beneficial to the mental wellbeing of the owners, she recognised them as an "icebreaker" which allowed homeless people to feel "a connection to the society."

"I started POTH because there was a lack of support for people with their pets. There are organisations for helping people and organisations for helping pets, but nothing really available to help someone struggling with their pets," she said.

"Being able to have your pet with you is very important especially when you are going through a crisis or a trauma, and having your pet taken away from you causes

additional trauma. We wanted to show that we can keep people and their pets together during their times of hardship."

Continuously fighting the misconception that people who are struggling should not own pets, Ms Hong hopes that awareness will be spread not only through the work done at POTH but now also through the McCracken St Food Share Pantry.

Located at 89 McCracken St in Kensington, the food share pantry is an extension of the Kensington Neighbourhood House and serves to provide for the community in need, and their pets, without any added shame, guilt or conditions.

And with help and support needed now more than ever, Ms Yang said the McCracken St Food Share Pantry was actively seeking more volunteers and support.

"The community has really embraced the pantry and we are really grateful for that and are grateful for anyone who has donated so far, but we are always needing more people to volunteer." ●

For more information:  
[kensingtonneighbourhoodhouse.com](http://kensingtonneighbourhoodhouse.com) and  
[petsofthehomeless.org.au](http://petsofthehomeless.org.au)



# Jeffcott St development changes tack

WORDS BY *Sophie Berrill*  
PLANNING

A new 23-storey residential tower proposed for West Melbourne's Flagstaff Precinct will now stage its development in an effort to keep residential apartments separate from a potential residential hotel on the adjoining blocks.

If approved, the high-rise would be built on 102-108 Jeffcott St and is part of a larger development across the two adjacent blocks of land at 355-369 Spencer St and 371-383 Spencer St.

In 2019, Minister for Planning Richard Wynne approved the initial permit for a \$56.3 million development of a residential hotel that spanned the three sites.

It included 190 guest rooms and office space, while the lobby of the Jeffcott St high-rise was also to house retail and café tenants.

Now, developer BEG Projects Pty Ltd has applied to amend its permit. It wants the tower to operate independently of the proposed residential hotel as a residential apartment tower.

"Since the planning permit was issued, the three sites that form part of the singular planning permit have

been sold to different owners," BEG Projects said in the council delegate report tabled at the April 12 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting.

"As such the project will now be delivered in stages – in that each owner will deliver their own portion of the project."

BEG Projects owns 102-108 Jeffcott St and has requested to begin its works with CHT Architects under "stage one". Under the amended plan, construction of the Spencer St buildings would then begin in "stage two".

The report does not name the new owners of the Spencer St blocks, however, the two are understood to be separately owned. The council flagged concerns that these owners had not provided any guarantee that they would proceed with the proposal.

The council was expected to endorse management's recommendation to support the amended permit for Jeffcott St at the April 12 meeting, subject to a number of conditions.

Significantly, the council has recommended that prior to the commencement of any development, a staging plan must be submitted, and a Section 173 agreement entered into, with the Department

of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

According to the council's deputy planning chair Cr Rohan Leppert, the agreement would help preserve liveability in the precinct by forcing all three owners to develop the sites in accordance with the original permit.

In striving to provide the most "balanced outcome for the site", Cr Leppert said the conditions "made it very clear" that the neighbouring owners couldn't build to the heights proposed under the live application.

"Should they [the developers] not sign up to this agreement, the new West Melbourne planning controls would come into effect for the sites," Cr Leppert said. "This agreement puts the onus on the [Jeffcott St] site owner."

Alongside the staging, there are some proposed alterations to the Jeffcott St building, but no changes to the approved height of the 40-metre tower.

BEG Projects plans to keep the façade of the 1914 two-storey, brick building currently on the Jeffcott lot. Similarly, the Spencer St site will retain elements of the heritage-listed Sands and McDougall manufactory and warehouse.

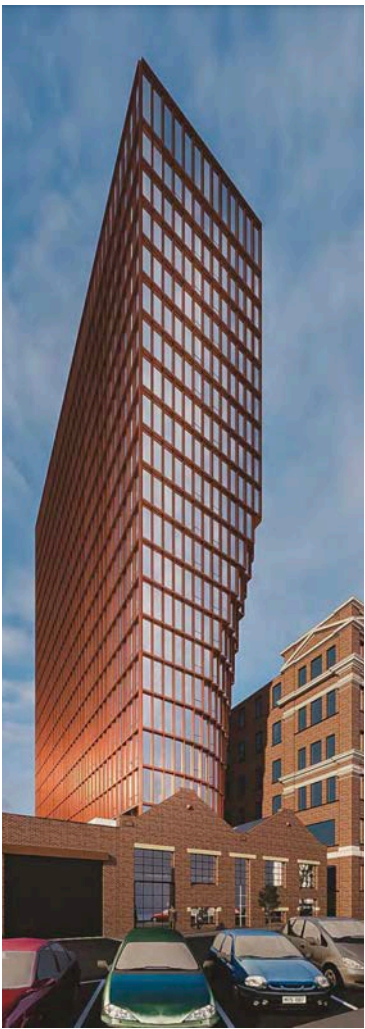
Building upwards from this

location would give the Jeffcott St tower views into outdoor recreation yards at the neighbouring Judy Lazarus Transition Centre, and Melbourne Assessment Prison (MAP) across the road.

The City of Melbourne's West Melbourne Structure Plan listed the privacy and security of MAP as an important consideration in any adjacent developments. The report says the original permit addressed these concerns with requirements for screening measures that prevent those views.

The height of the planned tower would also surpass the Structure Plan's vision for buildings "between six and 16 storeys" in the Flagstaff Precinct, however the precedent has already been set with the original approval. Councillors considered the amended proposal at the April 12 FMC meeting after *North West City News* published its April edition.

"We wish them [the developers] well," Kevin Chamberlin, chair of North and West Melbourne Association, said. "Serviced apartments and residential hotels don't have a good record in that area. The one around the corner in Rosslyn and Adderley St that was only recently built is now up for sale." ●



# West End Art Space's artists explore the forgotten past

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*  
ARTS & CULTURE

West End Art Space is gearing up to host artist Carol Batchelor's latest exhibition *Merge* from April 13 to 28, with the show's guest speaker artist and RMIT lecturer Dr Robin Kingston opening the exhibition with her personal insights into the abstract paintings.

Excited to hear from Dr Kingston and for *Merge* to open, West End's founding director Anna Prifti and gallery assistant Erica Sait said a "deepened appreciation of [Batchelor's] technique" was to be expected upon witnessing the work in real-time.

"Visiting Batchelor's recent work at West End provides a truly intimate experience. Core to her show is the idea of merging the transactions and transience between different qualities on the canvas," Anna and Erica said.

No stranger to working on pieces over a long time-frame, Batchelor's work centres around paintings that have been built up over time only to



then be stripped back through sanding, revealing layers that have since been forgotten.

Created with no predetermined direction, the finished paintings are a result of layers merging themselves gradually over time.

"When part of the painting is no longer visible, its existence is still actual and felt as it is merged and

submerged as an integral part of the fabric of the work and ultimately the unity of the painting," Batchelor said in an artist's statement.

While Batchelor was well and truly set to have her work on display before this year, COVID complicated the schedule and resulted in West End having to reschedule the exhibition.

The extended wait and inability to

“Visiting Batchelor’s recent work at West End provides a truly intimate experience.”

access her studio, while disruptive, surprisingly led Batchelor in a new creative direction with her latest work.

Understanding the way time has escaped from us all during the past couple of years, Anna and Erica said *Merge* was an opportunity for visitors "to reflect on [their] interactions and experiences that have blurred through time."

This seamless blend of reflecting on the present and past has become a somewhat recurring theme at the West End with Batchelor's solo exhibit following on after artist Sarina

Lirosi's exhibit on the relationship between memory, loss and desire late last month.

Focusing her work on abandoned artificial flowers she collected from Melbourne Cemetery, Lirosi's exhibit *Fray* revealed stories of the time passing and the memories of the deceased that have passed with those who held those memories.

Reflecting on the excitement of both shows being in-person, Anna and Erica are encouraging everyone to "pop in and say hello", as the return of visitors has been "so lovely" for the West End Art Space and the artists.

"Our gallery is part of the community at West End precinct, and it has allowed many locals to visit while restricted in lockdown. But on the other hand, we've now been lucky to forge new friendships with our neighbours in North and West Melbourne."

West End Art Space is open from 11am to 4pm from Wednesday through to Saturday, with appointments during non-opened times also accepted if arranged prior.

*Still Point of the Turning World*, 2021. Solo exhibition *Merge*. Artist Carol Batchelor ●

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NORTH WEST CITY NEWS







## MELBOURNE IS BUZZING AND READY TO WELCOME YOU BACK WITH OPEN ARMS.

As you enjoy life to the fullest, take a moment to appreciate the passionate workers who help make the City of Melbourne safe, beautiful, caring and connected, during the pandemic and year-round.

Here is a quick snapshot of just a few city heroes. Visit [magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au](https://magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au) to read our full interviews with these local legends.

