

# NORTH WEST CITY NEWS

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▲ The owner of Amiconi Restaurant in West Melbourne, Michele Cardamone, says the latest lockdown has hurt his business.

## COVID-19 hits city’s North and West

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
HEALTH

The West Melbourne COVID-19 outbreak which spread to North Melbourne Primary School (NMPS) in June has been linked to a returned traveller staying in a Melbourne quarantine hotel.

Contact tracers have used genomic sequencing to match the Delta COVID-19 variant, which infected a West Melbourne family in early June, to a returned traveller who had stayed in Melbourne’s hotel quarantine system in May.

The man arrived in Australia from Sri Lanka on May 8, when he went into the state’s hotel quarantine system and tested positive on arrival, according to Victoria’s Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton.

However, at the time of publishing, the link between the man and the West Melbourne family was still unknown.

The returned traveller was released from quarantine on May 23 after completing his 14-day isolation at the Holi-

day Inn health hotel and testing negative twice.

Shortly afterwards on May 24, a West Melbourne family of four drove back from a holiday in Jervis Bay, NSW. Following the onset of symptoms, the father in the family got tested for COVID-19 on May 31 and returned a positive result on June 1.

The day after, the man’s spouse and two children tested positive.

On June 4, genomic sequencing revealed the family had the Delta variant of COVID-19, believed to be 50 per cent more infectious than the Alpha variant and responsible for a surge in infections in India.

North Melbourne Primary School announced that it had closed on the same day, after a year five pupil who was in the same class with one of the West Melbourne children tested positive, along with two adults in their home.

On June 5, the second family’s other child tested positive to COVID-19, as did a work colleague of one of the West Melbourne family adults.

Continued on page 2.

## Businesses stung by another lockdown

*Small business owners in Melbourne’s north-west have spoken of their heartache of enduring yet another lockdown, with many struggling to stay afloat and finding ways to pay staff.*

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
BUSINESS

North West City News spoke to several business owners who said the state’s fourth lockdown had taken its toll with cash flow drying up and government payments doing little to help.

Michele Cardamone, who has been running his family-owned Italian restaurant in West Melbourne for 39 years, said the latest lockdown had hurt with revenue all but dissipating.

“There’s not much money in takeaway ... by the time you pay wages, honestly, it’s just a joke,” he said, adding “there’s no profit left” after paying high commission fees to food delivery services such as Uber Eats.

“There’s no reward. You’re basically working for nothing,” he said.

“With JobKeeper (last year) at least you could have staff working doing takeaway, you could subsidise your wages and operate.”

He said his business would normally turn over between \$25,000 and \$30,000 a week but that had “totally dissipated”.

Mr Cardamone said he had applied for grants, but applications were either too complex to fill in or “you’ve got to jump hoops”.

“It’s just frustrating, unfortunately. We’ve got so many functions booked in the two or three weeks.”

“I’ve got one this Sunday for a wedding which they’re waiting for me to say ‘yay’ or ‘nay’. I said, ‘look you’ve got to wait for this government.’”

“At the end of the day the small guy always cops the worst. If you’re a big fish you can play football, you can play sport ... but what is a little restaurant in the suburbs got a hope of having a voice?”

Judy Collings, who has been run-

ning Wayward Books in Kensington for 15 years, said she was trying to stay optimistic in the face of uncertainty.

While she understood safety was a priority, she was sad to close the doors of her pride-and-joy business during the latest lockdown.

“It’s a conflicted position because you want people to be safe, you want this thing to be over as soon as possible, but at the same time you want your business to survive,” she said.

She is now doing her best to keep going via her online presence, but estimated sales had dropped by up to 80 per cent.

Ms Collings said it was tougher this time around without the JobKeeper payment scheme which helped her stay afloat during last year’s extended lockdown.

But she has applied for a state government business support grant of \$5000, which she conceded would make a “big difference” if approved.

“It’s very hard. I’m luckier than a lot of people because I’m later in life, and I’ve got a little bit behind me but there’s a lot of businesses that don’t have that,” she said.

Ele Pricce, owner of Sassy Italian Restaurant in West Melbourne, said he had been left devastated, describing the lockdown as a nightmare.

He was concerned about his staff and questioned the lack of government support.

“What are they giving us? \$2500? What’s that? That doesn’t even pay your electricity bill,” he said.

“How are we supposed to support our staff when I’ve already gone to the bank twice before to reborrow to give these guys money so they can pay rent and bills?”

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# All eyes on Errol St

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge

HEALTH

All eyes have been on Errol St during the latest lockdown because of an outbreak of COVID at the local primary school with 300 people now traced as contacts.

But shoppers were still out on the street despite the growing list of exposure sites announced during the last week of the lockdown.

Mryna and David Macrae had just been to the IGA on Errol St.

"The school was a site and it made me think about the places people went," Mryna told *North West City News*. "I made sure only one of us went into the supermarket."

Although they were taking care to avoid the outbreak, David said he was not concerned about the dangers.

He said the authorities were focusing on airborne particles, not surfaces, and releasing useful information about exposure sites.

"I'm feckless," he said. "I don't care about the case in Errol St. It could be anywhere."

The couple enjoy shopping. "We like to get out and bump into friends," Mryna said. "It's our main form of entertainment."

As news of more exposure sites was released during the week, North Melbourne shoppers were lucky.

Just two tier-two exposure sites were reported in the suburb, a café in Abbotsford St and the North Melbourne Community Centre in Buncle St.

Errol St was spared any more exposure sites apart from the school. The West Melbourne family who spread the virus to the school shopped at Costco in Docklands.

Mryna and David said they had received the information about the sites through friends who were dedicated Costco users.

Residents say the lockdown hasn't been as bad this time because of the practice they got during previous ones.

"I'm feeling we worked out ways last time," Mryna said. David agreed. "This seems to have an endpoint."

Cafes along Errol St were back in COVID-mode with entrance and exit signs on the doors at the popular Auction Rooms, and Sublime, once again, had its street furniture off limits but the crosses hadn't been reinstated on the floor.

At lunchtime people were buying takeaway and sitting on the median strip in Errol St but there were only a few.

"On a warm day there are 30 to 40 people sitting out there," David said, but he added there were more people around this time than "in the bleakest time" last winter. "I'm doing the QR codes religiously," Mryna said. "As long as you cooperate it's much clearer." ●

*Just two tier-two exposure sites were reported in the suburb, a café in Abbotsford St and the North Melbourne Community Centre in Buncle St.*



▲ Myrna and David Macrae shopping on Errol St.

# COVID-19 hits city's North and West

*Continued from page 1.*

The next day, a teacher from NMPS who taught the two year five students tested positive, and on June 7, another child of a previously announced case and three family members of another case tested positive.

The total number of cases linked to the West Melbourne outbreak was 15 at the time of writing.

North Melbourne Primary School reopened to students on Friday, June 11 on the same day Melbourne's lockdown was lifted ●

# Boy stabbed

WORDS BY Spencer Fowler Steen

CRIME

Police have arrested and charged a teenage boy following a stabbing in North Melbourne in late May, which left another teenager fighting for his life.

The 17-year-old boy was arrested at his Flemington home on June 1, and was later charged with intentionally causing serious injury, recklessly causing serious injury, intentionally causing serious injury, recklessly causing serious injury and armed robbery.

A day earlier on May 31, a 16-year-old boy from Box Hill met with an unknown male at a park in Stawell St, according to Victoria Police. The Box Hill boy was stabbed just after 5pm, leaving him with life-threatening injuries.

The boy fled but collapsed shortly afterwards about one kilometre away in Dryburgh St, West Melbourne. He was found by police and rushed to hospital where he remains in a stable condition.

