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3x3 B-Ball: From the courts to the Olympics.
Photo by John Tadigiri

North Melbourne’s “The Huddle” is fostering the next generation of 3x3 basketball stars and leveraging the power of sport to strengthen social inclusion, education and careers for young people. From left to right: Pheonix, James, Mitchell, Declan, Hazem. *Story on Page 2.*

Concerns new school could sow division

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*
EDUCATION

While most North Melburnians welcome a new school, the community has raised concerns that the Victorian Government’s proposed \$36 million North Melbourne Hill Primary School has progressed without consultation. The six-storey school – due to begin construction in the middle of this year and finishing in 2023 – will be built on land being redeveloped as part of the government’s Public Housing Renewal Program. However, various members of the community have been left in the dark about whether the new school – which will be less than a block away from North Melbourne Primary – will form a second campus or function as a new stand-alone school. During Parliament on March 3, Planning Minister Richard Wynne suggested North Melbourne Hill Prima-

ry School would be a new school separate to the existing school. However, further details about zoning remain unclear. In particular, community members have raised concerns with *North West City News* that the new school’s zoning could lead to socio-economic division and that the vertical design could deprive students of adequate outdoor spaces. Nearby resident Anita Rivera said consultation had been “problematic” and expressed concerns over the development of North Melbourne Hill Primary School occurring separately to the redevelopment of Abbotsford St estate social housing. “The whole consultation piece had been really problematic,” she said. “The word ‘consultation’ gets used a lot, it’s ticking a box, but there’s very little opportunity for the community to engage.”

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Does urban renewal need a rethink?

In the late ‘80s and early ‘90s one of Australia’s first large-scale urban renewal projects was built in Kensington. With two major urban renewals now under way in North Melbourne, are there lessons to be learnt from the nearby Kensington Banks?

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
PLANNING

Kensington Banks is still considered by many as one of the most successful examples of urban renewal. It created what is described as a walkable, well-serviced neighbourhood with an abundance of enviable open space. Before the renewal the land was occupied by stockyards, animal auction yards and abattoirs. The industrial use ceased in 1987 and the redevelopment began. The first phase, on the escarpment north of Epsom Rd, was named Lynch’s Bridge. The second phase, from Epsom Rd down to the Maribyrnong River, is Kensington Banks proper. One of the first parts of the renewal was the creation of the Women’s Peace Garden, near the top of the old stockyards. The shelters and pathways within the garden were designed to form the symbols for women and peace, with colours of the women’s movement – green, purple and white – represented by the flowers and foliage. On foot, the gardens mark a main entrance to the top of the renewal area, connecting to a central walking path to the river which incorporates the area’s retained sale yard heritage, surrounded by low-rise housing and small parks. A new major park was also built at the bottom of the area next to the river to provide concentrated open space while helping to manage flood risks. RMIT planning Professor Michael Buxton said the renewal was “trail-blazing” in combining high amenity

with a high-density housing model. “The density of typical outer urban housing was about seven to 10 dwellings per hectare, Kensington Banks was about 25 dwellings per hectare – a little bit more in some parts – with a mixed, diverse housing approach,” Professor Buxton said. “It’s single and double storey mostly, with some three storey buildings and some apartments. The density made it interesting, it was attempting in a more modern way to recreate the housing type of Melbourne’s typical pattern of traditional Victorian housing.” Professor Buxton said removing garages from the street and placing them on rear lanes was a “critical feature”. “It recreated that Victorian streetscape and eradicated that traditional outer urban housing of streets dominated by garages.” “It is very walkable, and it had really interesting open space – it was recreating that Victorian focus on small parks with housing overlooking the parks.” “All those features made Kensington Banks a model for future development.” But Professor Buxton said that model had unfortunately not been followed since. He said Docklands and Southbank were two big opportunities to build on the model, but which went in another direction. “They were opened up to developers to do whatever they liked, and the development industry decided to go for high rise because there was more money to be made on each site by developers,” he said.

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▲ The Huddle CEO Cameron McLeod with teenage basketballers Pheonix, James, Mitchell, Declan and Hazem.

From the courts to the Olympics

WORDS BY *Jack Hayes*
SPORT

Considered the world’s number one urban sport, 3x3 basketball is on a meteoric rise from the streets to the biggest stage in world sport: the rescheduled 2021 Tokyo Olympics.

Fostering the next generation of 3x3 basketball stars and leveraging the power of sport to strengthen social inclusion, education and careers for young people, is The Huddle; an organisation founded by the North Melbourne Football Club which uses the influence of sport to connect people across different ages, genders and cultures.

The Huddle, in partnership with the National Basketball League (NBL), showcased the cultural wealth of the Victorian community through basketball, with 20 teams taking part in the 3x3

Community Hustle at Moomba Festival.

According to The Huddle CEO, Cameron McLeod, nearly 20 different cultural groups were represented by over 100 participants varying in age from eight to 25.

“The opportunity to work with the NBL, the City of Melbourne and the Victorian government is a testament to how well it [The Huddle] is going,” Mr McLeod said.

“3x3 basketball gives the opportunity for young people to play, to coach, to umpire – it has an educational component – it’s about developing teamwork, it’s about goal setting. There are many skills from everyday life that we work to foster and nurture through sport.”

Since its foundation over a decade ago, The Huddle has worked with 85,000 young people from over 160 different cultural backgrounds throughout Australia.

“Last year we had nearly 200 young people

gain employment through the program. In the context of COVID-19, that is enormous,” Mr McLeod said.

“Our end game is educating young people and giving them access effective and sustainable employment opportunities.”

“We need to thank the City of Melbourne and the Victorian government to allow the 3x3 Community Hustle to take place. Given the year that we have just had, it was great to bring the community together, and I think sport does that better than anything.” ●

For more information:
nmfc.com.au/huddle

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Concerns new school could sow division

Continued from page 1

By way of example, Ms Rivera said a traffic management report for the housing project estimated 1000 additional cars would travel along Molesworth St each day, but no traffic reports had been completed for the school.

“There’s a lot of little kids on scooters and walking and lots of old ladies – a lot of people who are more vulnerable to traffic,” she said.

One nearby resident in the immediate vicinity who wished to remain anonymous told *North West City News* the school was originally planned to be oriented in a north-south direction along Hardwicke St, which she said would create minimal overshadowing of the new social housing apartments.

The resident, speaking on behalf of a number of community members, said an “L-shaped” design instead of a six-storey block should have been considered to allow more light to penetrate the new housing.

But nearby resident Rachel Laihung Chiu, who moved to the area three years ago, said she could not wait to send her three-year old son to the new school.

“My husband and I are very excited about it because it’s just opposite our house,” she said.

“We know the capacity, there’s lots of people and we believe the new school will make our area more vibrant.”

Greens State MP for Melbourne Ellen Sandell said there had been a stark lack of “good-faith” community consultation about the new school, and asked the Ministers for Education, Housing and Planning at Parliament in March to discuss the various issues raised in relation to the school with her.

“In the past two weeks I’ve received almost 100 messages from concerned parents and residents who are worried that the school will be a stand-alone school, not a second campus of the existing North Melbourne Primary, which could divide the community in two,” she said in a statement.

“

“This decision could mean the majority of public housing residents are sent to a high-rise school with little outdoor space, while students from wealthier families attend a different school.”

”

“This decision could mean the majority of public housing residents are sent to a high-rise school with little outdoor space, while students from wealthier families attend a different school.”

A Department of Education spokesperson said the new school would help ease current demand and enrolment pressures on existing sites.

“Every student has the right to attend their local Victorian government school and students can also enrol at a school outside their zone if capacity allows it,” the spokesperson said.

“A virtual community information session was held in December for local residents to discuss the project and provide feedback as the new school is developed.”



▲ A render of the school plans from above.

“Consistent with all school building projects, the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) will work with local authorities to develop a traffic management plan for the North Melbourne Hill Primary School site during construction.”

According to the VSBA, the new school will include amenities such as play and recreational spaces for children, an outdoor stage, tiered seating and an events space along with a gym, basketball and netball court.

A kindergarten for three- and four-year-old children will be built on level five of the school which will include two rooms opening out onto an outdoor learning and play spaces ●



▲ A render of one of the school entrances.

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Auction Rooms cafe received a small business reactivation grant

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Businesses across Melbourne are finding creative ways to innovate and evolve in response to COVID-19.

To support the COVID-safe reopening of our city, the City of Melbourne partnered with the Victorian Government to deliver up to \$10 million in small business reactivation grants.

Among the more than 1100 businesses awarded funding, Flemington and

Kensington Bowling Club received a grant to remodel a shipping container to create a new outdoor service area.

In North Melbourne, Auction Rooms cafe and artisanal bakery The Bread Club also received funding to help them create outdoor dining areas.

If you own a business, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/business to subscribe to the Business in Melbourne newsletter and explore the support on offer, including grants and outdoor dining permits.

For one-on-one advice, you can also call our dedicated Business Concierge Service on 9658 9658 (press 1 for business), or enquire online at melbourne.vic.gov.au/business

Information and events in this publication are current at the time of printing. Subsequent changes may occur.

THREE WAYS TO HELP SHAPE MELBOURNE'S FUTURE

Join conversations to influence the City of Melbourne's long-term vision for the municipality through community engagement platform, Participate Melbourne.

As 2021 takes shape, there are a number of projects on-the-go and we are seeking feedback from people of all ages and backgrounds during March:

1 Community vision

Help shape a bright future for Melbourne by taking part in a local community vision survey or workshop.

Your thoughts are important to us as we evolve our aspirations for the city and look to update Future Melbourne 2026, our 10-year plan for the city that was released in 2016.

2 Health and wellbeing

What can we do to help Melburnians lead happy and healthy lives? Share your feedback to help identify priorities for our Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and guide our work for the next four years. Some of the key areas are food security, climate change and mental health.

3 Towards a smoke-free Melbourne

Did you know that the City of Melbourne already has 12 smoke-free areas, and a vision to make Melbourne a smoke-free city by 2025? Share your feedback by registering for our community panel or via our quick online survey.

For more information, visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au and sign up to receive updates.



IN-BRIEF

NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The City of Melbourne is creating a new advisory committee that will advise Council on the growth and sustainability of social, cultural and economic activities than happen between 6pm and 6am. The group will include 10 retail, hospitality and creative industry leaders.

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL

Get set to grin, chuckle and guffaw through more than three weeks of COVID-safe laughs when this world-renowned festival returns on stage and online from 24 March to 18 April. comedyfestival.com.au

RAINBOW CARERS

Do you provide unpaid care to an older person, or someone living with a physical or mental health condition or disability? The City of Melbourne offers supportive programs for carers, including a dedicated group for LGBTIQ+ carers, in partnership with Queerspace. Find out more at melbourne.vic.gov.au/carers

ELIZABETH STREET

Works are underway to create more space for people and a more appealing streetscape on Elizabeth Street. Due for completion in May, the transformation between Flinders Street and Flinders Lane will add 400 square metres of pedestrianised space. Learn more at melbourne.vic.gov.au/cityprojects

GRAFFITI REMOVAL

Eyesore graffiti and tagging is being removed from high areas like building facades and bridges in a city cleaning blitz. This project will create jobs and a welcoming environment as people return to the city.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Watch meetings live from wherever you are thanks to our live-streaming capability. Tune in live or catch up later.

Find all the details about Council and committee meetings at melbourne.vic.gov.au/aboutcouncil

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Does urban renewal need a rethink?

Continued from page 1.

Macaulay and Arden

Plans for the urban renewal of 140 hectares in North Melbourne are now being revised under the Arden and Macaulay structure plans.

Last month's edition of *North West City News* reported on the current planning regime in Macaulay.

But Arden has been assigned much higher density targets. The aspiration is to create a major employment precinct – with 34,000 jobs alongside 15,000 residents – by 2051.

High-rise is proposed for much of the precinct, in some places up to 40 storeys.

"It's not human scale, it's replicated all the problems that have occurred in Southbank and Docklands," Professor Buxton said.

"It's full of high-rise towers that are windy, it's not a great place to live. Compare it to the low- to medium-rise development and redevelopment occurring all over Europe and the west coast of the US."

"It's just a shame that the government is replicating its obsession with high rise as the only way to develop these areas."

And despite the delivery of Arden Station scheduled for 2025, Professor Buxton said transport was a major concern.

"There's no real transport plan for Arden, they should be designing these areas with an integrated transport plan. Much of the Arden development will not be well connected to Melbourne," he said.

"The nearest tram is 500 metres from Arden Station and a lot of the development will be not connected well internally through public transport."

"Especially with 34,000 jobs planned they need a better transport system."

Professor Buxton said that in his opinion the focus should be on residential, not the creation of a major employment precinct.

He also said that the proposed affordable housing provision of six per cent was "pathetic":

"In the west coast of the US it's a mandated 25 per cent."

In response, a government spokesperson said the Arden precinct would create jobs, and pointed to the



▲ "The Crescent" by Burbank Urban, part of the Kensington Banks renewal. Photo credit: Burbank Urban.



▲ Part of the walking track through Kensington Banks.



▲ The view from the top of the Women's Peace Garden.

"It's just a shame that the government is replicating its obsession with high rise as the only way to develop these areas."



▲ An artist's impression of Arden once developed.

pre-existing train stations in the area.

"We make no apologies for having a bold vision for the Arden precinct – one that is about creating and supporting jobs, as well as providing housing for 14,000 people on the doorstep of the CBD," the spokesperson said.

"Arden will include a mixture of low-, mid- and high-rise buildings

that respond to the history of the area and provide considerable social and affordable housing – building on our \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build program, which will deliver 12,000 new homes over the next four years."