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT OFFICER

Nick in the Carlton Gardens with local dog Mishka

From a snake on Spencer Street to a peacock on the run in Kensington, our animal management team has seen it all.

‘Lately I’ve rescued a staffy that was running around a construction site, rehomed a rabbit and waded in a fountain at the Carlton Gardens to rescue a distressed duckling,’ animal management officer Nicholas Pecipajkovski said.

‘The most rewarding part of my week is reuniting owners with their lost pets. Registration and microchipping are so important.’

While Nick’s job has many heart-warming moments, the animal management team performs a critical service.

This includes daily park patrols, responding to reports of barking dogs, animal welfare issues and dog attacks, and assessing compliance among pet shops, animal shelters and pet boarding establishments.

Nick and his colleagues work closely with the RSPCA and police, pursuing fines and legal action where necessary.

‘The animal management team is very hands-on and responsive,’ Nick said.

‘We are out there trying to keep the community and animals safe. We listen to feedback and, when issues arise, we always try to have positive conversations with pet owners.

‘As our city evolves, we will continue to work hard to ensure the community has good shared access to parks and public space, striking a good balance between people and pets.’

Please take good care of your pet, be considerate of others and renew your pet registration by 10 April each year. To learn more about responsible pet ownership, visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/pets](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/pets)

LIBRARY SOCIAL WORKER

Erin at City Library

Thousands of people with extraordinary life stories pass through the doors of our city’s public libraries every week. For community members having a tough time, support is at hand amid the shelves.

Library social worker Erin McKeegan works with people experiencing multiple and complex challenges including, but not limited to, homelessness, addiction and trauma.

She also meets weekly with a network of agencies to connect patrons to the care they need.

‘The way libraries are used has completely changed. They are now one of the few public spaces that are free and accessible to all. They are a safe place to come for people who are marginalised or sleeping rough,’ Erin said.

In recent weeks, Erin has helped a woman experiencing family violence to connect with a network of support, and assisted a man who hadn’t slept for several days after he found himself experiencing homelessness for the first time.

While Erin’s job involves listening to traumatic stories, she feels privileged to hear them.

‘I like to think that I am hearing people’s stories of survival and resilience.’

‘With a social worker on staff, the whole library team now has more tools and resources to support people in need. We also get referrals from other City of Melbourne staff, like the maternal and child health team.

‘This is a great network to have, and we will continue to listen and learn to improve our service.’

‘I like to think that I am hearing people’s stories of survival and resilience.’

For more information on homelessness, and how you can help, visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/homelessness](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/homelessness)

PARKS SUPERVISOR

We’re planting new biodiversity gardens

Biodiversity gardens are springing up throughout Royal Park, increasing the variety of local plants and attracting even more native wildlife, including insects, birds and microbats.

‘There aren’t many places in Melbourne where you can see the sky without being blocked by buildings and trees. The grass circle is one of my favourite places,’ Royal Park supervisor Chris Nicholson said.

You won’t find many deciduous trees in the park, which was redesigned in the 1980s and ‘90s to ‘evoke the original landscape’ of bush and grassy woodland tended to for thousands of years by Traditional Owners.

River red gums are among the eucalypts now planted in the park to gradually restore the local population, and two dedicated gardeners have been establishing new biodiversity gardens.

‘It’s all about increasing the palate of plants in the park, and in turn the palate of birdlife, lizards and skinks,’ Chris said.

Over the past two years, the team has planted natives such as kangaroo grass, juncus reeds, wattle and banksias. The Friends of Royal Park have been busy too, planting shrubs and replenishing the understorey.

Tread carefully on your next walk around the park. Kneel for a closer look at the new groundcover and find ruby saltbush in flower, and tiny native bluebells that attract more than 200 species of native bees.

Whether you have a big backyard, a green rooftop or pot plants on your balcony, everyone can help promote urban biodiversity. Request a visit from our team at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/gardensforwildlife](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/gardensforwildlife)

Chris in the grass circle at Royal Park



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH NURSE



Cloe with the handy green guidebook given to new parents

Give your baby a wonderful start in life with free support from our compassionate maternal and child health nurses.

The service offers 10 check-ups for children from newborn to school-age, new parents' groups, lactation consultancy, counselling, and additional support for vulnerable families.

'I love working closely with families to ensure they feel supported during the transition to parenthood,'

maternal and child health nurse Cloe Olive said.

'Every family has such potential, and we are privileged to listen and observe, to wonder through the eyes of a child, and create a space where parents are encouraged to do the same.'

During the pandemic, our nurses continued to provide face-to-face support when needed. They also moved many services online and found new ways to provide flexible care, which will help us continue to enrich our services.

'Being a new parent is an emotional roller-coaster, with a great exploration of many themes alongside parenting, including the importance of infant and parent mental health,' Cloe said.

'Resources on social media and online can be overwhelming and contradictory, so it's important for us to provide evidence-based information to help families feel more confident.'

'The journey into parenthood is also a great opportunity to break down an individual's notion of perfection and inadequacy.'

'After all, there are no perfect parents, and there are no perfect children, but there are plenty of perfect moments along the way.'

For more information, visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/maternalandchildhealth](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/maternalandchildhealth) or call 9340 1444.



New mum Megan with baby Lacey



Manu (second from left) with colleagues

GRAFFITI REMOVAL WORKER

Tending to street art and keeping graffiti off city walls may seem like opposing forces, but graffiti removal expert Manu Parashar sees the beauty in each action.

'I've got more than 100 different paints in my unit so we can match the colour of a door or the wall of a heritage building,' Manu said.

Every morning, Manu patrols his section of the central city, both for illegal tags and damage to iconic street art. It's street art that drew him to this job, and his favourite spot is Hosier Lane.

'It's full of beautiful art and the art keeps changing. I go there almost every day, looking for anything which shouldn't be there, offensive words and that type of thing,' Manu said.

'We protect the street art by putting an anti-graffiti shield on the artworks.'

His favourite piece of street art – a portrait of a local dog called Jesse he once patted on his rounds – has long since been painted over. And yet the corner of Hosier and Flinders lanes serves as a reminder of the relationships he has built over time.

'The best part of the job is that we get to talk to people. We listen to them, see how everything is going in their life. They share their stories. We talk to shop owners as well,' Manu said.

GYM INSTRUCTOR

Boost your physical and mental wellbeing in the welcoming surrounds of your local recreation centre, supported by staff who love what they do.

'I spend my days running classes like high-intensity interval training, stadium circuit sessions and prime fitness classes for our energetic members aged 60 plus,' passionate gym instructor Bill Mooney said.

'I also show potential members the gym and write programs for people to help them achieve their goals. Someone might want to run 5kms, and another might want to hike in Machu Picchu with ease.'

'It's such a feel-good time when we see people achieve their goals. We are as excited as they are.'

Even if you have never been to a gym before, Bill welcomes you to drop by for a tour of North Melbourne Recreation Centre, where he works, or any of our City of Melbourne recreation centres.

We offer world-class facilities and best-practice programs for people of all ages and abilities across our recreation centres, to empower local people and promote community connection.

'Fitness is a continuous journey,' Bill said.

'Ultimately, our job is trying to improve people's lives and this isn't just a physical thing, it's a social thing. It's great to see people who train together becoming friends and going out for coffee.'

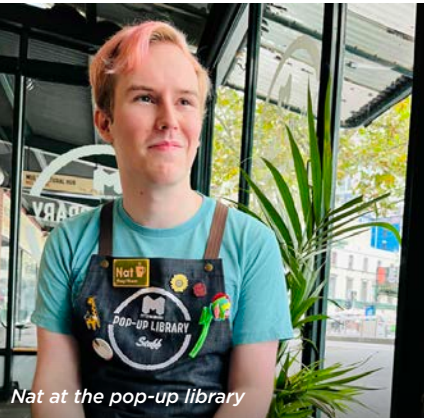
To find out more about our recreation centres and plan your new fitness routine, visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/activemelbourne](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/activemelbourne)



Bill at North Melbourne Recreation Centre

It's such a feel-good time when we see people achieve their goals. We are as excited as they are.

CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY ACTIVATOR



Nat at the pop-up library

It's time for tech to shine at a pop-up library and make-it space opposite the Queen Victoria Market.

It took just two months for creative technology activator Nathaniel Bott and their team to fill an empty Chinese restaurant with cool gadgets.

'Each piece of equipment on its own is expensive. Too expensive for many to own. So we bring it all together in the pop-up space and make it free for anybody to use,' Nat said.

The badge maker is strategically placed at kid level, so it's easy to obsess over designing a new badge after the family's weekly market shop.

More complex machines – such as the sewing machine, 3D printer and obelisk-like laser cutter – are kept around the corner and away from little fingers. All of it is free to use, and Nat is on hand to help.

'I've found a creative job that matches my weird and varied skillsets,' Nat said.

'People ask us when the pop-up is ending and I tell them that there will be a new library in the area soon, and it will have a bigger makerspace.'

We are developing a new community library at the Munro site, in the Queen Victoria Market precinct, featuring a creative makerspace, library and children's library, family services and a rooftop terrace.