The attacker fled the scene on foot but was arrested by detectives from the Melbourne Crime Investigation Unit at his home the next day following an investigation.

The 17-year-old boy was remanded to appear before a children's court ●

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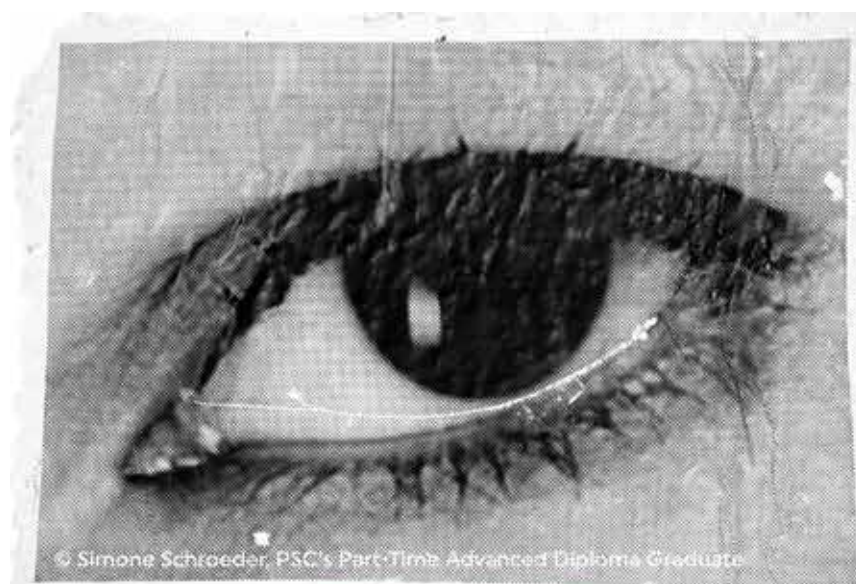
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# Businesses stung by another lockdown

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Mr Prioce, who opened his restaurant in August 2019, was forced to lay off staff within months of opening due to the crippling impacts of last year's lockdown.

"Now this time around, once again, we've gone back to full rent and we're getting nothing for it."

He said he was incurring losses of more than 80 per cent each week with food delivery services also taking a large chunk of what was left.

"We're not even making anything. We're in a no-win situation here."

Mel Massimi, who runs Moscato Hair in West Melbourne, was staying resilient despite revenue quickly evaporating.

While she welcomed government support which would be "enough to pay my rent so I can open the doors", she said "other than that there's nothing else".

But she was grateful for her loyal customers who "keep calling and buying products online; everyone is trying to support local".

"I feel more sorry for the hospitality industry than anyone else," she said, adding she counted herself lucky that she operated with just her business partner and didn't have staff to pay.

In Kensington, hair salon owner Natalie Ragusa, who opened her Aerial Studio business in March last year, said business had also plunged.

"As our job requires face-to-face service with our clients our business has been greatly effected through each lockdown," she said, adding as a new small business they were not eligible for any financial help during their first year.

"Small businesses must not be forgotten about; this is our livelihood. We all have to stay positive so that we can all see this through."

"We are grateful that we have the support of our clients to keep going."

The president of the North and West Melbourne Precinct Association Marita Smith said many businesses had been left "shattered" as they weathered the uncertainty of lockdowns.



▲ The founders of Amiconi Restaurant.



▲ A regular customer.

"The government grants on offer are most welcome and will definitely take the edge off for some businesses, but we know that it's not going to be enough to cover the rent for many," she said.

"We know many businesses, particularly catering and cafes, will be hurting during this current lockdown, but we are a strong and close-knit community who will get through this together." "Over the next few months, we'll be launching some visible campaigns to encourage North and West Melbourne residents to look more locally for shops and services within walking distance instead of traveling further afar.

"We hope this will result in community connections and provide some real optimism for local traders."

Ms Smith, who runs a contemporary art gallery business in North Melbourne called Gallery Smith, said she changed her business model "quite dramatically" to an online platform after being forced to close her doors.

"Obviously we want people to be coming in

“We know many businesses, particularly catering and cafes, will be hurting during this current lockdown, but we are a strong and close-knit community who will get through this together.”

and experiencing art, that's what art is about," she said.

"Fortunately, we've got a very loyal customer base and they have been very supportive."

The state government announced more than \$500 million in cash support for businesses with payments up to \$7000.

The federal government will also provide disaster payments of \$500 to help Victorians who would normally work 20 hours per week.

While Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chief Executive Paul Guerra welcomed the federal government initiative, he feared it wouldn't keep workers connected to their job and see businesses rehiring.

Restaurant and Catering Industry Australia CEO Wes Lambert said the lockdown had been a "crushing blow" to the thousands of restaurants, cafes, and caterers, adding grants of "just a few thousand dollars just won't cut it this time, not with federal JobKeeper gone and tenant protections having just expired" ●



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# Public housing residents 16 and above eligible for vaccine

WORDS BY *Matt Harvey*  
HEALTH

Vaccination hubs have opened up at public housing towers across Melbourne in a bid to protect vulnerable residents from COVID-19, but the announcement has caused confusion about accessibility and eligibility for the vaccine.

All Victorian public housing residents have been made eligible under Priority Group 1 to access the Pfizer vaccine if under 50 years, or AstraZeneca if over 50. But these changes have prompted groups of Australians who are not yet eligible for the vaccine to attempt to get their first shot either through genuine confusion, prompting from friends, or attempts to subvert the eligibility rules.

Grace, who wished for her last name to remain anonymous, was waiting in the queue at the new vaccination hub outside the North Melbourne public housing towers and explained how she came to hear about the change.

"Instagram; one of my friends came and said they were giving it to any age. I think because everyone wants Pfizer," Grace told *North West City News*.

Another woman queuing who wished not to be named expressed some confusion. "Yesterday, they were taking anyone, but they just came out and said you had to be over 50 or over 40, or have a reason. I have my reason, but some people have left," the woman said.

The vaccine rollout is currently only accessible to residents of public housing and members of previously eligible groups who have been deemed a priority due to high risk.

Victorians would remember in July 2020 when the nine public housing towers were locked down due to concerns of an outbreak within the towers which were referred to as "vertical cruise ships" by Acting Chief Medical Officer Professor Paul Kelly.

The nine tower lockdown was met with criticism and the Victorian Ombudsman found the actions "breached human rights". Deputy Leader of the Victorian Greens Ellen Sandell announced the recent change in vaccine eligibility for public housing residents on Facebook.

"Last year's lockdown of the nine towers was a wake-up call to the government to prioritise the needs of public housing residents and to stop treating them like second-class citizens," Ms Sandell said.

However, this message has spurred discussion on social media about the possibility of anyone aged between 16 and 49 being able to access vaccines.

The vaccine sites are not government facilities and are being run by the not-for-profit outfit Cohealth.

Cohealth communications manager Lanie Harris has spoken of the importance of moving the vaccine hubs to more accessible locations.

"The new thing is we are taking pop-up clinics on site at the towers, that means we are bringing the vaccine to where people are not relying on themselves to track down their closest site," Ms Harris said.

"But, really, because the people who live in those accommodation types are already facing disadvantage of poverty, or low literacy, or other language barriers, doing that kind of outreach work is a really important way to get them access to the vaccine."

While the queues are not long, averaging 25 to 30 minutes and often not more than 20 people, on-site nurses have to make regular trips out into the queue line to remind people that restrictions apply.

On-site health concierge, 21-year-old Zahra Neberay, spoke about some of the difficulties getting clear messaging to residents.