"While driven by the new Metro Tunnel station, Arden will be serviced by three train stations as well as a network of open space and bike

paths – meaning direct connections to every part of the precinct, the surrounding suburbs and the rest of Melbourne."

The spokesperson was pointing to the existing North Melbourne and Macaulay stations, which sit on the northern and southern ends of the precinct.

North West City News understands plans for potential future integration within the precinct include a north-south public transport corridor that may be built as the renewal proceeds over the next 20 years.

The City of Melbourne recently released summaries of the second round of community consultation on the refreshed structure plans.

Fifty-five per cent of participants said they supported locating Arden's taller buildings mainly along the freeway boundary with heights transitioning down to meet adjoining neighbourhoods.

But the report did not clarify the general attitude to high-rise.

The consultation process also floated the possibility of allocating open road space for a dedicated tram or bus service in Arden, which 80 per cent of respondents supported.

Seventy-one per cent of respondents supported mandatory requirements for at least six per cent of all new housing to be affordable for people living on low to medium incomes, but it is not clear how many people supported higher thresholds.

Sheila Byard, a Kensington resident since 1972, was on the community advisory committee for the Lynch's Bridge renewal while she was a lecturer in Urban Studies at Victoria University.

She said the consultation process for Arden and Macaulay had been undertaken "at a high level of generality".

"It hasn't shown interest in some of the specific issues, like where the open space will be, how street level amenity will be achieved," she said ●



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Kensington Primary still needs its fix

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
EDUCATION

After years of campaigning for funding to fix major problems at Kensington Primary School, the Minister for Education visited the school to take a look in late February.

But there is not yet an indication of whether or not the school will get its entire fix.

Minister for Education James Merlino agreed to visit to the school when Greens State MP Ellen Sandell raised it in Parliament.

The 140-year-old school has long been dogged by maintenance issues and a lack of funding to address them.

Local parent Jonathan Orr said parents had been paying for some of the repairs.

“The underlying issue with the school is that it’s an old building that requires maintenance and the maintenance budget provided by the department is insufficient for the needs of the building,” he said.

“So, there’s basic plumbing problems, water leaks and other bits and pieces that the school has to fund out of the meagre maintenance budget.”

He also said that with more than 500 students the school was coming under increasing pressure, using only one toilet block.

In the administration centre of the school, Mr Orr said there was a spot with X marks on the floor “because if you walk through that area there’s a reasonable chance you’d fall through the floor”.

The school was allocated \$200,000 in the 2019 State Budget, but at the time Victorian Greens leader Samantha Ratnam said the school really needed more than a million dollars to be brought up to standard.

After his February visit, Minister for Education James Merlino said needs would be considered again as part of the State Budget process.



▲ Minister for Education James Merlino with Sheena Watt and Ellen Sandell at Kensington Primary School.

“Kensington Primary is a great school, but the buildings are more than 140 years old and there are some urgent maintenance and safety issues that need to be fixed.”

and it was wonderful to hear from staff and students.”

“We have already invested more than \$260,000 for maintenance and capital works along with a new double-storey building at the school, and we know much more needs to be done.”

“We will consider the needs of Kensington Primary School, and all schools, as part of the State Budget process”

Greens MP Ellen Sandell said the maintenance and safety issues were urgent.

“Kensington Primary is a great school, but the buildings are more than 140 years old and there are some urgent maintenance and safety issues that need to be fixed,” she said.

“I’m so pleased that, after I asked him in Parliament, the Minister visited Kensington Primary with me to see these issues for himself.”

“I’ve put in a bid to the Victorian Treasurer to get the funding that Kensington Primary needs this year. I very much hope that the school receives the funding they need to fix the toilets, guttering, and more.” ●



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78 Seniors: friendship, support and loving thy neighbour

WORDS BY *Jess Carrascalao Heard*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Jess Carrascalao Heard*
FEATURE

“Loneliness is the biggest disease on the pensioner.”

Erika Lodge was frowning as she took a swig of coffee at the picnic tables outside the high-rise housing at 94 Ormond St, Kensington.

She’s the president of the 78 Seniors Club, a social group catering for the over-55s and seniors living in public housing in the area, a demographic which can be severely affected by loneliness and isolation.

“Most of their [senior residents’] friends have passed away. Some of them have lost families. Some of them are not talking to their family ... and they find it hard to talk to other people,” she said.

The 78 Seniors Club seeks to combat isolation and loneliness by providing friendship, support, and a sense of community regardless of its members’ history, background and culture.

“The idea of the 78 Seniors Club is to embrace everybody and their problems. We’ve all got problems, and we’re all trying to get together,” Ms Lodge said.

She said that one’s problems should not stop you from circulating and getting to know your neighbours.

Formed in 2008 by residents of the then-new high-rise housing at 78 Clifford Terrace, within a few years the club had expanded to include the nearby 56 Derby St, 94 Ormond St, and other local addresses.

For \$12 a year, the club gives its members the chance to make friends and mix with other residents through activities, outings and events, including Christmas lunch, day trips, shopping trips and free lunches.

Ms Lodge laughed when she talked about how she became involved.

“They approached me! I thought that was quite funny ... they knew I was a chef by trade, and they had their chef sick. So, I took over more or less from then on,” she said.

While she has been the president for five years now, and is a trusted, listening ear for other residents, she recalled her own sense of fear and isolation when she first moved into public housing.

“I was scared, and I didn’t want to know anybody. And it was the first time I went on Centrelink, and because I lived on the streets for two years, I was lucky I got this accommodation,” she said.

Her experiences have made it easier for other residents to open up to her, with fear of being judged a big part of why they might otherwise stay silent.

“Some [residents] have gone through a really

hard life, a really tragic life, and they’re scared of being judged,” she said.

“They don’t like publicising the difficulties they go through. So, you’ve got to be on the same wavelength as them.”

Loneliness for older Australians is a well-documented issue, as is the issue of loneliness in public housing.

According to the most recent Census, a quarter of older people live on their own, with one in three older women, and nearly one in five older men, living alone.

A 2011 essay by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute which looked into housing, loneliness and health showed that 47 per cent of public housing tenants viewed loneliness as a serious problem.

It also showed that more people who lived in public housing experienced loneliness on a regular basis, compared with other types of housing.

Isolation, a demon which comes hand-in-hand with loneliness, can take many forms, whether it be having no-one to talk to on a regular basis or a lack of support during times of need.

Ms Lodge recalled one of the most devastating examples of isolation; one of her neighbours had recently passed away alone.

According to Ms Lodge, her neighbour’s body was not discovered for three days.

“What happened to knocking on the door and finding out if she’s all right? No one should have to die alone. You know, that’s horrible,” she said.

She thinks the culture shift thanks to the proliferation of mobile phones and online communication has impacted on our ability to relate to each other on a human level.

“We’ve lost the art of being neighbourly ... and the most important thing, we have lost the art of loving thy neighbour. How many people look after their neighbours? Very few,” she said.

That love-thy-neighbour principle became especially important last year during COVID-19 and lockdown.

Although the pandemic saw the 78 Seniors Club’s social events curtailed for much of last year, the Healthy Living and Learning take away program was still running, in partnership with Kensington Neighbourhood House, Cohealth, Unison Housing and Hotham Mission.

The program offers weekly free lunches, as well as exercise and other activities.

As well as leading the program, Ms Lodge was also busy sourcing surplus food from shops and charities and cooking large batches of soup for residents, as well as delivering food hampers.

Her efforts saw her become a Community Champion finalist at the 2020 Melbourne Awards.



▲ 78 Seniors Club president Erika Lodge in the kitchens at 94 Ormond St.

But Ms Lodge said she did not live for the accolades, but rather what she could do to help the people around her.

And with lockdown restrictions easing at the end of last year, the 78 Seniors Club was able to get into the Christmas spirit.

Because of gathering restrictions and social distancing, the usual sit-down affair for their annual Christmas lunch was not possible, so the club hosted a take-away version of the event instead.

Roast meat with gravy, vegetables, Christmas mince pies and donated lollies were on the menu, packaged up in four containers per person.

Although numbers were down from the 150 people who would usually attend, Ms Lodge was still pleased with the turnout.

“No-one went hungry over that period of time, which as good ... people weren’t sure we were doing anything, because of the lockdown,” she said.


Ms Lodge said the special events were important for the club’s members, especially for those who had lost or were estranged from their families.

“Bringing them into this atmosphere is like generating a second family. We accept you for who you are,” she said.

“You may be an alcoholic all your life, you may be a gambler all your life. It’s who you are in the here and now. Treat you with respect, courtesy, and we expect the same back.” ●



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Curran St apartments approved

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*
PLANNING

A proposed block of apartments in North Melbourne has been given the green light by the City of Melbourne despite more than 40 objections from neighbouring residents.

At a Future of Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting on March 2, the council unanimously voted to demolish the current non-heritage listed dwelling to make way for a \$4.65 million three-storey apartment on the south side of Curran St.

The proposed building will have street frontage at 5 Curran St with 12 apartments and 21 underground car spaces around 100 metres west of Flemington Rd.

But in supporting the proposal, Deputy Lord Mayor and the council's chair of planning Cr Nicholas Reece acknowledged there had been "a large number" of objections, prompting heavy scrutiny over three main aspects relating to heritage, precinct and neighbourhood character, urban design and build form, as well as impact to amenity.

"In terms of the amenity impact on the neighbouring areas, I think this is possibly the most challenging aspect of this," Cr Reece said.

"But having heard from our officers this evening and read their report very carefully, and we do rely on their expert opinion on these things, it's clear this project complies with state planning policy."

A neighbour next door to the site, Kate Richie, told councillors that residents were "very concerned" about the proposal and its impact on the "close-knit" community of Hotham Hill.

Ms Richie said the developer, Mainstone 8 Pty Ltd, had admitted it made a mistake in overshadowing her courtyard garden, which would

not receive the requisite five hours of sunlight.

But she said her main concerns were that the height of the building would be 12 metres instead of the maximum permitted height of 11 metres, adding that the height of the interface between numbers one and three Curran St and the proposal didn't "fit".

"We have offered solutions but the developer has not attempted to meet us half way," Ms Richie said.

Another resident nearby the proposed development, Rick Gardiner, objected to the height of the side setback, which he said would overshadow his balcony. In relation to the car park, Mr Richie also raised concerns over two spaces he said would be occupied by a bike rack, and would not be able to be used as intended.

"And also, the spaces in the plan are 4.9 metres long and many cars are longer than that," Mr Richie said.

"So, if someone parks a longer car in one of those spaces, the opposite spaces are not available."

But despite the objections, Cr Rohan Leppert seconded the motion, acknowledging that in his four years and eight months on the council, it was "incredibly rare" to see applications come through with all but two standards met in full.

"We have received a lot of objections and of course there's always friction when neighbours in particular would like the setbacks from their properties to be a little more than they're proposed to be, but we also have to be honest with them and with everyone about what the planning scheme says and what should be supported on sites like this," Cr Leppert said.

"Regardless of the objections, if this were to go to tribunals as one of our submitters has said tonight, the tribunal would have no qualms in very quickly determining the permit should issue. This is a high-quality project." ●

▼ *A render of the development.*



▲ *Railway Place residents are concerned about the lack of a noise barrier around the Wurundjeri Way Extension.*

No Wurundjeri Way sound barrier

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*
CAPITAL WORKS

"Terrible resonance." That's how West Melbourne residents describe the noise from countless heavy freight trains rumbling by their front doors every day.

Now, the proposed lack of a sound barrier around the Wurundjeri Way Extension section of the West Gate Tunnel Project (WGTP) threatens to disturb their peace even further.

As it stands, the WGTP has no plan to install a noise barrier along part of the project known as Wurundjeri Way, an elevated road around 100 metres away from Railway Place between Dynon Rd and Dynon St where it will join the current Wurundjeri Way.

North West City News understands the WGTP factored in background noise from local roads and the nearby rail in its modelling, with the additional project forecasted not to exceed the 63-decibel threshold required for installing a sound barrier. But Railway Place residents are still concerned about the cumulative noise from regional rail link trains, metro trains and the vibration and resonance from the heavy freight trains passing through the E-Gate.

Railway Place resident Janet Graham told *North West City News* that she already put up with "terrible resonance" from the trains running about 14 metres from her front door.

"You can be sitting in your house and you get these vibrations," she said.

"My bookshelves tend to rattle, but more importantly, it's just a sort of vibration that goes through your head."

Ms Graham said the WGTP seemed to be ignoring the real possibility Railway Place residents may be subjected to even more noise on top of the 250-odd trains passing by their houses each weekday.

Another nearby resident Anthony McKee said while a lot of modelling for the Wurundjeri Way Extension had already been done on the overall length of the project, it did not consider the fact there are many surrounding high-rise apartments and offices which may be impacted by the noise.

According to a letter from City of Melbourne state infrastructure director Rob Moore, directed to Ms Graham in October last year, noise monitoring along Railway Place carried out for the WGTP environmental effects statement in June 2016 showed existing noise levels of 60 decibels.

Further noise modelling carried out for the project predicted "2031 with project" noise levels of just 63 decibels along Railway Place without noise barriers.

"However, the EES doesn't state what volume of vehicles or proportion of vehicles or proportion of trucks were used as inputs to the noise model, nor why the predicted noise level was presented as a rounded whole number but the change in noise level was presented to one decimal place," Mr Moore said in the letter.

In September 2020, Mr McKee circulated an artist's rendering of the roadway published on the WGTP website which includes text at the bottom of the picture, which read, "Noisewall heights and locations not confirmed".