Visit the Elizabeth Street pop-up library at 510 Elizabeth Street to feed your mind with an amazing array of best-selling books and access to wi-fi, as well as the bespoke Make\*It Space.

There will be a new library in the area soon, and it will have a bigger makerspace.

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.

We protect the street art by putting an anti-graffiti shield on the artworks.

Scan the QR code to report illegal graffiti tagging, and our Rapid Response Clean Team will get on the job.



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 [melbourne.vic.gov.au/magazine](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/magazine)

You can also join conversations to influence plans for your neighbourhood through Participate Melbourne at [participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au](https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

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NORTH & WEST MELBOURNE PRECINCT TRADER PROFILE

# Beauty salon a lesson in business rejuvenation

*Erin Laird was first drawn to the old Take Off Skin and Body salon because it was a failing venture.*

WORDS BY *Sophie Berrill*

Her usual work had been consulting businesses that were behind schedule or over budget, swooping in to clean up the mess and make operations more efficient.

Always eager for a challenge, Ms Laird bought Take Off to see if she could turn around a small business herself.

“The original idea was sort of to get it up and running and sell it on again,” she said.

That was 10 years ago.

“Now I love it and I love being in the industry, so I just kept it!”

The name “Take Off” was inherited from the previous owners in Peel St. It was airport-themed, with hanging aeroplane models and jokes on the menu about landing strips.

Ms Laird didn’t have the resources at the time to rebrand—but now the name is a reminder of how far the business has come.

Today, Take Off is a beauty salon on Errol St that specialises in skin treatments. It offers facials, waxing, tanning and treatments for people with skin conditions, those looking to refresh their skin, or parents who just want some space from their kids for an hour.

Ms Laird has taken a unique approach to fit in with the “relaxed area”. Her therapists don’t wear uniforms or follow a script. They’re allowed to show their personalities, and they won’t look you up and down or shame your skincare routine.

“I think beauty salons can have a reputation of being a bit intimidating,” she said.



“People can come here [and] they can feel good when they come in. They’re not going to be judged. They feel safe in our space. Whatever you’re after, whether it is just relaxing, or whatever budget you have, we can find something for you.”

The staff’s inclusive attitude is perhaps one reason the business has continued to thrive 10 years after its revamp.

Another is Ms Laird’s decision to specialise in skincare at a time when the industry is booming.

“I think it was like 10 or 20 per cent skin when I took it over. Now it’s more like 75 to 80 per cent skin [for] our services,” she said.

Take Off has invested in training its staff, who undertake intensive courses on ingredients on top of two-year diplomas. Technology and treatments are also kept updated, but Ms Laird is careful not to jump on passing trends.

“Some things just come and go really quickly,” Ms Laird said.

“If you can do really solid foundational, good quality services, they stand the test of time a bit more than the latest Instagram crazy, weird thing.”

She recommends newcomers to the world of skincare should speak to a professional before following advice from influencers.

At Take Off, this usually starts with a basic skin consultation, or you could opt for the skin analyser session where they photograph your face to observe underlying pigmentation, oil flow and dehydration.

This helps the therapists tailor realistic treatment plans to each individual and their budget, taking into consideration products clients might already like or own.

“We’d *hate* to be that kind of business where people come in and they walk out with 10 moisturisers and they didn’t want them,” Ms Laird said.

For a salon called Take Off, they’re very down to earth.

They work with clients to get what they want – whether they’re women, men or non-binary, people with stressed skin, acne sufferers, customers after preventative treatments or people who just some time out ●

**For more information:**  
[takeoffskinandbody.com.au](http://takeoffskinandbody.com.au)

BUSINESS

# One-hundred-and-fifty years of local service

*This year, North Melbourne’s W.B. Simpson & Son is celebrating 150 years of continuous service in real estate.*

The business started in 1872 when William B. Simpson opened an office in Collins St, Melbourne called W.B. Simpson & Son.

Back then, real estate mainly involved collecting rents and debts with the odd house being sold. After the discovery of gold in the 1850s, Melbourne experienced a population boom, and William saw an opportunity to be involved in that growth.

The son in the business name was John William Allan, also known as William, who partnered and then succeeded his father.

When young William set out on his round of collecting rents, he wasn’t to know that the daughter of one of his tenants would later become his wife.

By 1927, William’s son Allan joined him in the business, later followed by Allan’s brother Jack.

The firm moved into an expanded property in Victoria St, North Melbourne, and then renovated a larger premises on the other side of Victoria St in West Melbourne.

By 1934, the firm moved to 30 Errol St – a building which has since undergone a number of renovations and modernisations.

Allan’s son Darrell recalls “I would come into the office after school, and work there in my university holidays” and earned pocket money

by handing out brochures at auction sales.

William remained active in the business for many years, still going into the office until he died, aged 95. Darrell fondly remembers a photograph of his grandfather on the front page of *The Herald* newspaper, taking golf lessons at the age of 91, as he was not hitting the ball as far as in previous years.

Darrell’s son Richard joined the firm in 2001, having qualified in economics and accountancy, and working with KPMG in the banking and finance division.

Three Simpson family members have served as president of the REIV – Allan Simpson (1949-1950) Darrell (1978-1979), and Richard (2017-2018). Darrell continues his involvement with the institute through the valuations committee, where he is a past chairman, and Richard through the commercial and industrial chapter committee, also as a past chairman, and continues as a board member.

The firm has seen enormous changes throughout North and West Melbourne, originally a dormitory suburb for many people working for the nearby railways and dockside businesses, then post war, as large numbers of migrants entered the area, often buying their houses on vendor terms.

Some older houses were demolished to make way for large scale developments such as Hotham Gardens, and Ministry of Housing flats around Melrose St.

Now former factory and warehouse buildings developed largely through the 1960s and 1970s are making way for new apartment and townhouse developments, with steady demand for people wishing to live close to the Central Business District, Melbourne University, and



▲ Richard Simpson.

Photo: John Tadigiri.

several of Melbourne’s major hospitals.

Richard Simpson said, “The sociological changes have also been enormous with significant growth resulting from considerable overseas migration from Europe in the 1950s and 1960s, and later from Asia in the 1970s and 1980s.”

**For more information:**  
[wbsimpson.com.au](http://wbsimpson.com.au)



Latest news from Parkville Gardens

*Amid global turmoil and national flood disasters, the Parkville Gardens neighbourhood is fortunate to have remained a place of calm and natural appeal. It's also been a quiet time for community activities, but that's about to change.*

By the time this update is published, two quite different events will have taken place.

The first is the children's Easter egg hunt scheduled for Sunday, April 10. That's always fun and the weather's looking very good!

The second is the Future Melbourne Committee event on the night of Tuesday, April 12. The Lord Mayor and councillors will be meeting in Parkville and local residents have been invited to register and attend. There'll be reports on both of these in next month's edition.

As foreshadowed last month, outgoing local member Tim Read MP and his successor Ellen Sandell MP met with the Parkville Gardens Residents Association (PGRA) on the night of Thursday, April 7. Tim has been a great ally for us on issues such as bus services and shelters, school zoning and electric vehicle charging stations. Ellen will officially take up the baton in November, shortly before the state election.

The biggest news of the night was that planning control for Parkville Gardens has been returned to the City of Melbourne. This has long been PGRA's wish. Development in the area has been under the direct control of the Minister for Planning ever since the state government took it over to provide accommodation for athletes competing in the 2006 Commonwealth Games. This arrangement made it almost impossible for local residents to object to amendments to the planning scheme for the area. This return to customary processes is very welcome news indeed.

Tim Read's success in gaining budget support for a better bus service has yet to translate into more frequent peak hour buses, so he's pledged to follow up on this. There was lively discussion about other options for improved public transport in the area, especially a service connecting Parkville Gardens with Flemington Rd trams.

His request on our behalf for school rezoning was rebuffed by the Minister for Education, so there's more work to be done on this issue. It's proposed to survey residents about both public transport and school zoning to generate an evidence base for change. The third major



topic of the night revolved around electric vehicle charging stations and ongoing traffic and parking issues.

Finally, the lack of a community centre in the neighbourhood continues to be a drawback. PGRA is most grateful to Tim and Ellen for their interest and support.

The next item in our calendar is a Trivia Night on Thursday, June 23 at the Reggio Calabria Club. We're looking forward to this fun community-building event. For the moment, please note the date. There'll be more information next month.

Work has yet to begin on the planned safety improvements at the intersection of Galada Ave and Oak St. Construction of the social housing apartment building is proceeding but still at the foundations stage.

It's that time of year when major faiths are engaged in their core religious observances – Easter, Passover and Ramadan. It's also school holiday time. PGRA wishes everyone well ●

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



*Tom Knowles*  
TOM KNOWLES IS THE PRESIDENT  
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City of Melbourne consults Kensington

*Within almost any major city there is a broad spectrum of wealth ranging from those in abject poverty to (what are sometimes labelled as) the "filthy rich". Then there are other demographics, such as age and gender.*

Finally, in cities like New York and Melbourne (or any other Aussie city) there is a rich multicultural profile, so the task of effective community planning in made so much more complex! Put yourself in the shoes of the City of Melbourne's community planners! Where would you start?