"After the hard lockdown a lot of people were traumatised and felt really bad afterwards," Ms Neberay said.

"When they don't speak English, it's really difficult, but we try our best to give them the information about what they are asking. If not, we can get a translator, it's a bit difficult but we get by."

The mix of ethnicities and languages among residents of the towers means it is important to have people invested in assisting the community to have a clear understanding of their new eligibility status.

"I live around here so I was like, 'oh! This is a great chance to help my own community,'" Ms Neberay said.

Senior nurse coordinator, Highrise response, Sally Wilcox has been coordinating sites across North Melbourne, Flemington, Footscray, Williamstown, and Kensington and has supervised the rollout of on-site information.

"We've got more signage and banners coming and, I guess, we are reliant on a bit of word of mouth particularly here. The residents and community leaders, we've had forums with them so they know this is happening here," Ms Wilcox said.

Part of the concern regarding the community is that there is a large population of refugees in public housing. Access to vaccines for refugees has been a worry for Ms Wilcox, who assured *North West City News* that there would be no barriers to access for residents outside of daily supply amounts – even a lack of identification or Medicare cards would not be a deterrent.

"It's handy to have some form of identification, but because these communities may not have identifying documents, it's not a requirement to get the vaccine," Ms Wilcox said.

"We are pretty reliant on people being honest about it and mindful this is set up for



▲ A vaccination centre in Kensington.

residents, however, we are not discriminating." "The system we use only has a few compulsory identifying questions, they don't have to prove who they are or where they're living."

The hub is a six-day service Monday to Saturday, 10.30am to 4.30pm and must be run under strict daily times. Public housing residents will be prioritised.

Ms Wilcox said the reason for the strict daily times, and the biggest delay in the vaccine roll out, was the "cold chain policy". "The cold chain is a whole job in of itself. Someone is allocated to that to watch the temperature of the vaccine every 15 minutes," Ms Wilcox said.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has approved wider storage and transportation conditions for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in Australia.

These changes have enabled greater flexibility in storage, transport and deployment of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine across Australia. At the time of writing, new vaccine hubs were scheduled to open in Carlton and Williamstown on June 14.

Residents of public housing are being encouraged to come forward and get their vaccine.

Family and friends of members of non-English speakers, refugees, or anyone who might be cautious or not have direct access to information, should engage them in a discussion and find their local health concierge for up to date information.

All residents now eligible for vaccine

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When asked about the effectiveness of messaging around the vaccine roll out the office of Premier Dan Andrews was contacted but did not provide an answer prior to deadline ●

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# Kensington Primary secures \$7.4 million government funding

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
EDUCATION

After years of desperately trying to scrape together funds to fix Kensington Primary School (KPS), the community has welcomed a \$7.365 million upgrade from the Victorian Government to fix the aging school for good.

The much-anticipated funding was revealed in the May state budget, after goliath efforts from KPS parents, staff and students who have been forced to reach deep into their own pockets just to fix surface level problems.

The 140-year-old heritage-listed school has been plagued by a litany of structural issues, including rotting floorboards, dodgy cladding, an unsafe playground and concrete falling off the walls.

But although the works are long overdue, Principal Bridget McLaughlin said she was “incredibly happy”.

“For me this is just such an amazing opportunity for our amazing students who are future leaders who can be whoever they want to be,” she said.

“It enables us to do some works which are well overdue, make our school the best school, not just only physically, but academically, emotionally – I am incredibly happy, thank you so much.”

State Member for Melbourne Ellen Sandell has been lobbying the government for funding to fix KPS since 2014.

After a visit from the Minister for Education and Acting Premier James Merlino in March, Ms Sandell said she was quietly confident in her request for a modest \$1.5 million leading up to the 2020/21 state budget.

“We’ve secured \$7.36 million for Kensington Primary over the next three years,” she said in a Facebook post celebrating the hard work of the school community.

“I know this will mean so much to so many parents and Kensington locals who have been fighting for this funding for so long.”

“Now that we’ve secured \$7.36 million for Kensington Primary, it will mean the school can fix the toilets, uneven floors, replace the previous playground, and fully fund the school’s vision for more modern facilities and classrooms.”



▲ Kensington Primary School is in party mode following the recent Victorian State Budget!

In the past, there has been multiple fundraisers to fix the school organised by KPS parents, including one particular fundraiser to fix the school’s hall which was never clad inside, leaving chunks of crudely taped insulation exposed.

Ms Sandell said students had been selling their old toys to fund the project.

For KPS Council president Jonathan Orr, who has coordinated many of the efforts to fix the school, the \$7.36 million came as a surprise.

“To be honest I wasn’t expecting that much,” he said.

“Our goals were fairly modest at the outset, but this allows a multigeneration upgrade of the school.”

Mr Orr said a large part of the funds would go towards modernising learning spaces for students, after consultation with designers

and the community to work out how best to improve the school.

“Everyone’s pumped, I picked the kids up, and everyone wants a swimming pool. But I told them it’s probably not going to happen,” he said with a laugh.

Member for Northern Metropolitan Sheena Watt, who announced the funding, said she was “very proud” to deliver on the school community’s hard work.

“I visited Kensington Primary School with the Education Minister earlier this year. I’ve seen first-hand and heard from the community how important this upgrade is,” she said.

“Every single student deserves access to a great local school and that is exactly what the Andrews Labor Government is delivering.” ●

“  
I know this will mean so much to so many parents and Kensington locals who have been fighting for this funding for so long.  
”

# More buses for Parkville Gardens

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
TRANSPORT

In a hard-fought win for Parkville Gardens, the Victorian Government has finally committed to increasing bus services for the former Athletes Village after concerted efforts from the community.

The pledge came in the form of a sparse statement in the 2021/2022 budget, released on May 20.

“Funding is provided to progress bus network reform and for the delivery of service changes and extensions across Victoria including ... additional services between Moonee Ponds and Melbourne University,” the budget read.

For years, residents at Parkville Gardens have been fed up with the lack of public transport servicing the booming residential area, which adjoins CSL, the second biggest flu vaccine manufacturer in the world with more than 1500 employees.

Originally created to be the Commonwealth Games Athletes Village, Parkville Gardens is now a vibrant suburban area experiencing massive growth in people moving in and apartments being built.

In the Victorian Parliament in March, Greens Member for Brunswick Dr Tim Read said the only route out was through narrow Manningham St towards the city, with the 505 Parkville Gardens bus running once each hour with one additional service at each peak hour.

In a statement celebrating the improved services, Dr Read said he had raised the issue with

the Transport Minister on multiple occasions, had it costed, and finally set up a petition to demand better transport which garnered 138 signatures from residents.

“Back in 2018 when I first met with the Parkville Gardens Residents’ Association (PGRA) I was dumbfounded at the lack of public transport services in this neighbourhood located so close to the city,” he said.

“I knew that it wouldn’t cost that Government much more to run a few more bus services during peak times, and that it would have a huge impact on this community,” he said.

“Thanks to everyone for taking the time to add their voice to this important petition. Special congratulations to the PGRA for raising this with me and helping to share the petition with your neighbours.”

PGRA president Tom Knowles said it was time to spread the “good news”.

“Thanks to great advocacy from our local member, Tim Read MP, the government has allocated funding in the state budget for an improved bus service for Parkville Gardens,” Mr Knowles said. “That’s good news for us all.”

Route 505 currently services an area between Moonee Ponds, a major activity centre with a wide range of retail and medical services, as well as the University of Melbourne ●

▼ Parkville Gardens will get more 505 bus services thanks to the advocacy of Dr Tim Read.