When it was suggested the text may lead people to believe a noise wall would be included in the design, another Railway Resident was told by a representative of WGTP that it was a "copy and paste error", according to Ms Graham.

In September last year, Federal Member for Melbourne Adam Bandt wrote to the Department of Transport in a letter seen by *North West City News* asking for confirmation about whether a noise wall will be erected, urging the WGTP to consult with the residents.

"It is my understanding that studies show that medium-sized trucks emit noise levels of 73-78 dB(A) and heavy trucks may emit noise levels of 80-85 dB(A), well in excess of the VicRoads noise level objective," Mr Bandt wrote.

"I urge you to consider the impact that the noise levels of the freeway will have on amenity and quality of life for local residents at Railway Place."

A WGTP spokesperson said community and council feedback was factored into its decision making, with the noise from the extension falling "well under" strict limits ●

Melbourne Music Week dives into Kensington

WORDS BY *Jack Alfonso*
ARTS & CULTURE

Soul-searching insights into Kensington's identity, culture, and sense of community were on display in Melbourne Music Week's (MMW's) new podcast *Narratives of Neighbourhood*.

Kensington was explored as part of the four-part series on Melbourne neighbourhoods – alongside North Melbourne, Kensington, Carlton, Docklands and Southbank.

Hosted by Xan Coppinger, the series explores life in four different suburbs through conversations with local community members, providing them with a platform to share their stories. Listeners "will discover" the music and culture of North Melbourne and Kensington, among others, with the "key question" posed as "how to engage more fully with our neighbours" through thinking about "the lived experiences" of those around us. Arranging a complex atmospheric and musical

"Kensington was explored as part of the four-part MMW series on Melbourne neighbourhoods."



sound-bed throughout, the Kensington edition begins with Bec Smith, community education coordinator at Kensington Neighbourhood House and long-time resident of the suburb. Ms Smith details the history of the house and the ongoing commitment by women and children to respond to community needs independently.

Uncle Colin Hunter, a "proud Wurundjeri elder", is introduced to the show next, and an immediate evisceration of European colonisation ensues, highlighting the introduction of maps and economic development as the prime reason for tribal disputes in "Naarm". It also shows the condemnation of misrepresentation of Indigenous members of society, while also highlighting the need for security and the "basic human rights" to be ensured for Indigenous people. The importance of the "swamplands" in Kensington to indigenous tribes as a means of food is also discussed, as well as the pollution of the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers through discarding noxious waste in the middle of the

20th century.

The geographical layout of both Melbourne and Kensington is explored by geographer Soul Charles who discusses the way in which Melbourne was designed to transport goods and services from industrial outposts into the city, rather than for people to be able to travel around the city. The dichotomy between older cities, such as London, versus newer ones such as Melbourne, is discussed in relation to their development. The show finishes with an immersion into Transition Town, with guest Jacqueline Van Heerden, a permaculturalist, detailing the specific demands of climate change and affordability on a community-based scale. Her co-convened not-for-profit is attempting to aid local communities in their transition to a more environmentally-sustainable lifestyle ●



A History of **LGBTIQ+** Victoria in 100 Places and Objects



Landmark **LGBTIQ+** report documents local history

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
HERITAGE

On March 1 the Australian Queer Archives and Heritage Victoria launched *A History of LGBTIQ+ Victoria in 100 Places and Objects*, a ground-breaking study of queer people, places, objects and stories in Victoria.

The release, the first of its kind in Australia, coincided with the 40th anniversary of decriminalising sex between consenting men in Victoria in 1981.

Looking back as far as the 1840s, the report reflects the experiences of LGBTIQ+ communities and their histories, examining the lived reality of these communities, and reveals the hidden histories of political activism, social life, “treatment”, punishment, entertainment, and health.

Among those 100 places and objects is “The Hub” in West Melbourne and the love letters of Harry Bruin and Ben Morris, held at the Public Record Office Victoria.

The Australian Queer Archives and Heritage Victoria worked with the State Library of Victoria, Museums Victoria and the National Gallery of Victoria and received more than 150 submissions from LGBTIQ+ and heritage communities to shape to the report.

The work of uncovering surviving documentary and built heritage of LGBTIQ+ Victoria was challenging. Before 1981, keeping records of a “criminal” relationship increased the risk of prosecution, discrimination and social ostracism leaving so much of this history hidden, obscured or lost.

President of the Australian Queer Archives Angela Bailey said the report was as a step towards incorporating LGBTIQ+ social history into Victoria’s heritage system and would be a valuable reference point for future management of heritage places and objects with queer histories.

“On this historic anniversary of decriminalisation, this report paves the way for the recognition of LGBTIQ+

stories to become part of our broader shared histories across the state,” Angela Bailey said.

Local communities will also be able to use the report to apply for heritage listings and as the basis for local history projects like history walks, commemorative plaques and art works.

The Hub

Located at 142 Adderley St, West Melbourne, The Hub was Victoria’s first pride centre.

John Willis – a pastor with the gay-focused Christ’s Community Church – bought the building in 1979 with the intention of setting up a gay community centre.

“The West Melbourne building had six bedrooms, carpeted floors and was in good shape, having been recently repainted. Christ’s Community Church held services in the building on Sundays and otherwise it was available to community groups seven days week,” the report read.

“It included a kitchen with tea-making facilities. Among those who responded to the invitation to get involved with the newly established centre, known as The Hub, were the Australian Gay Archives, as they were then called (see Australian Queer Archives) which held its weekly working bee and open night there, Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous, and Transcare, a group associated with Seahorse, a club which described itself as a being for ‘crossdressers’ and ‘transvestites’.”

The report also highlights The Hub’s library, “which it boasted held the largest collection of homosexual fiction and non-fiction in Australia”.

“There were some 5000 volumes in the collection, which were mostly donated but some were sourced through Willis’s dedicated scouring of bookshops and market stalls in Australia and overseas.”

“In the late 1980s, after several years of being constantly on call for media interviews and to support members of the community, Willis decided to sell the building. For a decade, The Hub provided a service for

the queer communities of Melbourne that was not to be available again until the establishment of the Victorian Pride Centre in 2021.”

The Hub was the origin of the John Willis Gay and Lesbian Fiction Collection, which is now held by the University of Melbourne library.

Love Letters

A collection of 20 letters between Melbourne men Ben Morris and Harry Bruin over a period of several months in 1919 is held by the Public Record Office Victoria.

“Love letters between men from this period are extremely rare in an Australian context, and globally.”

They were seized by police from Bruin’s home in Harcourt Street, Auburn in October 1919. The police were investigating a report that Bruin and Morris were conducting an intimate affair,” the report read.

▼ “The Hub” in West Melbourne.



“On this historic anniversary of decriminalisation, this report paves the way for the recognition of LGBTIQ+ stories to become part of our broader shared histories across the state.”

“The relationship came to light when the mother of one of Morris’s friends, having failed in her attempt to blackmail Bruin, went to the police. Blackmail was an ever-present danger to homosexual men at that time. Homosexual sex was against the law and even gossip alone could ruin reputations, careers and social standing. In refusing the demands of his attempted blackmailer, Bruin took an enormous risk.”

But because the letters contained no descriptions of sex acts, the matter was dropped.

The report outlined that letters like those are rare as often the correspondence was destroyed by the writers or recipients to prevent it falling into the hands of authorities, blackmailers and others.

“The emotional letters provide rare evidence of a deep romantic affection between two men in their own words.” ●

Community housing for Parkville Gardens

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
DEVELOPMENT

A new 16-storey community housing building is now in the pipeline for a vacant lot in Parkville Gardens.

The property, on Galada Avenue, is currently occupied by a café and sales suite for a previously planned building by developer Frasers Property.

But plans for the site have been revised to build 151 community housing apartments, owned and managed by Housing First.

Site investigations are underway with construction anticipated to begin from June/July, subject to planning approval by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

The apartments will be a mix of one and two bedrooms, all with balconies, with 112 car parking spaces and 174 bicycle parking spots, if the plans are approved.

Funding for 86 of the 151 apartments was secured through the Victorian government’s “Social Housing Growth Fund”, announced in May 2020 by Minister for Housing Richard Wynne.

Housing First chief executive officer Haleh Homaei said the apartments had been specially designed for those living with a disability, and for older residents.

“Building well-designed, contemporary, quality homes where people can live safely, with dignity, in a vibrant neighbourhood, at rents they can afford brings relief not just to them but the whole community,” she said.

“Housing First’s established working relationship with Parkville Gardens’ joint venture partners - Frasers Property Australia, Citta Property Group, and Development Victoria - makes our project an easy fit, ensuring we can deliver a social housing development that is top-quality, beautiful, and perfectly integrated into the surrounding amenity of the area.”

“As well as great design, high-quality construction and good tenancy management, the

key to our success is supporting our tenants by building resilient communities that are cohesive and connected. Our community development and place-making initiatives provide that extra dimension to all our developments and surrounding communities.”

A Housing First housing services delivery office will be located onsite.

Housing First already owns and manages 82 existing apartments and townhouses across Parkville Gardens.

The development will also include 152 sqm of community development activity space for tenant and local community use.

It is expected to be completed in 2023.

The development is part of Stage 9 of the 20-hectare, 1600-dwelling redevelopment of the 2006 Commonwealth Games Village site, a joint venture between the Citta Property Group and Frasers Property, enabled by Development Victoria, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Office of Commonwealth Games Coordination ●

“Plans for the site have been revised to build 151 community housing apartments, owned and managed by Housing First.”



▲ Renders of the Parkville Gardens apartments.

What goes best with coffee?

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
BUSINESS

Small Batch in Little Howard St is expanding and opening a place in the CBD following the successful launch of its pastries during the pandemic.

Cheese and chilli twists, pastries flavoured with tonka bean and Danishes topped by plums are some of its original products.

Pastry chef Charlie is a bit of a local celebrity even though he’s only been baking in North Melbourne for a year.

Charlie moved from South Yarra bakery Tivoli Road, which Small Batch manager Pippa

used to run, but he is camera-shy and like many in the local industry likes to keep a low profile.

“We got our kitchen signed off by council a week after lockdown began,” Pippa said. “We went ahead anyway and opened from the cellar door.”

Locals stuck in lockdown quickly came to appreciate the takeaway pastries in a laneway reminiscent of a speakeasy.

The chewy, soughdough bread is excellent and the pastries have a twist, with unusual spices or a different combination of greens in the spinach pie. Tonka bean is similar to cinnamon, the staff say.

A similar scenario exists at Beatrix in Queensberry St, a bakery so unusual and



▲ A Small Batch Danish topped by a plum.

“It’s a classic Melbourne situation,” she said. “If people go and do something well, it doesn’t matter if it’s a hole in the wall or town hall size, people will come.”



▲ Charlotte Vermeers at Beatrix.

outstanding it has 74,000 followers on Instagram.

Locals say there can be a queue of 50 people waiting outside for a takeaway cake.

Proprietor Natalie Paull worked with Maggie Beer and Stephanie Alexander, pioneers of the celebrity foodsmith phenomenon and she started up the business a decade ago.

Artistry is one of the main selling points at Beatrix with customers ushered into the small corner shop two at a time with as much ceremony and reverence as was once reserved for making a withdrawal from a bank.

Front-of-house manager Charlotte Vermeers said the business want to keep a bit of mystique about the visits.

Customers are asked to keep their phones under control, but most can’t resist posting pictures of their favourite items on Instagram.

One customer drove across town to the cake shop when her mum visited from the country.

“It’s a classic Melbourne situation,” she said. “If people go and do something well, it doesn’t

matter if it’s a hole in the wall or town hall size, people will come.”

Another customer said the donuts were the best she’d had with a classic, clean flavour, “not like old oil”.

The shop is famous for its light sponges, but the flourless pumpkin cake is also excellent and not too sweet. Crystallised honey adds a tang, said another connoisseur.

Small Batch was opened 12 years ago by well-known restaurateur Andrew Kelly who sold Auction Rooms to focus on the coffee side of the business ●



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“Lessons have been learned”: Fourth time lucky for bike share?

WORDS BY *David Schout*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *John Tadigiri*
TRANSPORT

In the past three years, three share bike operators have packed up and left Melbourne. Will the newest company to take the plunge prove more successful?

Melbourne and share bikes haven’t had the most compatible relationship in recent years.

In fact, most operators have upped and left. Many will remember oBikes, whose fleet of yellow bikes were more likely to be found in trees and rivers than paths and roads during a calamitous period in 2018.

The Singaporean-based company quickly abandoned their Melbourne program amid the threat of huge fines from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

From there, the only casual cycling options Melburnians and tourists could utilise were the state government’s “blue bikes”.

But they too were on their way soon after, departing in November 2019.

While these sturdier “docked” blue bikes had not experienced the same dumping issues as oBikes, uptake was low.

This was blamed on a number of things, but a small network of bikes and docking stations — especially when compared with other successful programs around the world — was perhaps the most obvious.

The government tried to spin the failed program as a positive when roads minister Jaala Pulford argued it would “create more space on our footpaths for pedestrians and bike parking”.

But that conflicted with the City of Melbourne, who at the same time held a press conference urging operators to give Melbourne a try.

Electric share bikes, in particular, were “part of the future” according to the council’s then transport chair Nic Frances Gilley.

The council got its wish when Uber subsidiary Jump announced it would deploy 400 red bikes onto Melbourne’s streets in March 2020 to fill the void.

Within weeks, however, COVID-19 lockdowns ensured share bikes quickly became redundant.

And soon after, Jump became the third company in short time to abandon its share bike plans in the city.

But, it’s not all bad news. The red bikes have returned to the streets of Melbourne after Jump was acquired by Lime.