Between October 2020 and February 2021, the council began to take a fresh look at community planning and consultation. Given that the task took place at the height of the COVID pandemic, one can imagine that it would have been particularly challenging. However, four clear themes emerged from the consultation:

- The council needs to be more proactive.
- All voices must be heard.
- People need to feel comfortable in order to participate.
- Consultation must be genuine .... and linked to action.

My sense is that the planning team made clear efforts to respond to these themes in the "Participate Kensington" neighbourhood planning approach at the end of 2021.

"Participate Kensington" has been part of the council's vision to create more inclusive, connected and empowered communities, it has resulted in a broad range of "draft neighbourhood priorities" covering everything from traditional owner recognition, to transport infrastructure, dogs, inclusion and diversity, climate action, improving the creek, arts and culture and much more (the full list can be found on the Participate Melbourne website).

**For the next step the City of Melbourne would like community feedback on these draft priorities by April 19.**

It is asking - is there anything missing? How well have they captured the priorities for Kensington?

I presume this will then lead to a tweaked set of community priorities.

"So, what about the 'action' part?" you ask! Good question! My take on it is that having captured the "priorities", they can become a very useful kind of checklist, both for the council (to move toward an "action" phase), and for community members (to hold our councillors to account). In other words, while you might want to call one of our councillors sometime in the future and say, "hey what the ... beep ... are you doing about that dog-off-leash park we were promised?"

However, it's good to remember that "action" and "initiative" is driven by (or comes from) many sections of the community; it's got to be a team effort!

In addition, I am hoping (and I believe this is the intention), that this list of priorities is not set in concrete. I hope it can be progressively tweaked or added to over time. That would make sense to me, since the speed of change is faster than ever before, and lists made at any point in time quickly go out of date. As well as community members being able to use this evolving list to hold councillors to account on action, it could also serve as a reporting-back checklist for the council.

Some dates for your diaries

To help finalise the list of priorities there will be opportunities for you to give feedback in person...

At the Venny on Wednesday, April 13 or at Kensington Town Hall on Thursday, April 14. Furthermore, if you miss those dates, Melanie De Monaco (our neighbourhood partner) can be contacted directly on **9658 8092**.

You can also participate directly via Participate Kensington online. If you are not internet-savvy and find it a bit tricky to find "Participate Kensington", I suggest you ask your children, grandchildren, or the young digital native next door.

Remember – try to get your feedback in by April 19! ●



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KENSINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

Neighbourhood Houses – thinking globally, acting locally

*Climate change is frighteningly real. And we seem to be losing the war on waste.*

At any given moment, our news is full of environmental disasters of various sizes. As individuals, it can be overwhelming trying to work out how to have an impact when the problem seems so very big.

Here at Kensington Neighbourhood House, we've found that taking small, consistent steps is the way to go.

Like many neighbourhood houses across Victoria, we try to keep environmental sustainability at the front of our minds when planning activities, and we encourage community members to get involved as much as possible.

For example, we collect food from Second Bite and Food Bank Victoria to use in our healthy living and learning and food pantry initiatives – saving food from going to waste.

We run shared community gardens to encourage food-growing, and compost hubs to encourage recycling of green waste.

The McCracken Street Food Share Pantry invites locals to donate unwanted food, cleaning supplies, or toiletries – these can all be rehomed



instead of going in the bin.

The pantry is also home to an amazing recycling depository – collecting plastic bottle lids, bread tags, corks and medicine blister packs.

Every few weeks, a team of volunteers sort out the donations and take them to Lids For Kids for recycling. Imagine if this was

replicated in every suburb!

Within our building, we take steps both large and small to minimise our environmental impact. At the large end of the scale, we installed solar panels on our roof last year to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

At the smaller end of the scale, we use

recycled printer ink cartridges, purchase toilet paper and tissues in bulk from Who Gives A Crap, and turn off the lights in any rooms not in use. Little steps like these all add up.

Kensington Neighbourhood House also assists grassroots organisations working on local sustainability projects. We actively support the Kensington Repair Hub, the Kensington Seed Savers initiative, the Kensington Farm Collective and the Kensington Bike Workshop. You can find out about these groups via their Facebook pages.

By taking this slow, steady and small approach, our neighbourhood house is able to make a big impact ●

**For more information:**  
[kensingtonneighbourhoodhouse.com.au](https://kensingtonneighbourhoodhouse.com.au) or call 9376 6366



*Rebecca Smith*  
MANAGER KENSINGTON  
NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE  
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ABORIGINAL MELBOURNE

Lots to see at KHT

North West City News *caught up with Koorie Heritage Trust (KHT) CEO Tom Mosby in March to discuss all things art, design and education happening at the Trust.*

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*

Having only just recently reopened to the public, Mr Mosby said he encouraged everyone and anyone to come down to Federation Square to enjoy exhibitions showcasing the very best on offer from Victorian metropolitan and regional First Nations’ artists.

He said KHT’s latest exhibition, *Off The Wall*, was all about mark-making tradition.

“What we have done is commission three Victorian Aboriginal artists,” Mr Mosby said.

“We thought we’d do something experimental; we provided large sheets of paper and said, ‘do what you’d like to do, we’d like to see your interpretation of people, culture, and community.’”

“It’s a beautiful, beautiful exhibition.”

The other exhibition on display at KHT is *Blak Jewellery*.

Mr Mosby said the exhibition emerged out of KHT’s Blak Design program, an initiative created a couple of years ago to address the lack of participation and representation of First Nations’ peoples in the design, industrial design, fashion and textiles industries.

“Each year through an expression of interest, we recruit up to about 15 participants from



▲ Protection, Mandi Barton.

around Victoria looking at metropolitan and regional artists,” he said.

“We offer different disciplines and we mentor the participants through practical sessions around the design process, and also business skills.”

“Despite COVID and lockdowns, it’s been highly successful, and I strongly encourage people to come to see it.”

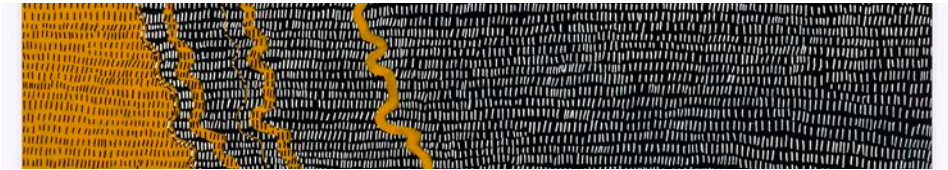
After reopening to the public in December, the KHT has seen a surge of people flocking to see art in-person, with KHT’s famous walking tours around the city also back on.

“People are coming back and wanting to engage in the city, so those tours are a really good way to learn about the settlement and pre-settlement of Melbourne and really get a feel and understanding of Melbourne,” Mr Mosby said.

“For us, it’s about really encouraging people to come back in-person. Our program and services are available, and we’d really love see



▲ Molwa (Shadow) Reflections, Mandi Barton.



▲ Spotted Bonytongu, Charlie Miller.

people attending the exhibitions.”

KHT will continue to run programs and open-forum discussions online ●

For more information:  
[koorieheritagetrust.com.au/whats-on/kht-online/](http://koorieheritagetrust.com.au/whats-on/kht-online/)

WE LIVE HERE

Party policy time

*With the fragrance of a federal election in the air, we have a sniff of party policies at a national level on short stays.*

A policy articulated by the Greens, courtesy of a statement in this masthead by Adam Bandt, national leader of the Australian Greens and federal MP for Melbourne, focuses on the socioeconomic impact of short stays, including housing affordability.

Adam Bandt strikes at the heart of the issue, saying, “It’s hard to develop a sense of community when all the apartments around you are being flipped on sites like Airbnb. No one wants to feel like they’re living in a busy hotel.”

The MP’s stance aligns with what we have been forewarning in this column for some time now: namely that as we recover from the pandemic and we kickstart tourism again, it’s critical to implement controls on the use of apartments for short stays.

“As we recover from the pandemic, we need to invest in our communities, not simply let the market rip,” Adam Bandt said

Adam Bandt’s statement has some essential macro and micro elements. It acknowledges the impact of the proliferating short stays on housing affordability and also refers to everyday high-rise challenges and cost imposts, such as accelerated damage to common property and the need for more security.

The statement also refers to the research the Greens have been conducting into policy solutions around the world, many of which have been detailed in this column.

We are looking forward to seeing the major parties issue policy statements, without holding our breath.

Owners Corporations Act – going in circles

The federal Greens’ focus on bigger-picture housing issues brings us back to a core issue at the state level here.

Frustratingly, the Victorian Government has been constrained in comparison with NSW. In Victoria, OC rules, called bylaws in NSW, are technically defeated by planning regulations.

This peculiar limitation has seen Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) using the anomaly to exclude the issue from its reviews.