 *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
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# From the Dalai Lama, to locals in Kensington, Mathias has snapped them all

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Mathias Heng*  
FEATURE

When it comes to taking photos, Mathias Heng knows a thing or two.

The Dalai Lama, Aung Sang Suu Kyi, Bill Clinton and Robert Mugabe are just some of his more well-known clients.

While he used to live in Melbourne, Heng now works as a freelance photojournalist on the COVID-19 frontline in Singapore, simultaneously chipping away at a myriad of other projects including a documentary on global Shamanism.

And although Heng prefers to work wherever the wind takes him, some of his most famous photos were taken right here in Kensington.

Back in 1995, Heng took a series of photos, now enshrined in the State Library Victoria archives, documenting the lives of people living in the Kensington Public Housing Estate in Derby St.

They capture a moment in history when parts of the estate were being demolished to make way for a combination of public and private low-rise housing, a government initiative to improve liveability.

Heng still remembers the stories of upheaval and survival from the residents he talked to at the time.

“They were tearing the building down and relocating the residents there,” he said over a scratchy phone line from Singapore.

“I wanted to record history. I wanted to record migrants coming in trying to rebuild their lives coming from another country, and the Australians there doing it tough.”

To this day, Heng still keeps in contact with one particular man he met at the Kensington housing estate.

He was the father in a family which had migrated from East Timor looking for a better life, but who wished to leave the Kensington housing estate because of the heavy drug usage that surrounded them on a daily basis.

“As a migrant, he was really hard working,” Heng said.

“I’m a migrant myself, and I thought: ‘this is great, he wants to contribute, he wants to pay



▲ Mathias Heng.

back what Australia has given him’, and that made me feel really good.”

“Some people don’t really care about their lives, they do drugs, or they push drugs.”

“This guy’s really appreciated what the government did for him, and he moved out eventually. Today, he runs a small store at the Queen Victoria Market.”

As construction progressed and the building became more abandoned, Heng said he encountered more drug users. One of his most confronting photos depicts a 16-year-old boy injecting heroin into his own arm – a real moment Heng wanted to capture without censoring anything.

“Out of respect and privacy, I don’t usually shoot people’s faces out of respect, but this guy didn’t care,” Heng said.

“I said, ‘hey mate is it alright if I take a photo for a documentary about Kensington? And he says, ‘yeah, no worries’.”

“All the photos were taken as they were, I don’t set them up. I don’t crop them. I want to capture the essence of them, the way they are.”

At first, Heng said people at the estate were reluctant to have their photos taken, but after a while, they came to trust him

“Once you get one family, they invite you in, word gets around and they trust you. Once they trust you, they welcome you with open arms,”



▲ Brothers Ahmad and Ali sitting outside 16 Derby St.

he said.

Aside from his work in Kensington, Heng has travelled the world taking photos, often in the company of high-profile world figures including former US president Bill Clinton, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

He was even the official photographer for the Dalai Lama when he was in Melbourne in 1996.

“I was with him for five days,” Heng said.

“[He’s] just an ordinary man, treats everybody equally. I got really comfortable and felt like I could talk to him about anything.”

But other world figures were not as friendly.

Heng remembers being part of the press throng in Zimbabwe in 1996.

“It was rough meeting Robert Mugabe, the bodyguards would just push you and you’d go flying,” he said.

“I spoke to him, just a couple of words. He was a bit cold – didn’t like the media.”

For now, Heng is holed up in his Singapore apartment itching to travel once more.

When COVID-19 first hit, he witnessed and captured first-hand how Singapore’s migrant workers bore the brunt of the infections.

“Every day, 1000, 1500 workers were infected because they live in dormitories where it spreads,” Heng said.

“There can be 12 to 20 workers living in one room.”



▲ Michael looking after his elderly mother who suffered a stroke and was confined to a wheelchair.

At the moment, Heng said he was trying to expose as much as he could about the COVID-19 situation in Singapore, so people knew what to expect.

But in his down time, he is also working on a photojournalism project on Shamanism across Siberia, Indonesia, Laos, Indonesia and North America and Africa, where he was scheduled to fly out to before COVID hit ●

**For more information:**  
[mathiasheng.com](http://mathiasheng.com)  
[@mathiasheng](https://www.instagram.com/mathiasheng)



# Community demands better security for JJ Holland Park

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Local residents are fed up with “poor” lighting at JJ Holland Park, with a number of recent incidents sparking concerns for Kensington women.

In mid-May, a woman was allegedly robbed during a running session at the park, and another described the figure of a man standing in the dark who followed her and her friend.

Kensington’s Danielle Bryan coordinates five different women’s running groups at JJ Holland Park after dark, something she said was necessary to achieve “safety in numbers” due to the “poor lighting”.

“We need more quality lighting, more security, more awareness especially at JJ,” she said.

“Women still feel insecure walking through here at night. It’s everyone’s right to use a public space.”

“This what motivates our running group, but even we have been privy to theft and verbal abuse from unsavoury characters of late.”

Ms Bryan said last year, a woman in her running group was allegedly attacked by a man in broad daylight while running, prompting her to issue words of advice to her team.

“My client who got abused, it was broad



▲ *Members of the local women’s running group.*

daylight, and a guy ran up to her and punched her in the face,” she said.

“I tell my girls to wear their hair up in a bun because this guy was grabbing her ponytail.”

A local personal trainer who also uses JJ Holland Park but wished to remain anonymous, said sometimes the lights are off at around 5am in the morning when her classes were underway.

“Particularly near South Kensington station, there’s no lights,” she said.

“The lighting around the centre where all the paths cross is very dull. There’s a pavilion in the middle of the park which houses like the club



rooms for the cricket, soccer and footy teams.”

“They don’t have any exterior lighting. The only lighting is inside the clubs.”

*North West City News* understands the lights on the sports ovals have been known to cut out in the middle of training sessions at night, leaving hundreds of kids in the dark.

Ms Bryan said the recent robbery at JJ Holland Park occurred during a running session on May 12.

“My client had brought along her backpack from work which had her work Macbook Pro and it was taken, and we think we know who did it because we avoided a confrontation with that person while we were running, he was slurring and using profanities.”

“We recognised the bag he was holding.”

While Ms Bryan tells her clients that “predators” are often put off by people who appear confident, she maintains that the lighting is creating a dangerous environment.

“Given the activity lately, I think it’s a matter of time before something more serious happens,” she said.

In a statement, a City of Melbourne spokesperson said council crews had inspected all the lights in JJ Holland Park and found they were “working, in good condition and comply with Australian Standards for lighting.”

“The City of Melbourne is committed to providing safety and security for everyone within the municipality. Street and park lights are one of the biggest assets we maintain and are a key crime prevention method,” the spokesperson said.

“The brightness of the lights in parks is intentionally set at a level lower than streets. This is to reduce the contrast between lit and unlit spaces, allowing increased visibility of the darker areas beyond the lit footpaths.” ●

# Kensington shop fire leaves locals reeling

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
SAFETY & SECURITY

A Kensington shop owner is looking forward to reopening her doors soon, after her gift and homewares store was heavily damaged by smoke.

Wendy Keast said her floor stock and front window were damaged after a fire broke out at a neighbouring barber shop on May 21.

Thirty-four firefighters were called to Macaulay Rd to find the ground level of a two-storey building “well alight” just after 3.30am.

It took an hour for crews to bring the flames under control with six pumpers, one rescue unit and one aerial unit also called in to help tackle the blaze.

Firefighters, who arrived within six minutes after several calls were made to triple-zero, wore breathing apparatus as they searched the building.

Luckily no one was inside at the time of the fire.

Fire Investigation Unit specialists attended to investigate the cause of the fire, which is yet to be determined.