For some time now, the San Francisco-based company has attempted to crack the Melbourne market with their primary product — electric scooters — but restrictive local laws have ensured that (as it stands) cannot happen.

By acquiring the Jump brand, however, they finally have a presence here in Melbourne with the re-badged bikes.



▲ Melbourne’s latest share bike experiment - Jump operated by Lime.

So, will they work?

Lime believes previous failures gives it strong intel on what *not* to do.

“I think we’ve come a long way from those times,” public affairs manager for Lime Australia and New Zealand Lauren Mentjox recently told 3AW.

“Lime has been operating bikes for about three years now, and we’ve certainly learned a lot about shared bikes, and we think they are the way of the future. We think that some of those bikes potentially didn’t have the oversight that Lime has. We have strong teams on the ground ... and we’re certainly making sure that we don’t make any of the mistakes that were done before.”

Eight hundred e-bikes are being rolled out and, according to Lord Mayor Sally Capp, there had been very few complaints to date.

“Lessons have been learned from previous share bike schemes,” Cr Capp said.

“These e-bikes incorporate GPS tracking and geo-fencing capabilities, for example, which allow the bikes to be managed more easily and efficiently.”

The bikes cost \$1 to unlock, and 45 cents per minute to ride.

The rate is already a 50 per cent increase on the cost compared with Jump (which was 30 cents per minute), despite being the identical bike.

The Lord Mayor did not respond to whether she believed the cost hike might impact uptake. A day pass can be purchased for \$16.99.

Lime e-bikes: How do they work?

The bikes combine good old-fashioned pedal power and electric power, for help getting up those tricky inclines.

They are designed to travel up to 25 kilometres per hour.

Users can borrow them by using either the Uber or Lime app, where a map reveals the nearest bike to your location.

Each bike has a QR code to scan before use, which takes users through the booking and instruction process.

Helmets are provided.

After a ride is completed, users can park them on public bike racks or, if unavailable, on the kerbside provided it is more than 1.5 metres from any building.

Lime has entered a one-year trial period with the Melbourne, Yarra and Port Phillip councils,

and the bikes can only be ridden and parked within these areas, which are defined within the app.

Users that stray outside the three local government areas will not be able to lock the bike after a ride, and will continue to be charged.

Further, there are designated no-park zones (usually busy pedestrian areas) where users will similarly be charged penalties for non-compliance.

As for ending up in waterways or toilet blocks, Lime is confident the weight of the bikes (over 30kgs) makes it difficult to move and vandalise them, and that users are traceable through their app bookings ●



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Developer acquires third Kensington site

DEVELOPMENT

Make Ventures (MAKE), the parent company of build-to-rent developer Assemble, has acquired 402 Macaulay Rd – its third development site in Kensington – for \$30 million.

The site joins Assemble’s existing projects at 393 Macaulay Rd and 15 Thompson St – both of which are currently under construction or demolition phases.

Both of the pre-existing sites will be delivered under a “rent-to-buy” model, but the 402 Macaulay Rd development will be Assemble’s first exclusively under a “build-to-rent” project in Kensington.

The development will include more than 400 apartments considered as “affordable housing” and community housing will comprise 20 per cent of the building.

The 7415 sqm former confectionary site is currently used as a distribution centre. It is across the road from Assemble’s 393 Macaulay Rd development, which is under construction.

Assemble’s pipeline includes more than 650

“The development will include more than 400 apartments considered as “affordable housing” and community housing will comprise 20 per cent of the building.”



dwellings in the Kensington area alone, collectively valued in excess of \$500 million.

MAKE managing director Kris Daff said the company would continue to privately acquire well located development properties.

“We have been executing our strategy over the past five years of a growth-centric approach. As a result of such a large, committed pipeline of projects, we continue to attract the attention of key institutional players and construction partners that value our commitment to build to rent, particularly focused on households with essential worker incomes and below,” he said.

“This latest acquisition in Kensington meets key criteria for institutional investors with a focus on assets that offer scale and access to inner-city locations within key employment areas, heavy rail access and high-quality existing high streets.”

A planning application is currently being prepared for the new site by Kerstin Thompson Architects and Hayball. The project will span four buildings.

Construction is expected to begin in 2022 ●



▲ A render of the development at 393 Macaulay Rd.

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Your City of Melbourne community update



OUTDOOR DINING EXTENDED

Dine with friends in an iconic Melbourne laneway or pop-up parklet to support local businesses as they continue to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions.

The City of Melbourne has extended its outdoor dining program until mid-2021 to provide further support to hospitality businesses. The extension will allow outdoor dining spaces to remain until Wednesday 30 June.

Nearly 1500 permits for outdoor dining have been issued across the municipality, and more than 200 outdoor dining ‘parklets’ have been installed, to help venues reopen and continue operating.

The City of Melbourne will invest \$2.2 million to extend the program as part of the joint \$100 million Melbourne City Recovery Fund in partnership with the Victorian Government.

This brings the total investment in outdoor dining infrastructure, maintenance and repurposing of laneways to \$7.7 million.

What businesses are saying

The City of Melbourne surveyed 150 of the more than 180 businesses with outdoor dining ‘parklets’ in January to gather feedback and inform decision making on the future of extended outdoor dining.

The survey indicated that outdoor dining ‘parklets’ had helped 81 per cent of businesses to reopen, 76 per cent to maintain seating capacity and 72 per cent were either satisfied or very satisfied with their ‘parklets’.

A comprehensive evaluation of the program will be considered by councillors later this year, including an assessment of the economic benefits and recommendations for the program beyond June 2021.

WHAT IS A PARKLET?

The outdoor dining program has seen cafes and restaurants expand onto footpaths, laneways and on-street parking spaces. When parking spaces are used in this way, the new dining areas created are known as parklets. Keep an eye out for them in your neighbourhood and stop by for a meal to support local business.

A word from the Lord Mayor

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said that lockdowns have had a major impact on our business community – particularly the hospitality industry – so Council is doing everything it can to provide certainty for businesses.

‘The outdoor dining program has helped bring back the buzz by attracting patrons from across Melbourne and the regions,’ the Lord Mayor said.

‘The extended outdoor dining program has helped to provide hospitality businesses with extra capacity to seat more customers and get more revenue.

‘Businesses can have confidence that outdoor dining will continue in the City of Melbourne until winter. We’re looking into additional features to support outdoor dining during the cooler months such as weather protection.

‘We want to reduce the administrative burden on businesses so will be directly contacting each business and have a simplified process to extend permits for those who wish to continue their outdoor dining space.

‘All City of Melbourne councillors are committed to ensuring our organisation is focused on assisting local businesses that have been battling some of the toughest trading conditions in living memory.’

For more information, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/outdoordining



SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

Local businesses, services and organisations are the lifeblood of Melbourne, and our support for them is multi-layered and ongoing.

Visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/business to subscribe to the Business in Melbourne newsletter and explore the help on offer, including grants, rate relief, marketing support and free outdoor dining permits.

For one-on-one advice, call our dedicated Business Concierge Service on 9658 9658 (press 1 for business), or enquire online at the above website.

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Your City of Melbourne community update

SEEKING CREATIVES FOR ARTPLAY NEW IDEAS LAB

Do you have an idea for a brand new creative project that could be co-designed with children or families? Submit your proposal to the ArtPlay New Ideas Lab by Friday 26 March.

If you need inspiration, look no further than the current New Ideas Lab project Imagination Gamespaces, which has seen local kids creating interactive 'escape rooms' with fantastical storylines and riddles.

ABOUT ARTPLAY

ArtPlay brings together children, families and artists to explore and create innovative arts experiences at its premises at Birrarung Marr and online.

Led by Brendan Ternus, Alia Syed Rose and Shaun Wykes from Radical Attic, Imagination Gamespaces included immersive game design, creative writing, visual art and performance-based activities.

'One of the things I've learned from this project is how powerful kids and their ideas can be,' Brendan said.

'We gave kids the agency and space to create whole new worlds, and it was clear what is on their minds: the environment, wealth, equality, conflict, peace, and heroes trying to make an impact in their communities.'

'Reflecting these values and concerns is so important, particularly in this topsy-turvy world we are living in. Art can help communities reinvent themselves. It is also a real antidote to disconnection.'

Brendan moved to Melbourne three and a half years ago after working on education projects in China, France, Japan and the United States. Melbourne's thriving youth arts scene has enriched his creative career.

'ArtPlay is one of the most supportive environments I've encountered all over the world,' Brendan said.

'The New Ideas Lab supports your process from the inception of an idea all the way through to execution and, if you aren't an established artist, the team can connect you with a mentor to help grow your ideas.'

'All the New Ideas Lab projects are very different but everyone is on the same page about the value of collaboration with kids and bringing their voices to the fore.'

'ArtPlay also helps New Ideas Lab projects find new audiences after the program is over through a showcase that connects you with industry leaders. So it's the gift that keeps on giving.'

The final showings of Imagination Gamespaces will take place in the April school holidays.

How to apply

The 2021 ArtPlay New Ideas Lab will support four proposals for brand new work to be co-created with children or families, with each project valued from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

People working in the creative sector and artists from all disciplines and cultural backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Applicants do not necessarily need experience in working with children, but a passion and enthusiasm for involving children in the creative process is essential.

Expressions of interest are now open and close at 5pm on Friday 26 March.

For more information, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/artplay

Information and events in this publication are current at the time of printing. Subsequent changes may occur.

'YEARS OF OUR LIVES' PROJECT

Radical Attic also worked with older Melburnians during 2020's reimagined Seniors Festival to create a community timeline celebrating their unique life experiences and diversity. Explore the participants' reflections, treasured memories and adventures at melbourne.vic.gov.au/olderpeople



Local kids designed their own 'escape rooms' through Imagination Gamespaces

KEEP IN TOUCH

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

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

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Heritage changes to be finalised

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*
HERITAGE

New heritage guidelines are set to be finalised in an upcoming Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting, putting an end to the old grading system which saw many heritage buildings demolished.

Last year, Planning Minister Richard Wynne approved the new system which updated heritage guidelines for the first time in 20 years. They are replacing a system that led to “massively inappropriate developments” on heritage sites, often allowing developers to demolish whole buildings due to poor wording and an out-dated grading system, according to Tristan Davies from Melbourne Heritage Action.

Under the old system, all heritage buildings were graded with an A, B, C, or D level of significance, with buildings categorised as D often demolished.

The amendment reclassified around 7000 buildings across Melbourne in the B, C or D categories as “contributory”, helping preserve Melbourne’s heritage structures.

Now, the FMC will vote on a new amendment – Amendment C396 – at a meeting on March 16 to convert the gradings for the remaining 400 heritage properties across a number of suburbs - including Kensington and North Melbourne - most of which fell into the lower level of significance in the old system.

A number of residential properties in Kensington, including on Barnett Street, Bayswater Rd, Kensington Rd and Epsom Rd, will now be labelled as contributory, requiring prospective developers to retain heritage elements.

Kensington’s heritage Holy Rosary Catholic Primary will be relabelled as contributory, with the grading applying to the fence which is a 19th century remnant of an earlier property.

In North Melbourne, residential properties will earn their new spot on the heritage list in areas including Peel St, Errol St, Arden St, Capel St and Molesworth St.

Royal Park Towers on Flemington Rd will also be heritage listed.

Amendment C396 seeks to convert the gradings of the remaining heritage properties across Carlton, Carlton North, East Melbourne, Kensington, Melbourne, North Melbourne, Parkville, South Yarra and Southbank ●

New inner-city bike lanes

TRANSPORT

With office workers returning to the city and traffic becoming a reality again, the City of Melbourne has joined forces with RACV to encourage commuters to consider cycling as a convenient, healthier way of getting around.

Let’s Ride Melbourne! is a new program aimed at inspiring Melburnians to get on a bike with a range of activities including bike confidence workshops, and the fast-tracked installation of new bike lanes.

Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece said the council would be prioritising new bike lanes to encourage people to ditch their cars for a bike.

“Let’s Ride Melbourne is a great way to access helpful resources and activities for new riders who want to learn more and build confidence,” the Deputy Lord Mayor said.

“We’re fast-tracking the installation of new bike lanes to make it safer for more people to ride, which frees up space on public transport for those who need to travel into the city from the outer suburbs.”

New lanes have already been installed along Exhibition and William streets in the city, Abbotsford Street in North Melbourne, Rathdowne St, Swanston St and Canning St in Carlton, Albert St in East Melbourne, as well as shared zones in the city’s little streets.

RACV general manager Elizabeth Kim said new research had found the pandemic significantly influenced how we choose to get around, prompting people to consider alternative mobility options.

Ms Kim added that recent and planned upgrades to Melbourne’s cycling infrastructure by local governments were making it easier and safer for a wider range of bike riders to get around Melbourne.

“The mental, physical and financial benefits of riding for transport, as well as for leisure, are being discovered by more people than ever before,” Ms Kim said.

Prospective bike riders can sign up for the workshops, subscribe to the regular newsletter and engage with the latest cycling information online ●

For more information:
letsride.melbourne.vic.gov.au



▲ Alex Macdonald on the wharf.

Rat spotting on the Maribyrnong

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
ENVIRONMENT

A new favourite pastime for a group of friends living on the Kensington Saleyards estate is to pretend they’re camping by the Maribyrnong River.

They take down camp chairs to the jetty at Riverside Park and watch the river.

One evening at about 7:30 pm they spied a native water rat.

It was way across near the other bank, but it did a few dives and swam over towards them before disappearing under the jetty.

Interior designer Alex MacDonald was not in the original group of campers.

They told her about the sighting, and she arranged to meet them on the following Thursday.