For example, in its *Consumer Property Acts Review Issues Paper No. 2, Owners corporations*, CAV specifically excluded the issue of whether OCs should be able to regulate short stays, deeming it “out of scope”. Aggravatingly, CAV in this review also characterised the issue of “short stays” as being limited to the problem of parties.

The main point remains that serious reforms are needed in the planning laws:

“One issue that is beyond the scope of this [CAV] paper is whether owners’ corporations should be able to make rules prohibiting a certain use of a lot, where that use is permitted under the applicable planning instrument,” CAV wrote.

All the CAV-led reviews and consultations have been risibly powerless to have any effect on the core democratic issue – the devolution of power to communities – despite having a ready model in NSW they could take as a basis and refine.

The so-called “Short-stay bill” has been an unmitigated failure. No recommendations from community consultations were acceded to. Planning issues have been ignored. Despite this, both major parties voted for the bill and it has been embedded, and effectively buried, in Sections 159A to 159F of the *Owners Corporation Act 2006, Version 19* released on

December 1, 2021. The review, promised by the government when it lobbied the opposition for its support, has now been avoided for two years.

Let’s stop the government’s excuses. The government needs to open a discussion about the challenging intersection of planning and consumer laws – a problem created by the arbitrary legal abstraction of our lives into “departments”.

We Live Here will vigorously pursue reforms to the planning regulations to allow self-determination by high-rise communities in Victoria.

Australia lags behind

Globally, there is abundant evidence that short stays have had an immense impact on communities and housing affordability. We anticipate more socioeconomic research will be undertaken to assist regulators in developing workable frameworks for controlling the sector.

One important volume of research is *Airbnb, Short-Term Rentals and the Future of Housing*, by Professors Emeritae Lily M Hoffman and Barbara Schmitter Heisler, published in the USA. This book poses the question: how do Airbnb and short-term rentals affect housing and communities?

The two professors argue that the most disruptive impact of Airbnb and short-term rentals has been in communities where housing markets are stressed. The authors describe how that Airbnb incentivises speculation in residential housing.

The overall effect of short-term rentals, according to the authors, has been similar across countries and cities. Local responses have varied from less restrictive in Australia to increasingly restrictive in the United States and most restrictive in Germany. Shockingly, Australia takes the title of “Highest penetration by Airbnb”.

The book claims that while Airbnb has made some concessions, it has not given any city the data needed to enforce regulations efficiently, resulting in costly impacts on governments and ultimately, communities.

With the publication of this book, we are

embarrassed and angry to find Australia classified a laggard, one of the most under-regulated jurisdictions for short-term rentals!

This should be a wakeup call for local, state and federal legislators: take notice of what is happening around the world and learn how to fix the problem here. Lagging behind is not fatal, remaining there is.

Why do we need a dark sky?

We strive to shine a light on the dark corners of the political world. Outside in the physical world, there is a strong argument for allowing natural, celestial light to be revealed in darkness.

Of course, we refer to the night sky and the problems associated with light pollution.

Our attention has recently been drawn to this issue by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) through their Victorian Branch (IDAVic). The main aim of IDA is to maintain the beauty of the night sky for generations to come and to support good lighting fixtures which are also environmentally friendly.

For example, there can be serious unintended environmental, ecological, safety and health consequences from commencing a LED street lighting program without careful planning.

For more information and to learn how you can become involved, visit the IDAVic website at [darkskyvic.org](http://darkskyvic.org).

Campaign donations

As a not-for-profit organisation, donations from individuals and buildings keep our campaigns going. To register as a supporter of We Live Here or to donate, please visit [welfarehere.net](http://welfarehere.net) ●



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FAMILI’S *We Take Back Our Mother Tongues* connects internal and external landscapes

*A collective of musicians, composers, DJs, dancers, choreographers, installation artists, poets, actors and martial artists are bringing an immersive production to Arts House this May.*

WORDS BY *Sophie Berrill*

FAMILI is not only connected by its creative vision, but its bloodlines. The 15 artists hail from Pasifika and from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

“I wanted to create a collective of artists who had a similar cultural background to me,” creative director Ripley Kavara said, who is of Papua New Guinean and Scottish ancestry.

“It was something that I’d seen a lot in places like New Zealand ... almost like a little family or little community of artists supporting each other and making stuff together.”

FAMILI first performed at Midsumma Festival in February 2020. *We Take Back Our Mother Tongues* at Arts House is its long-awaited return.

The three-hour performance fuses electronic music, hip-hop and new wave R&B with traditional instrumentation like conch shells and log drums.

The sounds, and visuals by Mossy 333, also channel currents of queer and LGBTQIA+ experience.

Mr Kavara said he wanted the new show to draw more out of the classical elements of water, air, fire and earth.

When he began planning, he was attending sessions run by Knowledge of Wounds, an indigenous-led gathering space with a focus on bodily elements of breath, skin, blood and bone.

“I was really inspired by the way those elements kind of named the internal landscape, as opposed to the external landscape,” he said.

All the elements linked and took on new



forms when he brought his brainstorm to FAMILI. They prompted further ideas about climate change, anti-blackness, homecoming, language and grief.

“What I think is really amazing about artists collaborating is it changes everyone’s perspective,” he said.

“When you collaborate with someone, you kind of have to move together. You kind of have to land on the creative moment together, and you figure out what works.”



For Mr Kavara, music was an important medium to express FAMILI’s ideas.

“I think music can address the intangible,” Mr Kavara said.

“When people sing together, it’s a really powerful feeling. I think it’s because it is so ancient and it touches on these things that we can’t sometimes name around grief or loss or joy, but people go to music to process that.”

It has been no small feat to pull off such a broad collaboration over long periods of

separation.

FAMILI has had to find creative solutions to present the work of members whose circumstances have changed over this complicated time and can no longer be there on stage.

Despite these learning curves, directing *We Take Back Our Mother Tongues* has been an involved and supportive process for Mr Kavara, much like the projects he originally set out to emulate.

It has also provided a rare opportunity for group catharsis.

“A lot of the artists and their families have experienced a lot of trauma, unfortunately due to colonisation and being displaced,” Mr Kavara said.

“I’m really interested in this idea of how human beings experience catharsis. Apparently listening to music together and dancing and all these things are linked to healing. Even on the level of addressing trauma, it’s quite powerful.”

He hopes audiences can also experience a similar release, like they did at FAMILI’s first shows.

“People [were] saying that it really affected them emotionally and spiritually, and that’s when I knew I’d done my job right,” Mr Kavara laughed.

*We Take Back Our Mother Tongues* is on at Arts House on May 6 and 7, 2022 ●

**For more information:**  
[Artshouse.com.au](https://artshouse.com.au)

ENVIRONMENT

Wildlife corridors

*Animals have always roamed on this earth, the bison herds across the plains in North America, the wildebeest and elephants across Africa.*



These herds are an important part of the ongoing regeneration of the plains leaving behind their nutrients from their urine, faeces and fur, etc. And in the sky, large flocks of birds, locusts and bats among others put on wondrous shows of beauty as they move across the skyline during seasonal changes.

The BBC’s documentary *The Great Migration* gives us an insight into these migratory processes and their value to the planet.

There is a wonderful documentary about the role of the bison as a keystone species in North America and how after the targeted killing of the bison by colonists the plains have been rewilded again with pure-bred bison.

The free movement of birds, lizards, fish, smaller mammals, eels, etc. across the Australian landscape allows for the continuation of healthy ecosystems through the functions each of these play in the overall balance of these natural systems.

Free flowing rivers, native grasslands, stepping stones of trees and native vegetation, the maintenance of wetlands and shore habitats for migratory birds are important to maintain this natural movement of animals.

Increasingly our species has moved more into animals’ migration and access paths with our development, resource extraction, fencing and building of infrastructure that has fragmented the habitat, impacting on this intricate and complex movement of life on earth.

Our human activity results in limiting animal travel routes and isolating wildlife populations. Fragmentation of habitat causes stress and possible extinction of species creating loss of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems.

In the regions and coastal areas, we see enough road kill to know that we have interrupted the ability for wildlife to move safely around their habitat due to the construction of roads that cut across their access points.

Signs do warn us of animals crossing – but how can we expect small snakes, lizards, kangaroos, wombats to safely cross highways where cars are travelling at 100kms per hour? Is this fair? Surely, we can do better than that.

The acceptance that human development needs to be adapted to preserve and enhance the natural processes of ecosystems is reflected in the increasing reference of the term “green infrastructure.”

The term “wildlife corridors” has been created in recognition of the importance of maintaining these natural movements of species. Wildlife corridors are connections across the landscape that link up areas of habitat and they support the natural process allowing species to move to find resources such as food and water and a mate.

Wildlife corridors can range in size – from small corridors created by local communities to large corridors that stretch across many different landscapes.

In terms of creating wildlife corridors, important characteristics include width and length, vegetative cover, habitat quality, location, human influences, noise, light, edge effects, degree of connectivity, and the presence of barriers.

There are several examples of how wildlife corridors have been reintroduced in different countries.

One of the most successful examples was that of the creation of a wolf corridor in a golf course in Jasper National Park, Alberta in 2001. This corridor enabled wolves to pass through the course and it is considered one of the first demonstrations of how wildlife corridors are used by wildlife and can be effective in decreasing fragmentation.