Police and paramedics were also in attendance.

After 25 years of running her business, Ms Keast, the owner of Tempted, is determined to see the shop she had worked so hard on return to normal.

“This has been a setback. It’s certainly an enormous amount of work, but we will get there,” she told *North West City News*.

She said while her storerooms remained unaffected, her floor stock including clothing, furniture, books and homewares were ruined and would be replaced.

But she was using the opportunity to organise repairs to ensure her store remained fresh and clean to house her new stock.

“I’ve had to clear out all my stock, so since that’s happened, I thought I might as well go a step further and do some renovations,” she said.

“My priorities are just to get back up as quickly as I can for myself and my staff.”

“I didn’t want to wallow in the misery of it all, I just want to get over it and get on with things.”

She said luckily, she was insured and planned to open in two weeks’ time as long as there were no further lockdowns.

She said her shop “will be open and be better than ever”.

“After 25 years it’ll take more than a pandemic and a fire ... I just hope the universe doesn’t



▲ *The burnt-out wreckage of a barber shop on Macaulay Road.*

*Photo: Thuy Le-Butt.*



▲ *Smoke from the fire.* *Photo: Michelle Crosbie*

*“My priorities are just to get back up as quickly as I can for myself and my staff. I didn’t want to wallow in the misery of it all, I just want to get over it and get on with things.”*



▲ *It took an hour for crews to get the blaze under control.* *Photo: Carolyn Chees.*



# Low-earning sole traders lose again

WORDS BY *Matt Harvey*  
ECONOMY

Arts practitioners and some sole traders are again left without support as lockdown restrictions in greater Melbourne eased and the Victorian Government announced additional support for businesses that continue to be affected.

After two weeks of Victorians being in lockdown, restrictions on some businesses have eased and more businesses are able to reopen.

Treasurer Tim Pallas acknowledged some businesses will still be affected by restrictions and will share a new \$8.4 million support payment, however, those businesses need to meet eligibility criteria.

“Victorians have banded together and now we can relax many restrictions in a safe way, backed by the best public health advice,” Mr Pallas said

“This top-up payment will support businesses who will still be affected in the coming week, so they can be in the best position to recover once their doors reopen.”

The initial funding supported small- and medium-sized businesses and sole traders, including restaurants and cafes, tourism and accommodation providers, and non-essential retailers.

Top-up payments of \$2,000 are available to businesses in metropolitan Melbourne that are closed due to extended restrictions announced June 9, taking the total amount available to businesses in eligible sectors to \$7000.

However, sole traders who are not registered for GST find themselves again ineligible for support payments. Businesses need to pay GST, but registering to pay the tax is only necessary once you earn over \$75,000.

This is the same as last year during the extended lockdown, but sole traders could eventually apply for JobKeeper.

Artists have been questioning the reason for being continuously left out with no real explanation provided.

The Business Costs Assistance Program FAQ page does advise:

“This program requires a business to be registered for GST because it shows the business was actively trading before Thursday 27 May 2021 and is a genuine operation, which the owner and their employees or contractors rely on for income.”

Applications for the Business Costs Assistance Program are open, and businesses will only need to submit one application to receive their maximum payment ●

**For more information:**  
[business.vic.gov.au](https://business.vic.gov.au)



▲ Paddy and his mum Caroline relieved to be back on the swings.

## Thank you to Paddy

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*  
COMMUNITY

Most kids in Victoria were celebrating the end of lockdown on Friday, June 11 by returning to school to see their mates.

Not so Paddy Williams who, like many North Melbourne kids, has been through a bit of an ordeal.

The Grade 1 student of North Melbourne Primary School was not complaining.

At least he was allowed out of quarantine to catch up on a bit of play time at the local park.

Paddy’s freedoms had been curtailed twice in the past fortnight by COVID restrictions. His mum Caroline said, “he’s okay but I don’t know about underneath.”

“Last week he woke up with a nightmare. ‘It’s all around,’ he said. ‘What?’ I asked. ‘The virus.’”

The bad dream for the local kids began on May 27 when it was revealed that members of an infected West Melbourne family were in Prep and Grade 5 at the school.

At first Caroline thought they were infected as well even though they’d had no real close contact.

“The virus was being passed between children,” she said. “I was worried that we had it for a while.”

Then students were contacted last Monday and told they’d been upgraded to “close contacts” after a new case was discovered in Grade

“

*The bad dream for the local kids began on May 27 when it was revealed that members of an infected West Melbourne family were in Prep and Grade 5 at the school.*

”

5. That meant they had to be tested and go into isolation.

Caroline got the call just before midnight. “It was really late,” she said. “It didn’t matter because I’m a night owl.”

But then on Tuesday they were told they had to take another test for day 13 of their possible exposure.

They ended up being tested twice. For three days they weren’t allowed to leave their home.

“A lot of us are in apartments. I’m on my own

with a six-year-old,” Caroline said. “Neighbours bought us food and coffee every morning.”

On the last day of lockdown, they got the call that Paddy was cleared. Caroline said that the Department of Health and Human Services must have been working through a list.

The Grade 1 mums are on a WhatsApp list and were comparing notes about who was being let out.

“I’m okay,” Caroline told *North West City News*. “We got out. There are people at school stuck in quarantine.”

She said the department did a good job. “At the Showgrounds they had a special queue for North Melbourne primary school students. It’s a big school. There could be 1000 kids. A lot of people were affected.”

She hoped the school would re-open after the Queen’s Birthday weekend but meanwhile it was back to home schooling.

“I’m alright with it. We got a note saying thank you to Paddy,” she said ●



*Rhonda Dredge*  
JOURNALIST  
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# Bad news for Haines St Telstra users

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
TECHNOLOGY

A determined North Melbourne resident has given Telstra the flick after discovering “appalling”, unfixable internet speeds isolated to the Haines St valley.

Like many in the area, North Melbourne’s Jan Lacey relied on 4G for her phone and internet connections.

But after multiple calls to Telstra to fix her sluggish internet speed, she said it plummeted to just 0.64 mbps with zero upload and stayed there.

Ms Lacey said she had even contacted the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman in a last-ditch attempt to shake Telstra into action but was still unable to secure decent landline or ADSL services.

Desperate for answers, Ms Lacey inquired on

“

*Internet in North Melbourne (including 5G) is the slowest I’ve ever had since manual modems.*

”

the North Melbourne Good Karma Network (NMGKN) whether nearby internet users were similarly affected.

“I live in flats in Haines St. Anyone else in the vicinity with similar issues? Because if so, they

may want to join me in efforts to fix,” she wrote in November last year.

Ms Lacey received mixed responses, with some reporting internet speeds in the area of up to 50 mbps download speeds, while others were not so lucky.

“Internet in North Melbourne (including 5G) is the slowest I’ve ever had since manual modems,” one Facebook user wrote in reply.

Six months later, Ms Lacey shared the results of her research once again on the NMGKN Facebook page.

“I discovered that appalling speeds (often less than three mbps) were confined to the Haines St ‘valley’. A couple of blocks up the hill in either direction speeds improved markedly,” Ms Lacey wrote.

“And I found the problem was Telstra specific. They kept promising to fix it, and even reduced my monthly charge, but nothing changed.”

“Today I transferred to Optus. Download

speeds anywhere in my flat 80 to 100 mbps, upload around 30 to 40 mbps. I use 4G for everything, so greatly relieved.”

Asked by *North West City News* whether Telstra could confirm the torpid internet speeds, a spokesperson for the telecommunications giant said Haines St is served by two primary mobile sites at North Melbourne and North Melbourne Exchange.