“It was the day after the five-day lockdown,” she said. “We were lucky. We were able to keep our plans. The rat came up after about half an hour.”

“It was pretty exciting seeing a water rat swimming around in the Maribyrnong. We leaned over the edge and called it like a cat.”

“It would duck down, and we could follow it. It swam around doing a few laps then it swam under the jetty.”

“It makes such a difference this park. You’re out in nature.”



Riverside Park is on a flat plain leading to the riverbank with a small marsh and native trees.

The place is so rustic that snakes have been sighted and bull ants gather in the sandy areas.

“If we hadn’t had COVID I wouldn’t been as excited about a rat,” Alex admitted. “It makes such a difference this park. You’re out in nature.”

Locals have grown attached to their local space during the lockdown. The sightings are evidence that the unexpected can occur even in an urban area.

While some take their exercise seriously, passing through in joggers and ear buds, others like the water rat prefer to muck around by the bank.

Alex designs the fit-outs for empty skyscrapers by day but by night she likes to emulate her furry friend.

Rat Wharf, the new name for this quaint piece of riverside habitat, is home to the rakali, or *Hydromys chrysogaster*, as well as some nature-loving locals.

Alex compares the Maribyrnong bank favourably to that of the Yarra. “It’s an interesting little park on a trail not just rich people’s homes,” she said.

Water rats have been spotted on the Maribyrnong from Keilor East to Yarraville, according to a survey conducted in 2018 ●



North Melbourne attempted armed robbery

CRIME

Detectives are investigating an attempted armed robbery which occurred in North Melbourne in January.

Investigators have been told a man and a woman were trying to access mailboxes at an apartment complex in O’Connell St at around 4.50am on January 11.

A man confronted the pair and asked them what they were doing. The male offender produced a knife, approached the victim and then demanded his phone while slashing at the victim.

The victim received a small cut on his wrist but managed to get to

his vehicle and leave the scene.

The male offender is perceived to be Caucasian, aged in his 30s, 173 centimetres tall and with distinctive tattoos on his arms and legs.

The female offender is perceived to be Caucasian, aged in her 20s and around 173 centimetres tall.

Investigators have released images of two people they believe may be able to assist with their enquiries ●

For more information:
crimestoppersvic.com.au

West Melbourne’s renowned architect

In 1967 John McNabb was offered a job as project architect on what would later be named the Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre.

“Ironically, I was drawing up formwork details for the contractor in December 1967 when I should have been down at Portsea surf lifesaving, and Harold Holt disappeared that morning,” he said.

Apart from the historical quirk, there is another meaning for McNabb; It occupies the second chronological highlight in his career as a renowned architect.

Before it is his job working on a building on the corner of Little Collins and Elizabeth streets when he was 22, and later came his work on the New Parliament House in Canberra and Federation Square.

“I was project architect on the central zone of Parliament House, so I had to defend why we were always late on our paperwork,” Mr McNabb said.

“And the work I did on that brought me

into consideration to assist the government on Federation Square.”

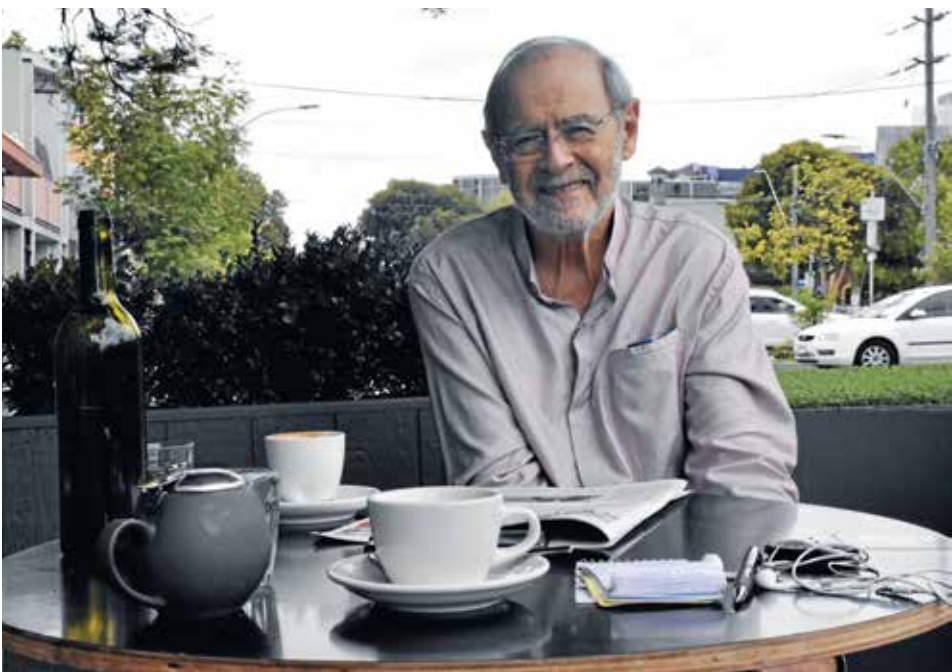
Mr McNabb, whose partner and two daughters are also architects, moved to West Melbourne in 2003 – into a converted warehouse apartment for which he and his wife designed the fit-out.

“It’s a 1920s building, it was initially a Gilbey’s Gin distillery,” he said.

“Then it was bought by the Herald and Weekly Times and it was used as one of their staging posts for their daily edition newspaper. They published them in Flinders St and sent them across here for distribution in trucks.”

Mr McNabb said they were fitting out some of the apartments for a client after they were subdivided in 2001 and ended up buying one.

“The apartments have gritty finishes on the wall, off warm concrete columns, red concrete



floors, some of them have little terraces but not all,” he said.

He started studying architecture at RMIT at 16 years old and said his interest with buildings began as a child growing up in Sandringham, building huts and designing buildings.

These days he runs a firm with his partner Jennifer Gomes and does volunteer work for the Friends of Queen Victoria Market, proposing alternative plans for the market’s redevelopment ●

ENVIRONMENT

Why grow your own food locally?

In the future, changed rainfall patterns, droughts, storms, floods and cyclones could put many crops at risk and potentially destroy crops.

The increased occurrence of these extreme weather events will have a big impact on the availability of food.

As well our current industrial food production system generates 58 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, with much of this attributed to the production of meat. Co2 emissions from plant-based products are as much as 10 to 50 times lower.

Growing our own food is the single most beneficial thing we can do for the health of the planet.

As city dwellers we are at greater risk of food insecurity due to these crop failures because of our proximity to them and reliance. Increasingly we see our food source moving further from us as farmers sell off their land to developers creating greater food miles between our food sources and us. We can wait and rely on a “crisis” response or we can start taking responsibility by localising and decarbonising our food system.

“We can no longer bury our head in the sands about where our food comes from and remove our responsibilities for caring for the earth.”

“

Apart from reducing the obvious environmental damage of the way our food system currently operates – there are a number of benefits of growing our own food locally.

We can pick it when we are ready to eat it, when it’s most **fresh and full of nutrients**. Food in its rawest, freshest form is not only tastier, but also most nutritious. Food grown

elsewhere takes longer to get to us and at each point in the distribution chain it loses its nutritional value.

By growing our own produce, we will tend to eat seasonally, which means food is naturally ready for harvesting and, according to nutritionist’s, seasonal food is designed to supply our bodies with exactly what they need at that time.

Keep chemicals off our plate

We control what goes in and on our food. Pesticides used in agricultural production have been linked to detrimental effects on humans and wildlife. Some pesticides used in Australia are not registered for use in the EU and other countries. It is evident from this that Australia’s pesticide regulatory system is failing to keep people and the environment safe from dangerous pesticides.

There is considerable work done to determine maximum allowable pesticide residue levels in food. The concern is that the residue limits that may be acceptable to a healthy adult may be different than for those already compromised.

According to the Environmental Working Group (EWG) strawberries may contain as much as 40 different pesticides, celery more than 60 different pesticides and cucumbers more than 86.

The EWG have compiled a list of the clean 15 and dirty dozen lists to help you reduce exposure to toxic pesticides. Visit ewg.org.

Gardening is exercise and getting out in the sun gives us important exposure to vitamin D. Recent work highlights how exposure to environmental microbes helps protect against allergies and other inflammatory diseases. So, by getting our hands in the soil, increasing diverse plant life in our environment, which attracts insects, soil life and wildlife increases our immune systems strength. It’s called the biodiversity hypothesis. We can also build our skills and knowledge in this area and collect our own seeds.

When it comes to growing food, the obvious first deterrent for most urban people is a lack of space. Due to density development, residents are lucky if they have a patch of land or even a balcony. Also, high density creates shadowing and wind tunnels, which put plants under stress.

A plot in a community garden is hard to come by with some residents waiting well over



▲ A productive balcony. A most inspiring gardener is Mark Ridsdill Smith, who grows more than \$1000 worth of food each year on his nine-by-six-foot balcony and five south-facing window boxes in London.

a decade. Residents have taken to verge and nature strip growing – alas the council charges residents a permit for this.

Food can be grown indoors and on balconies – the main ingredients are sunlight four to six hours, good fertile soil, water. There are many techniques for increasing your growing space such as vertical stacking.

When you have limited space, you may choose to grow food based on what food is treated with the most chemicals that you would like to avoid, what’s easiest for you to grow, what you like and/or what gives you a long yield.

In the small space gardening workshops I have conducted I encourage people to start with key foods such as herbs. Fill your salad

bowl, greens, flowers, small fruits, then move on to staple crops which provide most calories for the largest part of the year, and store well e.g. potatoes, onions, garlic, beetroot, carrots, brassicas, pumpkins and squash, beans then must have fruits – apples, tomatoes.

Fertile soil is paramount if you want to grow healthy food ●



Jacqui van Heerden
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How do we solve a problem like rough sleeping?

“Welcome to the seventh of our 12-part series which will attempt to explore the role that housing can and should play within Australian society and why it is important to our economy that we house all Australians, rich or poor.”

This series intends to draw on a range of perspectives centred around housing and homelessness. We will hear a range of views from business, the not-for-profit sector and hopefully government, as to why they believe housing is an important social and economic building block for Australia's future prosperity.

This month we have asked Jenny Begent, Head of Social Mission for The Salvation Army, to share her thoughts on why the objective around housing all Australians, and in particular investing in social housing in the era of working from home, should be considered an economic imperative ...

I am fortunate enough to live in what is considered by the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), as the most liveable city in the world. Due, in no small part I suspect, to its great coffee and café culture, but also to its healthcare, education, stability, culture, environment and infrastructure. On the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), it scored an incredible 97.5 out of 100. As a resident myself, I can attest to it being a fine place to live.

Yet, from my vantage point at The Salvation Army in the centre of the city, I am all too aware that Melbourne isn't a great place for all its residents. One of our significant challenges is the increase in the number of people sleeping rough. According to the City of Melbourne, rough sleeping has increased by 74 per cent compared to two years ago. This represents 247 individuals, most aged between 26 and 60. Most are there due to housing affordability, mental health or an addiction.

Melbourne is not unique in Victoria for its rough sleepers; rough sleepers are present in all our suburbs and in our major towns. It is unique, however, in the level of infrastructure that exists as a draw for people seeking housing and support. So, like Dick Whittington, searching for streets paved with gold, the homeless, the ill, the abused come looking for support, propelled by a spectrum of problems which includes having nowhere else to go.

This Increased presence has meant increased government and media attention, which has, in some instances quite frankly, not been at all helpful when agencies such as ours have been trying to support and assist this most vulnerable group. Along with increased attention, has been a call for solutions, some excellent, others not helpful. The call for the criminalisation of rough sleepers is extremely counter-productive, leading to vulnerable people being

driven underground rather than remaining visible where support can be offered. A great majority of rough sleepers are victims of crime themselves and the calls to criminalise, further stigmatise homeless street people, and penalise them for simply being poor.

The plethora of support agencies, and council and government responses have both helped and hindered this cohort. Differing agendas, targets and attitudes have meant that many rough sleepers have failed to obtain the housing and medical support they need to help them make a sustainable return to mainstream society. Until recently there has been a lack of political appetite and bureaucratic capacity for a co-ordinated approach to tackling rough sleeping. However, the creation of the Rough Sleeping Taskforce has finally been translated into a practical approach that will work towards a state-wide solution, rather than a Melbourne city-specific approach.

Rough sleepers are one of the most disadvantaged groups in society. They deserve better than to be treated as a nuisance – they may have suffered a relationship breakdown, a bereavement or domestic abuse. Instead, people need long-term, dedicated support to move away from the streets for good. Those who sleep on the streets are extremely vulnerable and often do not know where to turn for help. These individuals need additional support to leave homelessness behind, and any move to criminalise sleeping rough could simply create additional problems to be overcome. If we are to tackle the current housing and health inequalities then we need to assess and meet their needs in new and imaginative ways. It requires a broad overarching response that considers their health needs as well as housing needs. The response needs to be undertaken with main stream providers ensuring effective partnerships across a many

and varied service response.

It also requires a response from individuals, a reminder that each one of us is just one step away from homelessness. In the literal sense, as we walk around our own towns and cities and pass rough sleepers, and in the theoretical sense, we could suffer a job loss, an illness, a financial setback or a combination of the three. We could end up sleeping rough; anyone who is on the street is certainly a lot worse off than me. I look them in the eye, I say hello. When I acknowledge them, they are no longer invisible.