In northern NSW large bridges covered with trees and shrubs have been built over highways for wildlife to cross safely. Unfortunately, none exist in the state of Victoria.

An example of a community-driven approach can be found in the UK in a village Kirtlington, Oxfordshire where a volunteer-run hedgehog highway was created that passes through 60 properties with people simply putting holes in their fences.

A local is campaigning to make hedgehog highways a legal requirement for new housing developments in the area.

Versions of wildlife corridors can be created in your own backyard to let smaller wildlife

move safely from one area to the next for food, reproduction and habitat.

A small pond can help for frogs, trees and vegetation can help with smaller birds and insects.

What can you do:

- From dawn to dusk in regional areas travel at 60kms an hour to reduce roadkill.
- Support existing wildlife corridors such as wetland and coastal shores and free flower rivers for migratory, birds, fish and other animals.
- Lobby all levels of governments and members of parliament to create and maintain wildlife corridors along highways, rivers and train tracks.
- Help fund the campaign for the longest wildlife corridor in East Africa through GetUp’s campaign.
- Create your own wildlife corridor in your backyard.
- Create a local neighbourhood wildlife corridor ●



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FEDERAL MP

Dinner daze

After being elected as your representative 12 years ago, one thing which always strikes me about the Federal Budget is the dinners.

Not my dinner, where my office put on some cold pizzas while we listened to the Treasurer speak, but the fundraising dinners for the Liberal Party which appear all over Parliament House, raising money for their re-election campaigns.

During budget night, the Liberals turn the Parliament into a function centre, packing the place out with high-paying donors to come and listen to the Treasurer announce how he will be spending your money.

It's not just the dinners, but corridors and halls are actually laid out with tables, so donors can pay up to \$10,000 a plate for the privilege of watching the Treasurer on telly.

All the big donors are there, the coal and gas corporations, the big business groups and their lobbyists, the people who own media companies and the big corporations.

There are the Treasurer's mates, like the billionaires who took millions of dollars of your



money through JobKeeper.

It's incredible, because the public doesn't get to go to these dinners, only those who can afford to pay are invited. The budget is actually for the donors.

Much was made of the government giving \$420 to low- and middle-income earners in a one-off payment, but little was made of the fact that billionaires will be getting a \$9075 tax

cut each and every year, under the government's stage three tax cuts, with Labor's support.

The coal and gas corporations which attended these events presumably had a great time, given that in the budget there was more than \$36 billion in handouts from taxpayers, and nothing new to roll out renewable energy.

Instead of tackling the climate crisis, the budget actually pays polluters.

The budget gave over \$16 billion in subsidies to push up housing prices and make it harder for first home buyers to get into the housing market, which is why some of the developers who stand to profit were only too happy to get into Parliament House and have a piece of overcooked chicken.

If you feel like politics doesn't work for people like you, this is why. Liberal – and sadly, Labor too – take too many big donations from big corporations and billionaires, and as a result, Budgets get written which deliver little for everyday people. On budget night, it's like the curtain is pulled up, and there they all are, in your Parliament, getting drunk on your wine, and ripping off your resources.

This is why this election is so important. We have to kick the Liberals out. They have sent the climate crisis and cost of living crisis out of control and have refused to make the big corporations and billionaires pay their fair share.

With the Greens in the balance of power after the election, we will push the next government to make the billionaires and big corporations pay their tax, not donations, and we will fight for everyone's future, not just those on the guest list ●

Contact Adam Bandt:  
adam.bandt.mp@aph.gov.au or  
phone 9417 0772

STATE MP

Community rooms will finally reopen for public housing residents

Every Friday at 7pm, local Eritrean women gather in the community room at 503 Lygon St in Carlton. The regular meet-up is run by the Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre and provides an opportunity for women to meet, make friends, share stories and support one another.

At least, this is what happened before March 2020.

When the pandemic started, we all had to sacrifice doing some of the things we loved for the safety of our communities. But while pubs, theatres, cinemas, libraries and football have been open for months, community rooms in Melbourne's public housing buildings have been closed for more than two years.

Until now.

After months of pressure from residents and myself, the state government has finally announced that community rooms in public housing buildings will reopen on April 19. This will be a big relief to the many residents who use these spaces for social activities and to access support programs.

The Eritrean women's group is just one of the regular activities that has been put on hold since the pandemic started. The Kensington Chinese Friendship Group – a social gathering for mainly Mandarin-speaking seniors – has been unable to use the community room at the Ormond St public housing estate for two years now. The Kensington Neighbourhood House's study support program – which helps more than 50 primary and high school students with their studies – has had to move its program to a different location, making it harder for families to access it.

There are more than a dozen other community groups and programs I could name that have been in limbo for two years now. Many of the groups cater to residents who do not have access to, or the skills to use, technology like Zoom to socialise online. Residents have either had to pay hefty fees to access other facilities, or because most of them can't afford it, they have just cancelled their activities altogether.

After months of lobbying from my office and the local community (and after some strategic questions by the media!) we were recently successful! The state government has finally agreed to reopen these community rooms.

It's great news – but considering pubs, restaurants and theatres have been open for months,



▲ Ellen and Adam Bandt (Federal MP for Melbourne) chatting with residents at the Drummond St public housing estate in Carlton.

it does seem like public housing residents are again at the bottom of this state government's priority list. This needs to change.

One of the other issues I'm currently working on is lobbying the state government to fund free Wi-Fi in public housing towers, given that so many kids missed out on learning during the pandemic due to lack of internet or data access (even if they had a device from their school). I've also been calling for increased on-site mental health support for public housing residents, who often simply cannot access private services.

We are so lucky to have such a thriving, diverse community here in inner Melbourne, and we need to make sure no-one in our community gets left behind. If there is ever anything that I can do to help you, please get in touch: office@ellensandell.com ●



Ellen Sandell  
STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE  
OFFICE@ELLENSANDELL.COM

METRO TUNNEL



Rail enthusiasts given sneak peek into the future of Arden Station

A group of lucky rail enthusiasts were among the first members of the public to set foot inside Arden Station at the recent Arden Station and Tunnel Tour.

More than 1000 people were provided a sneak peek into the progress of the underground station in North Melbourne as part of the Metro Tunnel Project at the highly anticipated event last month.

The group was taken 20m below ground level to walk part of the tunnel, where the first rail tracks are set to be installed later this year.

There was also a tour of the imposing arches, made up of more than 100,000 bricks – each one laid by hand – that form the striking entrance to the station in a nod to the area's rich industrial history.

Those fortunate enough to attend the event also had the opportunity to have their photo taken in the tunnel and hear from construction experts on how the station will help redefine rail travel in Melbourne.

The station is now moving into the fit-out stage, with the installation of lifts, escalators and platform screen doors bringing Arden Station to life.

Arden Station construction manager Stefania Calati said it was a unique opportunity for the public to get a glimpse at how far the project had come since tunnelling started three years ago.

“What's interesting at the moment is while it is a construction site, we're here today able to open it up to the community, so they can see what we've been working on,” Ms Calati.

“We're starting to near the finish line at Arden.”

CBD Stations caverns director Andrew Banks said he was proud to show off what had been achieved.

“We're at a fairly exciting period as a project,” Mr Banks said.

“It's fantastic to have a community really blown away by what they see. Typically, on a tunnel project, you just don't know what's below your feet.”

“To be able to come underground and really see the spectacle, and the size of what is being presented here and what will be such a legacy for Victoria, is a unique opportunity.”

The first test trains are set to run through the tunnel next year ahead of the completion of the project in 2025 ●

For more information:  
metrotunnel.vic.gov.au



HISTORY

# The West Melbourne Apollo building

*I have been interested to know more about the Mighty Apollo building at 109-111 Hawke St for many years, and the recently published book by Jon Faine, Apollo and Thelma, a true tall story, prompted me to find out more.*

WORDS BY *Felicity Jack*  
MEMBER OF THE HOTHAM HISTORY PROJECT

According to Graeme Butler’s West Melbourne Heritage Review, the three-storey heritage-listed building was built in 1926 for the successful battery manufacturing firm, Widdis Diamond Dry Cells Company Pty Ltd, owned by Mr A.J.W. Scovell, one of the first Australian manufacturers of special purpose portable batteries for the radio industry. The architect was H. Stanley Harris.

The building was later occupied by the Hygiene Baby Carriages Pty Ltd, which manufactured prams. A 2015 photo shows that the existing café was then occupied by Advance Automobiles. But although the man whose name continues to be displayed on the building died in 1994, his legendary fame lives on, and is perpetuated by the Mighty Apollo Lane that runs nearby.

Paul Anderson, known as the Mighty Apollo, was a legendary figure. YouTube has several videos of his prowess, including *The Mighty Young Apollo*, *Australian Paul Anderson*, *Old Time Strongman* in which Apollo discusses his life story. The videos show his bulging, rippling muscles as he undertakes unimaginable feats of strength and daring. He was trodden on, twice, by an elephant, and could pull heavy vehicles, including a tram loaded with people, with a harness that he attached to his teeth with a toggle. He also trained athletes and brought Japanese martial arts to Australia after visiting Japan.