“We’ve expanded capacity at both of these sites over the past two years and both now offer 4G and 5G services,” the spokesperson said.

“The sites are operating as designed and provide excellent coverage and capacity at present and a good customer experience.”

“A customer’s individual mobile experience may be different depending on whether they’re inside a high-rise building, for example, or whether their path to the mobile tower is obstructed by other buildings, terrain or topography.” ●



# Recovering stolen bikes – a wheel chain in the butt

WORDS BY *Matt Harvey*  
CRIME

A recent incident of a stolen bike being found has not quite turned out how the owner might have hoped as they were left to cut the lock the thief placed on their own bike and were offered no support from the police.

Retail manager of the not-for-profit Good Cycles, Ed who did not want to be identified by his full name, recognised the stolen bike, ironically locked up by the thief, and placed a second lock on the bike to ensure the thief would not be able to use the bike again.

“It’s weird because I’ve got the sort of memory, I can go to Coles and forget half the stuff I went for,” Ed said. “But I just saw this bike and I knew who it belonged to after I’d seen it. I have a memory for bikes I suppose but also, it’s a very distinct bike.”

“I could remember the customer’s name, went back and looked her up on the computer and she confirmed it had been stolen. So, I grabbed a lock from the shop, walked back up there and locked it.”

Police were contacted and the bike was positively identified as the stolen bike. They then left the owner to sort out the bike locks on her own.

Ed left a spare key to the Good Cycles lock with the local shop and took one home in the event he needed to be contacted, but that still left the initial chain to be cut.

The bike owner turned to social media for advice and to possibly borrow a bolt cutter, sparking a heated debate about whether or not the police had failed in their duty to assist the bike owner.

Passionate social media users quickly formed sides all keen to offer advice or admonish the police for neglect of duty.

According to Victoria Police’s website, the duties of an officer are to prevent anti-social behaviour, deal with community safety concerns, resolve disputes, attend accidents, investigate crime, enforce traffic law, deal with drug and alcohol affected people, and attend critical incidents and emergencies.

But what should you expect of the police and what are your options when you find your bike has been found?

*North West City News* spoke with North Melbourne police who weren’t able to offer specifics on this case without the owner’s permission, but they did say help could be offered but it was on a case-by-case basis.

Riders should be aware the statistics on returned bicycles are low; a stolen bike is rarely ever recovered.

“Generally, when it gets stolen it’s gone, there’s not a lot to be done,” Ed said.

But there are still actions that can be taken to increase the chances of recovering a stolen bike.

“You do have to have some sort of identifying feature,” Ed said.

Recording every possible identifying feature while it is still in your possession – make, model, colour, tyres, etc. can be helpful.

Most bikes have a unique identification number, which is usually stamped on the frame beneath the bottom bracket (between the pedals). Note this number down. It can also be helpful to store a photo of the bike, according to Bikelinc Australia.

If you don’t have this information and the bike has been stolen, call the shop where you originally purchased it. They generally keep track of the



▲ Police located but did not return the bike.

serial numbers and might still have the bike’s details.

“We record the serial number of the bike we sell you on your receipt, and we keep a record of it as well, so if you ever need it for insurance purposes or if its stolen, we’ll have it,” Ed said.

The most likely place for a stolen bike is residential homes, according to Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, with 4206 of 7281 total offences recorded for the year ending 2020.

One potential solution floated in the social media chatter was to approach the council for assistance, a Local Laws team could be engaged to offer assistance.

Team Supervisor Local Laws with the City of Melbourne Kosmo Kanatsidis said there was no existing service to help people bolt cut or recover stolen bicycles.

“We don’t work with stolen bikes, we always refer to the police,” he said.

“But we do get those calls a lot because police do have a habit of saying call the council first, and if they do call us, we check our cage but it’s generally not there,” Mr Kanatsidis said.

Local councils do have a service called abandoned bicycles, where bicycles reported abandoned are tagged and checked. If after seven days the bike has not been moved it will be bolt cut and stored in a cage for a further seven days.

If you have the time to wait it could be an option, but there seems to be no common steps or wisdom for cutting locks.

Turning to the local community for assistance has resulted in friendly neighbours offering assistance, so don’t be afraid to ask for help.

Ed offered a last piece of advice for those hoping to avoid getting their bike stolen.

“Given enough time they will be able to steal anything from anywhere, it just a matter of not making it easy,” he said.

“The best combo is a cheap looking bike and an expensive looking lock.” ●

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

# Calls to improve lighting

WORDS BY *Ellen Blake*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Residents have raised concerns about poor street lighting in the area of West Melbourne where a woman was sexually assaulted in April.

Locals have conveyed anxieties about the lack of maintenance to the public lighting under the bridge at Railway Place, which has caused low visibility in surrounding streets.

A 23-year-old woman was assaulted on Railway Place, near Dudley St, early in the morning on her way to work in late April.

Victoria Police have charged a 32-year-old man with abduction for a sexual purpose, sex assault, false imprisonment, unlawful assault and robbery.

CitiPower, who are responsible for maintaining the lights, said while they had undertaken temporary repairs to the public lighting beneath the Dudley St rail bridge, more work was needed to address the safety concerns.

In response to questions about their plans to improve the public lighting and safety in the area, the City of Melbourne said it had allocated more than \$2.8 million to city safety measures, including investing in critical infrastructure such as CCTV and street lighting, in the draft Annual Plan and Budget 2021/2022.

The council said \$1.8 million would be spent on maintaining 16,000 streetlights across the municipality.

“The City of Melbourne works closely with Victoria Police as part of a joint commitment to keep our community safe,” a spokesman for the council said ●

*“The lights are all working but as these particular lights use non-standard fittings, a permanent solution will need to be arranged by the City of Melbourne and Department of Transport.”*



▲ Amy Poomian at the Willows & Wine in Victoria St.

# A hospo girl buys the bar

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*  
ARTS & CULTURE

There are many ways of being a barfly and one involves buying the bar yourself and creating the kind of culture you crave.

Amy Poomian wanted a bar where people felt comfortable coming alone and bringing a book to read over a glass of wine.

“Having that confidence level. That’s the world I want to live in,” she said.

Not as many groups have been out and about since COVID and Amy’s bar Willows & Wine in West Melbourne reflects the changes.

There are books for the lone drinker to read while they sit in a corner or out the front watching people pass by on Victoria St.

During the fourth lockdown Amy has been doing long shifts from 10am to 7pm, mostly standing at her window to the street selling takeaway drinks.

“I think that because of COVID, society had changed. I live by myself. A lot of people have learned to be with themselves,” she said, and her business could also be seen as a response to the lockdowns.

She bought it last November as Melbourne came out of lockdown number two and began changing the culture.

“It’s the first business I’ve owned but I’ve worked in the industry all my life,” she told *North West City News*.

Amy employs locals, other barflies who know how to win over a customer with their patter.

“I can teach people how to be a bartender, but I can’t teach them to have personality,” she said.

In its short life, Willows & Wine has developed a reputation as the place to go on a Tinder date.

“The female usually turns up first and has a drink. You can usually tell when they come up to pay if it went well. They split the bill. We’re thinking of putting in a shelf of books on relationships.”

Amy is quite sensitive to power relations and, unlike her own experience in the industry, supports her staff. She says that in the bad old days, bosses told her to put up with difficult customers for the sake of business.

“Hospo girls remember bad experiences. I never felt safe,” she said.

Recently she had to call the police to deal with some customers who refused to leave and challenged her about losing money if they were kicked out.

The incident is still quite raw for her and has influenced her philosophy. She said a lot of people had pre-conceived ideas about bars.