I hope you found the above perspective by Jenny interesting and insightful. While what was said may not align with our view of the world, we all need to listen and digest what is said by others in order to find common ground. This is why we are focusing on the fact that the provision of shelter is a fundamental human need (not human right) and without that need being met, we have unintended social and economic consequences that will span generations. As I said in my first article, doing nothing is NOT AN OPTION! We need to act and we need to act now. All of us need to be part of the solution so please feel free to write to me with your thoughts: info@housingallaustralians.com.au •



Rob Pradolin

FORMER GENERAL MANAGER AT FRASERS PROPERTY AUSTRALIA AND FOUNDER OF HOUSING ALL AUSTRALIANS (HAA)

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COUNCILLOR PROFILE

New councillor is a “unionist at heart”

WORDS BY *Sean Car*

Having snuck into the final councillor position at last year's local government elections, CFMEU member and new councillor Elizabeth Doidge said she was looking forward to helping shape and reactivate the city that she loves.

A proud “unionist at heart”, the 31-year-old was elected to the City of Melbourne council on Lord Mayoral candidate Jennifer Yang's union-backed ticket, with the CFMEU alone providing more than \$195,000 for the campaign.

Working in policy and stakeholder engagement with the CFMEU, Ms Doidge told *Southbank News* that the union's desire was just to have a place on council so it “could influence policy” and “play a part in the city that we built”.

And in what will come as music to the ears of many local residents, she said part of her ambition as a councillor and chair of the council's sustainable building portfolio was to help improve dialogue between the council, the building industry and residents.

It was a relationship tested in the CBD during the height of the pandemic when out of hours construction permits were granted by the council last year and Ms Doidge said there was a lot her union could do to help residents.

“There's never been a dialogue between the building industry and local residents, I suppose we're at loggerheads and that's something the CFMEU can do,” she said.

“It's not just because we have a lot of resident members but there can be a lot of issues resolved through collaboration – you just need those channels and I would love to be a part of that.”

In addition to her roles with the CFMEU and now as a councillor, Ms Doidge is, remarkably, also currently completing a master's degree in communications at RMIT University, where



she has been previously studying politics, international relations and media during the past 14 years.

She said the city was a “huge part” of both her own and her family's lives. Her grandfather once served as the manager of Flinders Street Station, while her grandmother was a regular shopper at Queen Victoria Market and visitor to St Patrick's Cathedral.

Having lived and worked in Melbourne her entire life, she said it was that affinity with her city that led her to the union movement, and she was looking forward to using her role as a councillor to change perceptions about the CFMEU.

She said all CFMEU members, including its controversial secretary John Setka, were far more progressive than many gave them credit

for, and had many overlapping ambitions with the council such as greening the city, sustainable development and community outreach.

“When John Setka and I were sitting down and talking about the relationships we have with council and things like that he said, ‘we need more trees, we need more green in the city ... it's getting ugly,’” she said.

“There's a lot of perceptions that the unions and the employers in our industry are always fighting with each other which is not true at all. We have fantastic relationships with builders and bosses of constructions companies, and we all work together to make sure the construction industry is healthy and safe.”

“There are jobs for our members so it's not in our interest to make building difficult it's quite the opposite – we want it to continue as much as

possible and we want jobs for our members. But we want to make sure they're good jobs, they're safe jobs and we want to see the products we're building are quality.”

With the impacts of COVID-19 sure to play out across the city for many years to come, the current council term marks as one of the most critical periods in City of Melbourne's history as it recovers from the pandemic.

In addition to the Environment and Creative Melbourne portfolios, Ms Doidge has taken on the role as deputy lead of the all-important City Activation portfolio, which is being led by fellow first-time Cr Roshena Campbell.

While she is still wrapping her head around local government processes, she said her councillor colleagues and others at the City of Melbourne had provided great support in helping her settle into the role.

It's been wonderful,” she said. “Especially now that I've been there for a while and I'm really starting to understand the role that councils play in actually shaping the city and having a really positive impact on the future of our city.”

“I pay very close attention to everything everyone says! I'm never going to walk into that room and think I'm the smartest person there or think I'm the best politician or the best councillor but that's why I love it. There's a great group of people who have very diverse political views and political backgrounds and I think we can all come together and make a big difference.” •



Sean Car

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McCracken St food share pantry supports the community

Kensington Neighbourhood House (KNH) worked with locals to establish a food share pantry to support local community members access food items and to provide residents the capacity to take, swap or donate food, which can all be done anonymously, 24/7.

Locals formed a team to set up the pantry in May 2020 and guiding principles and goals for the pantry were established. Key principles decided at the outset were to take a test and learn approach, following an iterative process of adapting and responding to communities needs quickly and to engage with the community with hope and trust in capacity of others. The pantry has been embraced by the community, with residents undertaking regular giving and receiving occurring. Since opening, demand has more than tripled.

The pantry is designed to take action at a local level to address food insecurity. The pantry has been a great resource to local residents especially during the pandemic and supports those who struggle to keep food on the table, allowing them to supplement their needs. It was built by two locals, Marti and Bruce, using recycled materials and includes a plastics depository where people can drop off their bread tags, bottle tops, corks and ring pulls which are passed on to organisations to recycle.

A grant was recently gained to continue to build on the ambitions of the pantry team from Vic Health. This is to establish a system to offer fresh, local produce from local gardens, build relationships with local businesses and undertake more community consultation. This has also meant that one of the dedicated volunteers could become a paid project coordinator.

The pantry is coordinated by a paid team member Danxi and is also maintained by local volunteers from KNH. The pantry team ensure there is a regular supply of various items and that supplies are maintained to the required standards. The pantry accepts donations of various items, excluding ones which require refrigeration, that are homemade, past their

use-by date or fresh vegetables that are highly perishable. Items need to be in their original packaging and not previously opened. The pantry does not accept donations of old clothes or other items that would normally be donated to an op shop.

The pantry is located on the veranda at the centre and is based on the principle of taking what you need or exchanging food items in the pantry as a swap or just donating some food for local community members. Items that are available include staple canned food items, long life milk, durable vegetables, dried pet food and basic cleaning such as dishwashing liquid and personal items. The variety of what is available can vary depending on demand and what is donated.

Esther, who assists in the coordination of the pantry at KNH, commented recently, “the pantry allows residents to act at a local level, empowering them to take personal action in donating food to their community or to supplement the needs of those who experience food insecurity that live locally, it has been a great activity in bringing the community together.”

The service has proved very popular and has given local residents the ability to make a difference to their community. If you would like more information you can contact KNH on 9376 6366 or donate, swap some food or take the food you need anonymously, come visit the pantry located at 89 McCracken St, Kensington. Access to the pantry is 24/7. Find us on Facebook by searching for “McCracken St Food Share Pantry” ●



Robert Menzies
MANAGER KENSINGTON
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▲ The food pantry.

STATE MP



▲ Ellen Sandell MP on her way to the opening of new safe and active paths outside Carlton Gardens Primary School last week.

Safer streets for pedestrians

Like many Melburnians, I love riding my bike.

Life as a local MP and a mum of two young kids can be pretty busy sometimes, so the chance to get some exercise and fresh air while travelling to work means I can kill two birds with one stone, and I also find it clears my mind ahead of a big day.

As you might have noticed, cycling has boomed during the COVID-19 lockdowns. And while it's great to see more people enjoying healthy low-emissions transport, it's also shone further light on some particularly unsafe bike routes on state-managed roads in our suburbs.

More separated bike lanes for cyclists

Credit should go to the City of Melbourne for taking leadership and creating more than 40km of separated and pop-up bike lanes across our inner city. This is great, but there are still several state government-managed arterial roads that are currently very dangerous for cyclists and are crying out for bike lanes.

Royal Parade, for example, often carries more cyclists than drivers during peak hour. Flemington Rd is another busy but unsafe route, which people often use to travel from the inner north or west into the CBD. Both of these routes are especially dangerous hotspots for “car dooring”.

To help fix these issues, I've been working with our local councillors to advocate to the Victorian Treasurer and Transport Minister for separated lanes on these roads. I've put in a budget bid and hope to see some funding in the upcoming State Budget.

In the past 12 months, my office has also

engaged locals in a pedestrian safety survey, which asked people to highlight concerns they had about their safety on inner city streets.

Some concerns that I've taken directly to Parliament and the Minister are for more traffic lights and investment in better intersections on Royal Parade, Spencer and Dudley streets, the need for a pedestrian crossing on Macarthur Rd outside the Melbourne Zoo and a long term solution to the lack of road safety on Racecourse Rd where there a pedestrian was killed in 2016 and there have been many near misses with trams and cars.

There are also some exciting plans in the works for Spencer St to become a high street with new shops, cafes and restaurants. But this needs state government funding to help it happen.

We have the opportunity to bring life back to our city streets and with more people already riding their bikes and enjoying long walks on our footpaths after COVID-19, but we also have the responsibility to keep everyone safe.

If you have any concerns about road safety or ideas on how to improve active transport options and infrastructure in Melbourne's inner city, I'd love to hear from you. If you have questions or ideas, don't hesitate to get in touch at 146 Peel St, North Melbourne, by emailing office@ellensandell.com or calling us on 9328 4637 ●



Ellen Sandell
STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE
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Faces of North West City

Question: What is your favourite winter-exclusive activity?



SAMEERUDDIN
I like playing outdoor games such as tennis and cricket with my friends. It's good for your health, so I take time for that.



HELEN AND HUW
Walking, I think! Mostly around North Melbourne, as there's always something new to discover.



DANTE
To be honest, just staying in bed! That's my favourite thing.



JULES
Going for a swim in an indoor heated pool.

LETTERS

Housing definitions

Dear editor,

I congratulate Hyperlocal News for initiating its series on the role of housing in our society. I missed the first four articles, but have caught up with the last two. Unfortunately, they were sometimes confusing because they used different terminology interchangeably. This led one contributor to suggest that the government had announced a \$5.3 billion public housing program. Sadly, not a cent of that money will be spent on public housing.

Instead, it will fund a several projects with community housing organisations and private developers. For example, in one project public housing will be demolished altogether – and replaced by a mix of community housing and private housing. Another project will purchase private housing and provide rental subsidies to make them affordable. None will build new public housing.

Victoria's *Housing Act 1983* was amended in 2016 to introduce a new term: “social housing”. It is an umbrella term embracing both public and community housing. It is used by the government when it really means community housing, thus concealing the fact that public housing is no longer a government priority.

Public housing is owned and managed by the state. Community housing is managed, and sometimes owned, by a community housing organisation. These organisations often provide inferior conditions for tenants, and always charge higher rents.

“Affordable housing” is defined (in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, for those interested) as suitable for specific income ranges. It includes social housing. Yet one of your contributors writes about it as though it is quite separate.

To avoid confusion, it would be useful if your contributors specified what type of housing was being discussed, that is, is it public or community housing? Or something else? It is best to talk about social housing only when it is being used in its catch-all context. If this happened, neither readers nor contributors should be confused.

Jan Lacey

Thank you

Hi Meg,

I am in touch to thank you for the positive article on public housing that appeared in the first issue which was factual and reflected community feelings.

I have been an advocate/campaigner for public housing and saving it from privatisation and sell-offs since 2013 and also active in assisting and supporting communities in Melbourne and Sydney living on the street without homes.

In October last year, as an “over 55” woman, I was successful with my priority transfer application request and moved from a rooming house (community housing) in Richmond to a public housing home in Clifford Terrace, Kensington which I love.

The impact of having a home for life that I will always be able to afford is nearly indescribable in terms of its positive influence on me mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

With gratitude,
Cathryn Murdoch

Love your work

Dear N&W Melbourne, Kensington & Parkville Gardens news team,

I have a copy of your latest news publication at home, and love it. Am trying to remember where I recently picked up a copy.

Don't want to miss out on the next one, it's very informative. It's loaded full with local action. I live in Ballie St, North Melbourne and wondering what the distribution is, so that I can grab a copy every time. Love your work.

Thank you, Zanin

Congratulations

Hello Meg,

Congratulations on the first edition of *North West City News*. I particularly enjoyed your article on the Abbotsford Street Estate and the new school planned for the site, and your exposé on the state of planning rules in the Macaulay urban renewal area.

Kind regards,
Janet Graham

Dear Editor,

The Melbourne City Council has notified the removal of the entire planting of nine (de-bold) *Tristaniopsis Laurina* (Kanooka) trees from Ireland Street, between Abbotsford and Dryburgh Streets, two *Quercus Acutissima* (Japanese chestnut oak) trees in Abbotsford Street, and two *Melia Azedarach* (Chinaberry trees) in Dryburgh Street, all in West Melbourne, to facilitate the adjoining new Gadsden construction relating to Planning Permit TP-2016-970/A and Construction Management Plan CMG-2020-70.

The mature Plane trees in Adderley Street, which is wider, are to remain.

While the *Tristaniopsis Laurina* may be small trees, they are well suited to this location in a relatively narrow street and a narrow footpath and provide the value of shade, privacy and aesthetics in this streetscape. The oaks may well be relatively young but the time required to resurrect even this amount of growth in oaks is significant. We feel that, as local residents, it is totally unreasonable that we should have to wait until the completion of this development for new trees to be planted and for them to grow out again.

We consider the savings to the developer in not being required to protect these trees to be minimal compared to the community loss. Other developers in the area have protected many of their respective trees.

We endorse the Council policy of promoting greening in the municipality but find their behaviour in allowing this degree of removal totally inconsistent. The *Tristaniopsis Laurina* complements the same species further to the south east in Ireland Street between Abbotsford and Hawke Streets, and adds a whole level of consistency to the entire streetscape. Our rates should not be supporting such an unnecessary destruction of our scarce natural green environment.

Bill Cook

Nature Therapy



“Watch where you sit.”