Growing up in the rough and sometimes violent suburb of Collingwood, Apollo set himself the task of becoming the strongest man in the



world from the age of five. Small of stature – he was only five-feet four-inches when fully grown – his strength allowed him to defeat the school bullies. His father was a blacksmith, so training weights and gadgets were in easy reach. At a later age he was gifted a bed of nails and a board known as the “Tomb of Hercules” on which to further develop his acts of daring. He attributed his superhuman strength to his strong will power as well as his well-developed



muscles. He also had a mystical belief in his indomitable will, believing that there was an indefinable spiritual force giving him power. Some of his feats were, he alleged, prompted by dreams. After setting up gyms in Melbourne’s city centre he moved his gym and his very basic living quarters to Hawke St in 1982.

Jon Faine’s book tells the story of how, as a fledgling lawyer, he was given the task of sorting out the disputed will of Apollo’s sister, Thelma Hawk, who had

died suddenly. She owned a pub in a remote area of the Northern Territory but, having defaced her will by scribbling out her executor, a solicitor who had been convicted of embezzling money, she died intestate. Her intention was to leave her wealth to her three nephews, sons of Apollo, but it was years before all the claims on her estate could be settled and the money distributed according to her wishes.

I started my search by visiting the Apollo café that has occupied the downstairs front portion of the building since 2017. After two successful years the business was severely curtailed by COVID. However, the owner, Russ Spear, says that success is returning as life is returning to a “new normal.” The café is well worth a visit but don’t rely on Google maps for its opening hours. Check its website instead. If you are an early riser, it’s open on weekdays from 6.30am.

I understand that the building has been owned by the same family since it was built, although Faine said it was sold in 2010 and was in the “gleeful hands of property developers.” Certainly, the top floor now comprises two apartments and there are several offices on the middle level. The façade and the café as well as the adjacent Mighty Apollo Lane remain as a monument to Apollo’s fame.

Faine’s book recounts several instances of coincidence, such as when, in 2011, he went to a Bendigo swap meet and discovered some of Apollo’s prized memorabilia that he was able to restore to one of Apollo’s sons. Russ Spear recounts one of his own. When he took his grandmother to show off his café she pointed to the building next door: she had worked at 125 Hawke St for 30 years when it was a printing business ●

NORTH WEST CITY LOCAL

# Kensington community worker kicks goals for public housing residents

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*

For Kensington’s beloved community worker Erika Lodge, the bushes next to the public toilets at St Kilda Beach used to be her “home away from home.”

Living on the streets for two years, Ms Lodge considered herself lucky because the owner of a nearby Italian restaurant used to give her a plate of food every day to help her stave off the near-constant hunger.

Nowadays, Ms Lodge lives at the Ormond St public housing estate in Kensington where she’s devoted to helping the local community through her 78 Seniors program and tireless work delivering fresh groceries to residents.

It’s work Ms Lodge, 70, said she was driven to do because she knew what it’s like to live rough.

“I’ve been extremely lucky to be dropping groceries off to residents’ houses,” she said.

“I was homeless myself and I knew what it was like to starve, so I’m drawing on my experience of being alone and having nothing to eat.”

Ms Lodge runs the 78 Seniors program for elderly locals, which aims to have a bit of fun and alleviate social isolation.

In non-COVID times, the group normally ventures to Williamstown for fish and chips or to see live theatre before tending to the community garden which they built two years ago at 94 Ormond St.

Ms Lodge said the garden was a big hit with residents, boasting flowers as well as vegetables including pumpkins, zucchinis and tomatoes.

“It’s embracing and enchainning the community,” she said.

“Not only that, but it’s also the greenery we need in our living arrangements. Also, there’s a compost worm farm which is beneficial to enrich the soil.”

Ms Lodge said she had recently been helping elderly Chinese and Vietnamese residents get involved with the garden, a process which was “hard at first” due to language barriers but was “really good” now.

Every Thursday, with the help of a member of her group who works for a food distribution centre, Ms Lodge sets up a market at 94 Ormond St distributing fresh vegetable and fruit for free to residents.

If the residents can’t come down, she delivers the groceries to them herself.

“We’re all in the same boat, so I’ll help anyone,” she said.

If earning accolades was a sport, Ms Lodge would be an Olympic champion.

Ms Lodge said her family had been forced to create a “hall of fame” for all her awards, which hang in her hallway, because “if it wasn’t there, I wouldn’t know what I’d done.”

Her long list of achievements includes National Volunteer Week’s Outstanding Volunteer Award 2016, the 2017 Award for Human Achievement, St Vincent’s Certificate of Appreciation, recognition from the International Honour Society 2017, and the Victorian Homelessness Achievement Award.

While a little vague on the details – something one gets the impression happens a lot regarding her achievements – Ms Lodge said she would also soon be attending an award ceremony at Government House.



“I never thought I’d get these awards, I just wanted to help people,” she said. “It’s not that I want the recognition from parliamentarians. My motivation is feeling other people’s needs.”

After a marriage breakup 10 years ago, Ms Lodge found herself homeless.

“I lived on the streets for two years and I’m extremely grateful for my home away from home, which was bushes next to the public toilets in St Kilda,” she said.

“And I was lucky because there was an Italian restaurant there, and the owner there would bring a plate of food out for me there every night after seeing me looking for food. I never went hungry.”

With some help from Unison Housing and St Vincent’s, Ms Lodge found accommodation, but her experience of living on the streets stuck with her.

Ms Lodge now tries to educate and encourage nearby residents to get vaccinated against COVID-19, a process she imbues with a good-natured sense of humour.

“I say, ‘hey I’m a Kiwi, I was 100 per cent pure

until I came here and you put all your bloody things in me’, and they laugh,” she said.

“You’ve got to lighten these things and take things each day as they come. You never know when you’re going to go.”

When it comes to her age, Ms Lodge doesn’t see it as a barrier.

“My grandchildren are in their 20s and early 30s. They ask, ‘how old are you?’ I say, ‘oh I’m 70’, and they say, ‘geez that’s old’, and I say, ‘you cheeky little shits!’” she said.

For Ms Lodge, the maxim she lives by every day, that actions speak louder than words, flows from her genuine belief that everyone has a good heart, and that everyone is vulnerable.

“Every little bit counts,” she said.

Recently 78 Seniors has been out of action due to the closure of community space at 94 Ormond St and COVID restrictions, but Ms Lodge can’t wait to resume.

“Having a good time is what we’ll do, it’ll be good to see everyone at one place at one time!” she said ●







# Pet's Corner

## A pug with personality

“

*Louis the pug has brought pure joy to Tess Sokolowski's life since she got him six years ago.*

”



WORDS BY *Sophie Berrill*

At that time, Tess was recovering from the loss of her childhood dog, and decided to channel her energy into researching different breeds. “The more I read about pugs, the more I adored them,” she said.

Six months later, Louis mended Tess's heartbreak and started the “next chapter” of her life. Pugs are known to be extremely meal-driven, and Louis is no exception. Scrambled eggs, his favourite dish, are the secret to his shiny coat, and the sound of the fridge door opening

at the other side of the house can wake him from a deep sleep. “This extends outside of the home and to the dog park,” Tess said. “One day someone at the opposite end of the park opened a chip packet and Louis sprinted and was sitting by his side on the park bench within seconds.” The mischief Louis gets up to at Clayton Reserve in North Melbourne always entertains Tess and her partner. He tries to keep up with the big dogs, but knows his place is with his best pug friends Ginny and Peppercorn. Lucky Louis also pays visits to the beach when the weather gets too hot for pugs. “He loves the freedom it brings,” Tess said. “And although he's not sold on swimming, he loves chasing the tide in, and when it comes back, he sprints like his life depends on it.” Tess can't always tell if people are “laughing with or at” Louis. Either way, he brings a smile to the faces of those who meet him. “He makes you feel like the most important person in the room,” she said. Louis has impacted Tess's life tremendously. This became especially apparent during lockdowns together in their Kensington home. “It was so comforting to have a little heartbeat at my feet follow me into every room, only wanting to be by my side.” ●

### ROTARY FLEMINGTON & KENSINGTON

## Let's talk about mental health

WORDS BY *Lesley McCarthy*

Mental health, anxiety and depression are being spoken about a lot more recently, especially with the impacts from COVID isolation on young people. Good mental health allows us to live life in a positive and meaningful way, helps us cope with day-to-day life stresses, to work or study to our full potential, and be involved in the community. It helps us be resilient, flexible, and socially connected. Feeling down, tense, angry, anxious or moody are all normal emotions, but when these feelings persist for a few weeks, or begin to interfere with daily life, they are cause for concern.

Following feedback from local community members and students, the Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington is taking action to address this issue in our area. A mental health forum will be held at Kensington Town Hall on May 18 from 7pm to 9pm

A number of relevant speakers have agreed to attend, and a featured guest speaker is currently being identified – it's a surprise! Learn how to identify mental health issues, listen effectively to someone experiencing issues and gather resources to best help and direct someone to seek aid. Representatives from Beyond Blue, HeadSpace, Cohealth and local support agencies will be in attendance to share resources.