“They don’t like change. People feel ownership over you. You become public property.”

She said that to be a barfly you needed to “walk into a place with a good attitude. You’re going into someone’s business to experience what they’ve created.”

She has a stand of books out the front, mostly by white male authors, she has marked down to \$5.

She plans to order in new stock more in line with her own reading habits. “It’s what I’ve loved. A lot of people you wouldn’t expect love books. It’s seen as elitist,” she said ●



# Giving back through Neighbourhood House

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
COMMUNITY

Keeping a group of primary school students engaged in their homework for hours is no easy task.

But for 16-year-old Angus Niggl, who volunteers as a tutor at the Kensington Neighbourhood House, he takes it all in his stride.

The Haileybury City campus student has been tutoring children since the start of this year and so far, he said it had been “so worth it and so rewarding”.

He is one of the hundreds of volunteers in the community whose contributions were celebrated as part of National Volunteer Week from May 17 to 23.

Every Monday afternoon he dedicates his time helping students with their homework while balancing his school studies.

He also helps deliver flyers in his spare time that promote the Neighbourhood House and its services to the community.

“I’ve helped with working-bees before, but I hadn’t considered volunteering properly until the end of last year,” he said.



▲ Angus Niggl has been kicking goals at KNH.

“The biggest reward is the relationship you build with the kids and the other tutors.”

As the youngest volunteer at the Neighbourhood House, Angus said he “didn’t have any prior expectations” before joining.

But he said he now loved the opportunity to help students strengthen their literacy and numeracy skills through the study support program.

“Applying was probably the easiest part,” he said. “I had been looking into doing tutoring for quite some time when a friend of my Mum’s told me about the volunteer program.”

“I’d already been to the Neighbourhood House quite a few times as I went to the primary school across the road, so I was quite familiar with it.”

He said he had always enjoyed helping friends when they were stuck on something at school or with their homework, “and a few teachers had noticed that and told me I’d be a good tutor”.

Such is his passion for helping kids learn and build confidence, Angus said he had now considered a career in teaching.

“Being able to engage with the kids like they’re your friends is a huge reward for me, and it makes the whole thing 10 times more enjoyable.”

“You feel that sense of trust between yourself and the kids, and they can feel comfortable around you. It’s great.”

“I’ll be honest, it’s quite hard to stay engaged with work after school. Most of them try to stay on task but what’s most important is that they’re in an enjoyable workspace, even if that means they’re only running at 50 per cent of their capacity.”

“I’d say though that they’re almost always enthusiastic and I applaud them for that.”

Angus said he always made time to study and do activities outside of school on top of volunteering.

“Plus, I love doing it, so sacrificing a Monday afternoon is worth it,” he said.

Kensington Neighbourhood House was established in 1975 to provide a space for the community and its various groups to meet.

Today, it offers a range of adult education, art, and hobby, social, children’s activities, childcare, and health and wellbeing programs ●

**For more information call:  
9376 6366**

## Biggest Morning Tea

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
COMMUNITY

The Parkville Gardens community banded together to host its Biggest Morning Tea last month to raise money for cancer research.

More than 50 people gathered at the event on May 22 where there was plenty of homemade cakes, sweets, and freshly squeezed lemonade to go around.

Organiser Ajith Vasanthakumar said the event was a “big success” with the community raising a total of \$507 through gold coins and online donations, which will go towards the Cancer Council.

“I was overwhelmed by the support of my neighbours and community,” he said. “I did not expect such a big turnout and was really surprised by everyone’s enthusiasm.”

“I organised the event but the help from volunteers really underpinned the success.”

He said families also pitched in to decorate and arrange tables for the street event which was held at Manchester Lane in Parkville Gardens.

Attendees were well fed as community members and local businesses helped bake and donate food items.

Following its success, Mr Vasanthakumar said the community would “surely organise this event again”.

Cancer Council Victoria’s head of fundraising Lyrian Fleming-Parsley said the generosity of communities meant “we can continue our work in cancer research, prevention programs, advocacy, and support services”.

This year participants were encouraged to host their Biggest Morning Tea their way – whether at home, with workmates, virtually, or at a gathering in a local community or school. The official day to host a morning tea is May 27, but participants can register to host at any time throughout May or June.

More than 36,000 Victorians are diagnosed with cancer each year, while more than 138,000 Australians are diagnosed annually ●

## 110 years of fighting for the underdog

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*  
ANIMAL WELFARE

Before the Lost Dogs’ Home opened in 1913, Melbourne was a grim place to be for stray animals.

Not only did Melbourne City Council poison or drown any stray dogs found on the street, many unwanted animals also ended up at Melbourne University for experimental testing.

Lost Dogs’ Home spokesperson Suzana Talevski said that the opening of the North Melbourne shelter was a pivotal moment for animal welfare in Victoria.

“People’s attitudes to pet ownership have changed drastically over the past few decades– they appreciate that pets are family members for life,” Ms Talevski said.

“In the past many people thought of them as property, which was also legally the case until 1970.”

The shelter, which was created by a group of locals concerned about the treatment of strays in Melbourne, opened on Gracie Street in North Melbourne in February 1913 and has remained on that site ever since.

As the largest animal shelter in the Southern Hemisphere, the home works with 18 local councils to take in thousands of lost, stray or surrendered animals every year.

Ms Talevski said that the shelter took in close to 17,000 animals last year that were “in desperate need of help”.

“The animals arrive via various



▲ Two-year-old Pointer Cross Theodore with adoption attendant Laura Stubbs.

means such as council pick-ups, our ambulance vehicles and individual surrenders,” Ms Talevski said.

“We never know what pets are about to show up on our doorstep, but our staff are ready to provide compassion and care to every one of them, no matter what their breed, age, health or temperament.”

With a team of 180 staff across the North Melbourne and Cranbourne sites, and hundreds of community



▲ Left: Adoption attendants Scott and Patricia with cats Kyle (left) and Tuffy (right) up for adoption. Right: Eight-year-old Tibetan Spaniel Cross Cody with shelter supervisor Amanda Smith.



volunteers, the animals are well cared for while they wait for their new homes.

Aside from food, warm baths and shelter, the home also offers veterinary treatment and foster services for animals who aren’t ready to be adopted yet.

Shelter supervisor Amanda Smith said that for many of the animals the main focus is to provide individualised training programs to get them ready for “the big, bad world” again.

“We have dedicated and experienced trainers who work with the dogs all day to provide enrichment activities and individualised training programs,” Ms Smith said.

“Some of the animals are fearful, have had some trauma in their lives, or have separation anxiety so we work with them to improve that.”

“These animals are really the underdogs which need a second chance at life, so we’re giving them that.”

Ms Smith also said that outside of the shelter, the Lost Dog’s Home also offers behavioural training classes for pets in the community.

“The Pet Squad service is our specialised training department to help owners with any behavioural issues their pet might be having,” Ms Smith said.

“We have individual and group classes with qualified trainers, and also have puppy and kitten schools.”

Although small breeds and young animals are often quickly adopted, older and larger animals can often be left behind.

Ms Talevski said that the shelter was currently offering reduced adoption fees for bigger breeds to incentivise people to consider taking in a bigger dog.

“Big breeds like Theodore here often have a tough time being adopted because there’s a misconception that they’re harder to take care of,” Ms Talevski said.

“If you compare a Greyhound, which is a couch potato, to a tiny Jack Russell which can often be quite a handful, you can see it’s just not the case.”

Currently the Lost Dogs’ Home has about 850 animals in their care, with 35 dogs and 77 cats available for adoption.

Aside from making a donation, which the shelter relies heavily on to continue their important work, the community can also donate blankets and pet food which the shelter is always needs.