Riverside Park
Kensington

ABORIGINAL MELBOURNE



Cultural competency on the rise

Where the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift online upended many organisations last year, Koorie Heritage Trust (KHT) manager of education and visitor experience Rob Hyatt said the trust’s Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency workshops had soared in popularity.

WORDS BY Ellen Blake

“There’s been a massive return from moving online. We now do about 25 to 30 sessions a month,” Mr Hyatt told *North West City News*. Through the workshops, the KHT works with various companies, including state governments and corporate and community organisations, to provide education on working with Aboriginal communities. “The main thing we hear from organisations is a desire to learn more and provide workplace support,” Mr Hyatt said. “Many of the organisations we work with have implemented reconciliation strategies but need more education on certain issues.” The Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency workshop focuses on four key education blocks: concentration of Aboriginality and identity, history, understanding Aboriginal communities today, and hints and tips for effectively engaging with Aboriginal people. “The workshop supports people to work with Aboriginal people but also stresses the social benefit of broader education about Aboriginality,” Mr Hyatt said. The workshop includes discussions on both traditional and contemporary elements of Aboriginality, an understanding of the history of what has happened to Aboriginal people and its impacts on areas such as education, justice and employment. Mr Hyatt said the workshop also impressed the resilience of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal people. “One of the main points of the workshop is to underscore the continued survival of Aboriginal culture and its strengths,” Mr Hyatt said. Mr Hyatt said the workshops were based on experiential and participatory learning and encouraged discussion. He added that workshop participants were increasingly interested in discussing “Change the Date” and “Black Lives Matter” after highly publicised social movements over the past few years. “This is just not a lecture, we encourage participants to self-explore their own experiences, values, beliefs and behaviour,” he said. The KHT is holding the Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency workshops for organisations, and individuals and small groups throughout the year online ●

For more on the workshops: koorieheritagetrust.com.au/visit-us/education/#cultural-competency

TRADER PROFILE

Tomato City – delivering fresh produce for 75 years

Queen Victoria Market (QVM) stall Tomato City has been in owner John Pontelandolfo’s family for almost 75 years.

Mr Pontelandolfo’s father started the fruit and vegetable stall at the market in 1946 at the age of 19 after emigrating from Molise in Italy. After leaving his job in the insurance industry, Mr Pontelandolfo tried his hand at running the business. “My father was going overseas and I was leaving the company and where I was working so I ran the business for three months,” Mr Pontelandolfo said. “I stayed on because it was a very good environment to work. And it still is.” Mr Pontelandolfo credits the “family environment” of QVM for keeping him in the job for more than 30 years. “Our customers are beautiful and they’re loyal as well so it’s a very good atmosphere to work in,” Mr Pontelandolfo said.



“Even the neighbouring traders are all very friendly and try to be like family rather than overly competitive.” Business at Tomato City has thrived as the Queen Victoria Market returns to full swing following the COVID lockdown, which crippled the city last year. “My old customers have all returned. When there was that little lockdown they were not happy about it and then it’s opened up again and they’ve all come back,” Mr Pontelandolfo said. “We were very, very lucky during the lockdown. We had two weeks, one week we lost money and one week we broke even. And then it went back to some sort of normality.” At Tomato City, Mr Pontelandolfo said customers were guaranteed to enjoy freshly-grown

Victorian produce. “Our main line of tomatoes is grown in Victoria. As well as things like peas, beans, lettuces, cabbages and our grapes. Our produce is picked, packed and brought to market rather than satt in the fridge waiting for shipment down to Victoria,” Mr Pontelandolfo said. “What I enjoy about the job is that we get to go and source the best fruit and vegetables that we can and then we bring them back to the market.” Tomato City is located in H Shed ●

For more information visit: facebook.com/tomatocityqvm/

THE KENSINGTON ASSOCIATION

The case for a Kensington precinct plan

Iconic precincts are never “planned”, they evolve. Those who have been privileged to travelled to London, Istanbul, Rome, Hanoi, Tehran or any other ancient city, know an iconic place when they savour one.

Such places have history and unique ambience, but nobody set about with an intention to “create” them. At a certain point in their evolution someone with foresight, historical sensibility and community power must have said, “hang on a minute, this place needs to be conserved and enhanced!” What places in our neck of the woods are on that iconic trajectory? Or have they already arrived? Kensington Village and the Bellair St locale would certainly be one of those with evolving ambience. What we need is that special “someone” who says “hang on a minute!”, the “vision thing” then comes into play. During the past 20 years the Kensington Association has been party to campaigns to protect Kensington Village. We and many other individuals have been saying “hang on a minute” on behalf of our community; traffic issues have been a very significant aspect of those campaigns. Cars and trucks, particularly at speed, are the surest way to thwart the evolution of any community ambience. At this moment in history, we are at a fork in the road. There are initiatives and regulations suggesting that we (in the wider urban community) need to move away from a car culture, so that, for example, more cars (as a transport option) are shared rather than owned. If we take this fork, transport will be of smaller scale, and person-powered or battery-powered; heavy transport will need to be funnelled along primary routes. Gradually we can see the “vision thing” come into play – Kensington from the top of the hill along Macaulay Rd up to Boundary Rd in North Melbourne becomes a people precinct, fed by public transport and characterised by bikes, scooters, pedestrians, small electric vehicles, and enough green open space to feed the souls of residents. Dream on mate! Dream on! It won’t happen! Unless ... unless what? Unless there is a

“precinct plan” for this unique stretch of road in Kensington, which takes development away from what Cr Rohan Leppert calls the “choose your own adventure” attitude of developers, and puts in the hands of those who are able to plan more holistically with community needs at the forefront of their thinking. Why is this part of Macaulay Rd unique? First, it is served by two stations less than 500m from one another and an east-west 402 bus service; so, it caters for people. Second, there is no other short stretch of road in metro Melbourne (that I know of) that is so constrained by what (I am led to believe) are unremovable rail crossings, so it can’t become an efficient car thoroughfare. Third, both sides of Macaulay Rd between the two railway crossings have large land holdings which are becoming development sites, and which border onto established, low-rise, heritage protected residential areas. There are at present some good signs and bad signs in relation to what might transpire along Macaulay Rd. Frankly the “bad signs” are ominous. What we see happening along Boundary Rd between Macaulay and Racecourse roads and the rail line (where there are also big land holdings) is opportunistic adventurism by developers, as they push built-form controls to somehow rationalise 12 storey buildings. This is happening for two reasons: First, because there are holes in planning rules that you can “drive a bus through”, and second, because there is not even a pretence of a precinct plan. These are bad signs, if that ruthlessness and lack of foresight is duplicated along Macaulay Rd, it will be a recipe for gridlock. There are, however, some (small) good signs. The City of Melbourne (CoM) is very much in favour of establishing bicycle lanes all the way down Macaulay Rd (I’m not sure how that would work across the Moonee Ponds Creek Bridge). At least this is indicative of a movement toward

the prioritisation of human-scale transport. Secondly, (I hear on the grapevine) that the CoM is negotiating with the developers of the Webb Warehouse (402 Macaulay Rd) to include some community infrastructure in the site plan. Maybe that’s routine, I don’t know because I’m no expert, but it’s good. What I would say, however, in the strongest possible terms, is that similar and more extensive negotiation, in the form of pre-emptive planning, needs to happen right now in order to formulate a precinct plan which can guide future development along Macaulay Rd. Hoping that this can happen is not “pie in the sky”. A precinct plan would give the community and developers certainty and clarity, it would support the evolution of Kensington as an iconic precinct, and forestall incremental moves towards Macaulay Rd becoming a horrible, traffic congested thoroughfare ●

For more information: kensingtonassociation.org



Simon Harvey
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ORG.AU

Pet's Corner

Charlie, the cuddly cavoodle

“

Prancing around Clayton Reserve, Charlie, the 11-month-old cavoodle, fully displays his bubbly and warm personality to all who come across him, whether they be two- or four-legged.

”



WORDS BY *Jack Alfonso*

“He’s extremely friendly,” owner Suzanne Foc said. “He was attacked in this park, but that hasn’t changed his personality. He also likes to eat everything.” Living in an adjacent apartment block with her husband, Suzanne, a retiree, and Charlie, don’t leave any time to waste when the chance is there to get outside. They told *North West City News* they went on “three distance walks per day”, excluding the “three-to-four times per day” they come down to the dog park. “My husband and I have always had dogs in our lives,” she said. “Our last one died a year before we moved here and with the lockdown, it just happened. So, we’ve got another 15 years of puppy love.” Having made the move from Melbourne’s East into North Melbourne, Charlie’s provided the couple

with an immediate icebreaker when it comes to making new friends post-lockdown, especially as “everyone here likes dogs.” “Over the lockdown he was a nuisance, because he was just a pup,” she said. “He took a lot of work – we’d forgotten how much work it involves – but no, we love him to bits.” When asked about her thoughts on Clayton Reserve, Suzanne said she “loves it”, adding that she wished “they would corner off a section for small dogs” after Charlie was attacked by a “bigger dog”. “As a result he’s blind in one eye. I’ve only allowed him to come down for the last month again – but he’s loving it, and it’s just unfortunate,” she said. “He’s got the right personality and knows not to antagonise bigger dogs, he’s just at the real puppy stage.” ●

METRO TUNNEL

Metro Tunnel marks latest milestones

The Metro Tunnel Project has reached the three-quarter stage of tunnelling and passed a key milestone as the tunnel entrances take shape.



The eastern entrance at South Yarra has been completed more than five months ahead of schedule and the breakthrough has begun to connect the new structure with the nine-km-long twin tunnels. The work to create the entrance also included widening the existing rail corridor, excavating more than 31,000 cubic metres of rock and soil, and building a base slab, internal walls and roof slab using more than 7700 cubic metres of concrete and almost 8000 tonnes of reinforced steel. Acting Premier James Merlino and Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan visited the South Yarra site on Thursday, March 11 where crews have spent the past two years building the tunnel entrance. A section of the nearby tunnel boring machine retrieval shaft – where TBMs Millie and Alice were retrieved after tunnelling from Anzac Station late last year – has been demolished, connecting the tunnels to the entrance structure for the first time. When the Metro Tunnel Project is complete in 2025, a year ahead of schedule, Cranbourne and Pakenham line trains will enter the tunnel near William St before travelling west underground below Toorak Rd and St Kilda Rd to the new Anzac Station. Other construction taking place during 2021 includes an underground substation at the South Yarra Siding Reserve and rail systems equipment rooms at Chambers St, as well as landscaping at the reserve and Lovers Walk to restore these areas as public open space.



Ms Allan said, “As Victoria recovers from the global pandemic, getting on with projects like the Metro Tunnel supports and creates thousands of jobs at a time when we need them most.” The Metro Tunnel will save commuters up to 50 minutes a day on their journeys when up to 48 trains enter and exit the tunnel each hour. The western entrance to the tunnel at Kensington is also nearing completion, and when finished, the Metro Tunnel will directly connect the Cranbourne and Pakenham lines in the east through to the Sunbury line in the west.

As part of the rail revolution in the west, the key transport hubs of Footscray and Sunshine stations will continue to grow in importance with more trains and travel choices from projects such as the Metro Tunnel, Sunbury Line Upgrade and Melbourne Airport Rail ●

For more information:
metrotunnel.vic.gov.au

Between real and surreal

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge

It's difficult to make out where fiction and fact separate in the photographs of Kate Ballis on show at GallerySmith in Abbotsford St.

In *Joshua Tree*, what looks like a canyon or a desert hang-out for cowboys, is printed in lurid colours.

Everything is pink, blue or purple in the world Ballis creates.

The photographs have just been hung and they have a fresh look, perhaps a feature of the post-COVID desire to escape restrictions.

The green is all blue and the rest pink. Palm trees cry out for birds of paradise or pink flamingos, but all is still, like a stage set.

The names are clues to the preoccupations of the artist. One photograph called *Poodle* has fluffy, groomed trees.

Succulent depicts a bunker-style modernist home, a mackerel sky and tall palm trees that is uplifting through its simplicity.

Infra-Realism: Lilac Lux is an exhibition of 11 photographs done in 2020 which build on a series by the photographer based in Palm Springs where she lives part of the time.

Ballis worked as an assistant to British fashion photographer and artist, Miles Aldridge, and the staged nature of her photographs are reminiscent of a fashion shoot.

She exhibited works from the *Infra-Realism* series at the Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP) in 2019, attracting an analysis of her fictional methods by curators.

According to CCP, her visits to Palm Springs and resulting familiarity with the desert and retro-urban landscape have culminated in her vivid new interpretation of the site.



▲ *Poodle*, 2020, pigment print by Kate Ballis.



▲ *Succulent*, 2020, pigment print by Kate Ballis.

“The works are placed somewhere between reality and the surreal; lucid dreamscapes which are familiar in form, yet subvert the usual colour and scale we rely on to interpret the visions around us.”

The works are shot using a converted digital infrared camera with lens filters and subvert a technique that infrared photographers often use to make photos “more realistic”.

These aim, instead, for the other end of the spectrum, not fantasy but strangeness.

“Healthy plants emit infrared light, and through my viewfinder I can see a glowing world that makes plants pop out from their surrounds,” Ballis told CCP.

Texture is augmented using this method, somehow overcoming the flat glossy nature of the usual surfaces.

Infra Realism also offers a never-before-seen take on some of North America’s most iconic destinations, according to CCP.

A barren landscape can become a lush oasis, where succulents and palm trees thrive,

through Ballis’s lens.

“And synthetic grass can be identified through the viewfinder and revealed for all to see.”