Book tickets by scanning the QR code. [Lillico2009@gmail.com](mailto:Lillico2009@gmail.com) ●



For more information: [rotaryflemington.org.au](http://rotaryflemington.org.au) or email [info@rotaryflemington.org.au](mailto:info@rotaryflemington.org.au)



### MELBOURNE ZOO

## Zoo puts the spotlight on wildlife photography

For most people, reaching for their mobile phone to take a photo when they see an animal has become instinctive. But a new study is suggesting that the way we photograph wildlife could have a serious impact on how people perceive that species. The study, released by Zoos Victoria and Deakin University this month, found that when people view images of humans touching, or near wildlife they are more likely to think the animal would make a good pet compared to people who view the animal alone or with the human further away.

The findings further support international research that established the way animals are photographed can also affect how people perceive the conservation status of a species. Zoos Victoria senior social science research manager, Emily McLeod, said that when people are taking photos of wildlife and posting them on social media the context can be lost to the viewer, which can significantly impact people's perception of those animals. “Often when people are viewing these photos, they're viewing them without any information around how the photo was taken, what's happening in that context, or what's happening with that animal,” Ms McLeod said. “What we're really conscious of is making sure that we're taking photos that really foster positive attitudes towards wildlife and the conservation work that is being done.” Study author and PhD candidate at Deakin University's Centre for Integrative Ecology, Meg Shaw, hopes her research will change the way people think about images of humans and animals together.

“Images are a powerful and common communication tool, but their messages can be misunderstood,” Ms Shaw said. “When humans are shown close to wildlife in photos, such as a selfie, those pictures can influence people to think that the animal would make a good pet or is not an endangered species.” “This is a problem because it can put the animal at threat and encourage behaviours towards the animal that can impact its welfare. Education around the structure of a photo is



important in order to maintain a true representation of the animal's environment.” As a result of the research, Zoos Victoria is encouraging its visitors and the public to change the way they take photographs of wildlife by making the focus on the animal, rather than a human posing with the animal. “A great way to take a photo with wildlife or zoo animals is to keep a respectful distance from that animal, making sure it has the choice and control to move away if it would like. As you're taking the photo, instead of looking at the camera, look at the wildlife to capture the fascination, awe and connection you have for that animal,” Ms McLeod said. “When you're taking that photo, you might know in that moment that everything is fine, but the image that is portrayed when it ends up on social media without context might be very different for those who view it,” Ms McLeod said. “We love people taking photos of the animals when they come to the Zoo, and we love that they are going to create moments that are unforgettable and are going to last forever in these images. We want to inspire people to help protect our wildlife and to remember that animals should be respected and held in awe.” Ms McLeod said Zoos Victoria was committed to adapting its methods and techniques based on science and research. “At Zoos Victoria, we are always led by science and evidence. So, when new information comes to light, like this, we act on it, and we are constantly evolving.” ●

### ROTARY NORTH MELBOURNE



## North Melbourne Rotary Club is now in full swing

Last month the North Melbourne Rotary Club got back in full swing by doing the big Moomba barbecue for the City of Melbourne. We fed more than 1000 people who had come back from the Moomba parade in under two hours. Not long after we did another large barbecue for the Metro Tunnel team and have another scheduled for them next month. Of course, next month we will also be cooking up our famous “Democracy Sausages” at the federal election at North Melbourne Primary School. But our biggest event coming up next month is the big concert we are organising to raise funds for the badly affected citizens of Ukraine. The event is being run at Melbourne Town Hall on Saturday, May 7 at 3pm (for more information please see promotional flyer published in this issue). All funds raised will be sent to help the Ukraine citizens by first sending them to the Australian Rotary Foundation's Ukraine Disaster Aid Fund especially set up for this purpose. Tickets are only \$25 and can be booked on Trybookings at [trybooking.com/BYPWE](http://trybooking.com/BYPWE). If you cannot attend but would still like to support, there is also a facility to make a donation on the same Trybookings site. These donations will be issued a tax-deductible receipt from the Australian Rotary Foundation. We are very grateful for the support of our major sponsor for this event, Downer, whose support has meant we can host this event within the iconic Melbourne Town Hall. We are also grateful for the club's banker, Bendigo Bank, Strathmore Branch for its support for this event as well ●



PUZZLES & TRIVIA

Quiz



- 1. Gouache, oil and encaustic are all types of what?
- 2. North Melbourne's southern boundary is which street?
- 3. Where are the smallest bones in the human body located?
- 4. Who was the first Indigenous Australian to become a member of the Federal Parliament?
- 5. Name the largest cafe on Errol St.
- 6. What is the birth name of Dr. Dre (pictured)?
- 7. Is the local council area for Kensington the City of Melbourne or Maribyrnong City Council?
- 8. What is the hard upper shell of a tortoise called?
- 9. Which politician is replacing Dr Tim Read to become the Member for Parkville Gardens?
- 10. What term is usually given to the technique of turning sharply when surfing?
- 11. Name the captain of the North Melbourne AFLW squad.
- 12. Kensington is surrounded by which five suburbs?

QUIZ SOLUTIONS

1. Paint 2. Victoria St 3. Bar 4. Neville Bonner (1971-1983) 5. Auction Rooms 6. Andre R侢elle Young 7. The City of Melbourne 8. Carapace 9. Ellen Sandell 10. Carve or carving 11. Emma Kearney 12. West Melbourne, North Melbourne, Footscray, Trarancore and Flemington

5x5

No. 010

Insert the missing letters to make 10 words – five reading across the grid and five reading down.

Q		I		K
	N		E	
A		S		Y
	E		S	
T		E		D

SOLUTIONS

QUICK, UNSEE, ASSAY, REUSE, TWEED  
QUART, UNSEW, ISSUE, CEASE, KEYED

PUZZLES AND PAGINATION  
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Apr, 2022

Sudoku

No. 010

Fill in the blank cells using the numbers from 1 to 9. Each number can only appear once in each row, column and 3x3 block

EASY

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HARD

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SOLUTIONS

EASY

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170	4	1	8	9	2	7	1	4



# What's On: April

CROWD STANCE: RAFAELLA MCDONALD

Arts House  
521 Queensberry St  
North Melbourne 3051  
Free, Feb 1 - June 12

Rafaella McDonald's expansive installation Crowd Stance uses bold colour, intuitive mark making and cartoon-like outlines of the body in various moments of action.



QUEER

National Gallery of Victoria  
180 St Kilda Rd  
Melbourne 3006

Free March 10 - August 20

Queer shines a light on the NGV Collection to examine and reveal the queer stories works of art can tell.



BARK LADIES

NGV 180 St Kilda Rd. Melbourne.

March to April

Bark Ladies is an exhibition that celebrates the NGV's extraordinary collection of work by Yolngu women artists from the Buku Larngay Mulka Mulka Centre (Buku), in Northeast Arnhem Land.



SEEING EYE DOGS CARER INFORMATION SESSION

Seeing Eye Dogs Australia, 17 Barrett St Kensington.

Monday 21 March 12.00pm to 1.00pm

Seeing Eye Dogs is on the lookout for more breeder and training dog carers. If you're interested in being a future carer, contact 0428 010 843

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.

EMU SKY

University of Melbourne, Old Quadrangle, Old Quad  
Parkville 3052, until July 31. Free

The Emu Sky exhibition tells its stories through art, research and storytelling, with more than 30 Aboriginal community members coming together to share their culture, knowledge and artistic practice.

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



FREE THE PARK HOTEL REFUGEES

701 Swanston St, Carlton VIC 3053

Every night, 6pm.

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

FRENCH CLUB

North Melbourne Library  
66 Errol St, North Melbourne 3051

February 5 - May 27, Fridays 1pm to 2.30pm. Free. Run fortnightly at North Melbourne Library, the French Club is an opportunity to explore French culture, improve your French language skills and make new friends.



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.

# Business Directory

## Politician

ADAM BANDT

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MELBOURNE

142 Johnston Street, Fitzroy  
(03) 9417 0772  
adam.bandt.mp@aph.gov.au

THE GREENS

## Precinct

NORTH + WEST MELBOURNE PRECINCT ASSOCIATION

Contact Us.

info@northwestmelbourne.com.au

Post Office Box 5,  
North Melbourne  
Victoria 3051

N

Next Chapter

Tom Hirini — Director  
0481 192 060  
thenextchapter.com.au

## School

SCHOOL OF LIVING MUSIC

A: 53 Little Baillie Street  
North Melbourne

Ph: 03 9329 0503

Email: info@livingmusic.com.au

SINCE 1999

## Real Estate

ELLEN SANDELL

STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE

(03) 9328 4637  
office@ellensandell.com

146 Peel Street  
North Melbourne VIC 3051

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8.00am – 4.00pm

CAMPUSES  
St Mary's 7-9 | 273 Victoria St,  
West Melbourne VIC 3003  
St Brigid's 10-12 | 20 York St,  
Fitzroy North VIC 3068



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