Infra-Realism: Lilac Lux, Kate Ballis, GallerySmith, until April 24 ●



Rhonda Dredge
JOURNALIST
RHONDA@CBDNEWS.COM.AU

PARKVILLE GARDENS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



Parkville Gardens Community Picnic

“Beautiful sunshine plus the promise of pony rides, children’s games and a food van brought Parkville Gardens residents out in force on Sunday, March 7. After having had to cancel a similar event at the last minute in 2020, the Parkville Gardens Residents’ Association (PGRA) was keen for the Community Picnic to be a big success – and that’s what it turned out to be.”

All residents in the neighbourhood were invited to come out and make the most of the occasion. Observing COVID-safe conditions proved no barrier to everyone’s enjoyment of the day. The Galada Ave Reserve offered plenty of space for people to meet and socialise safely.

Naturally the attraction of free pony rides, games and refreshments (ice-creams, hot dogs and donuts) was too much for children to resist, so plenty of young kids and their parents joined in the fun.

It was a wonderfully multi-cultural celebration too. Parkville Gardens is home to people from all sorts of places and cultures, and that was plain for all to see and enjoy on Sunday. The whole event took place in a relaxed, peaceful and sociable spirit. And the ponies were on their best behaviour too!

Funding for the picnic was covered by a 2020 community engagement grant from the City of Melbourne which could not be used last year because of COVID. The PGRA expresses its

appreciation to the council for its support.

Now that the 2021 ball is in play, PGRA is looking forward to hosting another event in a few weeks’ time – a children’s Easter egg hunt. That’s sure to be popular! ●

Residents can find us:
PGRA Facebook page (facebook.com/groups/pggrass) or email secretary@pgra.org.au.



Tom Knowles
TOM KNOWLES IS THE PRESIDENT OF PARKVILLE GARDENS ASSOCIATION.
PRESIDENT@PGRA.ORG.AU

Government hypocrisy on the record

Hansard can be decidedly inconvenient for pivoting politicians.

The state government managed to tie itself in syllogistic knots defending the indefensible this month, at the second reading of the *Owners’ Corporations and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2019*. Its stunning self-contradictions are now recorded in *Hansard* for posterity.

They had a chance to get it right and they stubbornly refused to listen to the needs of apartment-dwellers.

From the time the Bill was drafted, We Live Here made submissions and lobbied for amendments, including one to protect apartment owners from the inequity of long-term service contracts gifted to developers’ mates. As described in previous columns, some of the contracts are 25 years and we have had an example of 99 years reported to us.

Commendably, Greens MLC Dr Samantha Ratnam introduced an amendment to the Bill, precisely along these lines, limiting to three years any service contracts signed by a developer. While the Bill laudably limits owners’ corporation (OC) management contracts, it’s silent on sweetheart deals for other huge commitments like building management and cleaning.

The argument mounted by the government was exasperatingly risible. Labor MLC Shaun Leane, craftily narrowed his focus to utilities ...

“The consequence could be severe, particularly for utility providers, who require certainty beyond three years for the viability of their businesses. It could result in owners’ corporations struggling to find businesses willing to provide the most basic services – that is, water and electricity – given that the contracts would be for a maximum of three years,” Mr Leane said.

So here we have the Victorian Government

zealously espousing the right of developers to lock apartment owners into onerous long-term contracts.

How did this government work itself into such a distastefully invidious argument that abrogates both social responsibility principles and free market policies – risking affront to the entire political spectrum?

Our proposal for a three-year limit would still be an excellent outcome for providers in a market dominated by shorter deals. And if a provider does a good job, they will likely retain the contract after the three years is up. That’s the appeal of competition isn’t it?

The Honorable Member’s specious utilities example conspicuously contradicts government policies that actively promote competition in the electricity market.

Do you recall the Victorian Government offering everyone \$50 each just to have a look at its energy comparison website? That was part of a suite of competitive reforms associated with its *Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*, passed on October 17, 2019.

This is where *Hansard* becomes inconvenient, recording unanimous government support for that pro-competition energy Bill.

Fast forward scarcely more than a year and *Hansard* now records the same government capriciously condemning apartment dwellers – 25 per cent of Victorians – to suffer anticompetitive gouging at the hands of building services providers.

Why the about-turn, indulging the cupidity of developers and their cronies?

What’s going on here, is it a case of incompetence, ignorance or undue influence?

Greens and independent support

After almost two years of lobbying, We Live Here had the support of the Greens and several crossbenchers for a range of amendments to the OC Bill:

- Andy Meddick, Animal Justice Party

- Clifford Hayes, Sustainable Australia Party
 - Rod Barton, Transport Matters Party
 - Catherine Cumming, Independent Government hypocrisy on the record
 - Fiona Patten, Reason Party – although perplexingly, Ms Patten voted against our amendment about reasonable limits on contracts that developers dish out.
- Dr Ratnam proposed three amendments, which were all rejected by the government. Nevertheless, she used the opportunity to press for other urgent reforms:
- “The short-stay industry has largely been left to set its own rules, with the government only intervening to implement a complaints process and avoiding implementing any real regulation of the industry,” Dr Ratnam said.
- “Now we are facing the need to reinvent our cities in light of the havoc wreaked by COVID, this is a perfect time to be looking at how we make our cities more liveable.”
- Hear, hear!

“Oops, thanks for the reminder”

Dr Ratnam also raised the issue of the review of the *Short-stay (Accommodation) Act 2018*, promised for 2020 and seemingly forgotten.

Labor MLC Mr Leane sought some whispered advice before confirming that, err, yes, there will be a review “which will start this year”.

Asked for more specificity about timing and terms of reference, Mr Leane dodged with, “I cannot be more descriptive.”

Maybe *Hansard* needs the “shrug” emoji.

Pressed on the issue Mr Leane then went on to repeat the party line, “there is a provision in this [short-stay] Bill that gives owners’ corps the ability to penalise certain owners if they are breaching the short-stay rules.”

This is shamefully deceptive. In its two years of operation, the number of cases where owners have successfully taken action in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

(VCAT) under this provision is ZERO.

The short-stay Act is a toothless, useless law and Mr Leane knows it.

We need dedicated regulations for apartments

The reading of the *OC Amendments Bill* highlighted the convolutions required to draft a single piece of legislation covering everything from caravan parks to skyscraper apartment towers. Navigating the new law will be a huge challenge, perhaps one relished by our learned friends in the legal profession.


A review of the short-stay Act is quasi-scheduled, with the task of establishing terms of reference apparently not in anyone’s in-tray quite yet.

Now the government has a chance to set terms to review several issues in concert: specific provisions for short-stays, general improvements to regulatory framework, and the role of planning regulations.

Perhaps the new Minister for Consumer Affairs Melissa Horne can jump out of the ministerial revolving door to take charge.

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 **welivehere.net**. **We Live Here** does not accept donations from commercial tourism interests ●



Barbara Francis &
Rus Littleton

CAMPAIGN@WELIVEHERE.NET

WELIVEHERE.NET



ARTS HOUSE

Arts House will throw open its doors in April with *Housewarming*

“From April, community members can rediscover the North Melbourne Town Hall as well as the local neighbourhood with a series of interactive exhibitions and performances.”

”

For the reopening, Arts House has commissioned 11 Victorian artists to create *Housewarming*. Emily Sexton, Arts House Artistic Director, said, “our artists have the most original minds. We gave them free rein to transform some of our spaces throughout Arts House. We cannot wait to have people back in the building and show off what they’ve done to the place.”

The programming of *Housewarming* also reflects a wide range of diverse artists and experiences. In the meditative video installation *Deep Clean*, artist and writer Andy Butler explores the chasm that exists between discussions of decolonisation and diversity and the lived experiences of people from minoritised communities.

Meanwhile, artist Chelle Destefano has created a gentle space with textiles and performance poetry that will immerse people in the deaf experience. This piece titled *LISTEN* invites audiences into a deeper understanding of being excluded from a hearing world.

For *As We Bloom* which is a collaboration between artists and performers Irihipeti Waretini and Bella Waru, audiences will be able to witness portraits celebrating queer and First Nations families as well as create their own



unconventional family portraits.

Artists Amaara Raheem and Zoe Scolgio will host *The Re-enactors: The Walking Reading Group* presenting an opportunity for community members to journey through the North Melbourne streets with a passionate group of strangers and reflect on a series of articles about care while walking.

Housewarming will also feature a room of lasers exploding from a multitude of crystal balls. a small sonic encounter inside the Arts House elevator and an opportunity for a straight-to-the-point palm reading.

Tailored for small groups, *Housewarming* is a chance to chart multiple experiences across seven boundary-breaking works throughout the entire Arts House building and beyond.



Arts House officially reopens to the public on April 8 ●

For more information:
artshouse.com.au

What's On: March 2021

Community Calendar

Flemington Art Show 2021

Kensington Town Hall
30-34 Bellair Street Kensington

Friday 26 March: Gala Opening:
6.30-8.30pm Ticket: \$35pp

Saturday 27 March: 9.30am - 6pm - free

Sunday 28 March: 9.30am - 4pm - free

<https://flemingtonartshow.com.au/>



Taste of Flemington A Harmony Day Event

Racecourse Road, Flemington
20 March @ 12:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Celebration to explore the many flavours that make up multicultural Flemington - Ethiopian, Somali, Chinese, & Vietnamese cafes and restaurants.

Younghusband Triangle Eastwood Street 5pm Friday 19th March 2021

Join us for a community plant in, mulch day and BBQ on Friday 19th March from 5pm. Plants, trees and BBQ provided.

Contact Kensington Neighbourhood Nouse: esther.s@kenhouse.org.au

Helping Hoops

Kensington Community Recreation Centre, Cnr Kensington Rd & Altona St Kensington VIC 3031

We offer programs designed to introduce young children to the fundamental skills and rules of sport in a fun and safe environment.

The Osteo Joint Run Club

Saturdays 7.30am - 8.30am

Osteopath and run coach Jamey Pemmelaar takes a free run club in Kensington's JJ Holland Park on Saturday mornings.

more info: theosteojoint@gmail.com

PlayGym is a great introduction to gymnastics in a fun and safe environment.

Children aged 9 months to 5 years

PlayGym runs at North Melbourne Community Centre
Fridays: 10 - 10:45am, 11:15 am - 12:00am
Cost: \$6.90 per child (supervising adults are not charged).



Turkish Pazar

Saturday 21 March from 9am-4pm, Queen Victoria Market

Enjoy beautiful Turkish culture with a range of modern and traditional music with folklore and drumming groups, and the colourful Australian Mehter Band performing. Free children's activities.



North Melbourne Book Club

Mondays, 6pm to 7pm

This is usually an in-person book club but it will meet online for the first few months of 2021.

To join read@melbourne.vic.gov.au

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

youngadults@melbourne.vic.gov.au



French Club

North Melbourne Library
66 Errol St, North Melbourne
Fridays 11.30 - 12.30pm

Run fortnightly at North Melbourne Library, the French Club is an opportunity to explore French culture, improve your French language skills and make new



Osteo Joint Run Club

JJ Holland Park, Childers St, Kensington
Saturdays, 7.30- 8.30am

Osteopath and run coach Jamey Pemmelaar takes a free run club in Kensington's JJ Holland Park on Saturday mornings.

Business Directory

Association

North & West Melbourne Precinct Association

w: northwestmelbourne.com.au
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Sell or buy first?

Which option is right for you?

It's the ultimate dilemma for any home owner planning to move on to a new property – do I sell or buy first? You don't want to sell unless you have somewhere else to live, but you don't want to buy unless you have the money from the original home. Whichever way you go, there will be some stress involved, so it's important to look at the pros and cons of each option to decide which is the most suitable and practical for your circumstances.

Existing Equity

Your decision should be based on your current equity situation and how fast you can sell your current home. In a "hot" market, a "hot" property is sure to sell fast – but don't assume that your property will attract an immediate buyer. Do your research so you have a realistic idea of the potential selling time. The other factor to consider is how long it will take you to find your next home. You don't want to be left homeless and in limbo while you search for the perfect property.

Your financial status

Generally speaking, selling first is a suitable option if you have little to no equity, or if the property will take some time to sell, either because the market is slow. This way, you are not caught in the situation of having two mortgages, and you can purchase your next home with an established budget based on the sale of your last home.

If you have significant equity in the current home combined with a healthy income, you can afford to balance your payments if you buy first.

Simultaneous settlement

If you are very lucky and well-organized, you can achieve the ideal – a simultaneous settlement. This is when the sale of your previous home and the purchase of your new home are processed simultaneously. So the money from your sale is instantly transferred into the purchase of your next home. Your solicitor or conveyancer and your financial lender will assist you best with this.

One way to achieve this is by selling your home with a long settlement period of up to six months.

This gives you time to look for a new property, knowing that the payment from your previous home is available for the purchase. You can include a clause in contract allowing an earlier settlement in the event you find a home within that time frame.

You can also purchase a new home with a long settlement period, giving you extra time to sell your current home. However, this is riskier because if you fail to sell your home within the specified period, you could potentially lose your deposit on the new house and incur legal actions against you for non-performance of contract.

Buying first with a bridging loan

If you owe approximately 60% or less of the value of your current home, you may have sufficient equity to apply for a bridging loan. A bridging loan covers the cost of purchasing a new home and maintaining the two properties until you have sold your current home. You need to prove that you have sufficient equity to cover the loan once your property is sold.

This is generally a good option for a home owner who is downsizing, such as a pensioner, as the new home will be of considerably less value than the current home. As a bridging loan incurs a significant amount of interest, it is not a good option for anyone buying a more valuable property than the one they are selling, as the interest could become unmanageable.

In all situations you should seek good counsel from your financial lender, accountant or solicitor.

Contact us today if you would like individual advice about your property journey.

Call Chris on 1300 997 514

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