Ms Talevski said that making the animals feel as comfortable, supported and loved as possible while they were at the Lost Dogs’ Home was the main priority.

“As Dorothy once said, there’s no place like home,” Ms Talevski said.

“But we do the best we can while we find that home for them.” ●

**For more information:  
dogshome.com**



▲ Lost Dog’s Home in 1913.



# North Melbourne Community Centre gets budget funding

WORDS BY *David Schout*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Redevelopment of the North Melbourne Community Centre has been given a kick along with \$500,000 allocated in the City of Melbourne's recent budget for plans and design work within the next year.

An overhaul of the 1960s-built centre has been slated for some time, and the City of Melbourne is now moving forward with plans.

"The North Melbourne Community Centre (NMCC) precinct will be redeveloped to support the future needs of a growing community," a City of Melbourne spokesperson said after the council's latest draft budget was released in May.

"[An amount of] \$500,000 is allocated in the City of Melbourne draft 2021-22 budget for preparation of a business case including concept plans and some early design work."

Forward estimates in the latest budget reveal bigger spending on the project will happen in years to come.

In the 2023-24 financial year, the council is set to spend \$5 million on the redevelopment, while the following 12 months (2024-25) would see \$10 million put aside.

Prior to that, however, extensive consultation would take place.

"Community and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken in relation to the design, facilities and location of the new precinct before any works commence," the council spokesperson said.

"The redevelopment is in its early stages and construction schedules are yet to be determined."

The NMCC, located on Buncle St, is owned by the City of Melbourne and managed by YMCA Victoria.

The centre has a number of different facilities, including a gym, stadium, outdoor soccer pitch, games room and community hall.

Among a range of programs, it hosts "Y-Streetball" — a drop-in basketball game for those experiencing homelessness and disadvantage.

As well as being a key leisure and community site within North Melbourne, the centre acted as a logistical centre point to assist residents in nearby public housing flats during Melbourne's hard lockdown last year ●



*David Schout*  
JOURNALIST  
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▲ *The North Melbourne Community Centre.*



## Council puts down a record budget

ECONOMY

The City of Melbourne has handed down a record 2021-22 draft budget of \$789.9 million to help the city continue its recovery from the pandemic.

Given the challenges imposed on the city by last year's lockdowns, the council has impressively achieved a \$31 million turnaround since delivering a \$57.4 million deficit in last year's budget.

Despite a forecast deficit of \$26.2 million, the council has delivered a record spend headlined by \$244.7 million in infrastructure, as well as \$4.8 million in rates discounts, which the Lord Mayor Sally Capp said would save ratepayers between \$10 and \$50.

The Lord Mayor was joined by finance governance and risk portfolio chair Cr Phil Le Liu at Queen Victoria Market's (QVM's) new underground car park on May 25 at the Munro development to announce this year's budget.

QVM's precinct renewal program is one of the winners in the council's big infrastructure spend, with a further \$50.2 million committed. The Lord Mayor's \$300 million Greenline project also received \$1 million towards designs.

The council has also included \$21.5 million for bringing major events back to the city, while more than \$50 million will be invested in providing core services such as waste and recycling, cleaning and graffiti removal and safety upgrades.

Businesses will also continue to receive support through the joint \$200 million Melbourne

City Revitalisation Fund with the state government.

This includes more than \$800,000 for the city's precinct associations, subsidised fees for outdoor dining, expansion of the Business Concierge program and the establishment of Invest Melbourne — a new entity which will seek to fast-track planning processes, building permits and work to attract global headquarters and research centres to the city.

Kensington Community Rereation Centre will be redeveloped, and has been allocated \$10 million in the budget. The existing centre has served Kensington since 1976, and needs replacement.

A recommendation for the preferred contactor will be presented to council in the second half of this year.

For the 2021-22 year, \$63.7 million will be spent on upgrading existing assets, including \$6.5 million for the North and West Melbourne and Docklands Transport and Amenity Program.

The budget also includes more than \$2 million to support people experiencing homelessness in partnership with organisations like Launch Housing, Front Yard Youth Services and the Salvation Army.

Fees and charges for more than 70 per cent of council services will not change, or will be modestly increased in line with CPI inflation.

Parking fee revenue is budgeted at \$51 million and parking fine revenue is budgeted at \$39 million ●

## What's in the state budget for us?

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
ECONOMY

The Victorian Government has allocated millions of dollars in funding in its recent budget for major projects in North Melbourne and Kensington.

The new campus of North Melbourne Primary School, set to open in the first quarter of 2023, will receive \$50.15 million.

A program created in the wake of the controversial public housing lockdown in 2020 supporting residents at North Melbourne and Flemington towers will receive an additional \$6.5 million funding.

And Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre (FKCLC) will receive \$200,000 each year for three years to support a raft of initiatives including advocacy for law reform and police accountability.

**North Melbourne Primary School's (NMPS's) second campus**

Located between Molesworth and Haines streets, the new campus will be situated 225 metres away from NMPS according to the plans, with construction starting in May this year and finishing up in 2023.

In April, the state government backflipped on its decision to keep NMPS's new second campus — formerly North Melbourne Hill Primary School — as an entirely separate school with different zoning to NMPS.

The move came after concerted campaigning from the North Melbourne community, which argued separating the schools would sew division.

Now with \$50.15 million in funding, the government will build the new six-level campus, which includes a kindergarten, catering for 525 students initially and growing to 800 students in five years.

Further details about the new campus have not yet been released.

### Paving the Way Forward program

A Victorian Government spokesperson said an additional \$6.5 million was being invested in the Paving the Way Forward program (PWFP), supporting residents at North Melbourne and Flemington towers.

"The pandemic highlighted the importance of a home, this program helps ensure vulnerable Victorians receive the services and support they need to sustain their accommodation and remain healthy," the spokesperson said.

"The program is working with residents to

identify and respond to their priorities around their home, neighbourhood, services they receive and training and employment opportunities — with more than 40 jobs already created."

Following the snap lockdown of the North Melbourne and Flemington housing towers in December last year, which saw thousands of residents confined in their houses with no notice, the government launched the PWFP.

Although the Victorian ombudsman found many residents were left without food or medicine, the Victorian government denies that the detention broke human rights laws.

"We make no apology for saving people's lives," Housing Minister Richard Wynne said at the time.

With \$7.5 million in initial funding, the program will receive an additional \$6.5 million to build on partnerships with local government, housing sector organisations and community health services to improve the lives of public housing residents, according to the stated objectives.

Specific supports include:

- The introduction of health concierges who help residents access health and wellbeing services, including COVID-19 vaccination and testing referrals.
- Job training and opportunities through the Youth Employment Program.
- Improvement of community sporting facilities.
- Fortnightly drop-in sessions to give residents a voice in neighbourhood developments. Feedback will help inform the future directions of the Paving the Way Forward program.

### Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre

According to the Victorian Government, the \$600,000 cash injection over three years will support collaborative, sector-based advocacy for law reform and police accountability, and builds on relationships with key partners such as Women's Legal Service Victoria and Djirra.

FKCLC provides free, high-quality legal case-work, advice and assistance for the community.

It drives and supports law reform and policy advocacy on behalf of and alongside clients and communities.

It also provides community legal education through production of online and offline resources, tailored training, talks, forums and via the media. Legal students and other community members receive training through a volunteer program through Melbourne University Law School internships ●



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# DELIVERING FOR THE COMMUNITY – OUR NEW COUNCIL PLAN

After a year of significant disruption, the City of Melbourne has been working closely with the community to deliver the services and support that people need now, while developing a plan that reflects the community's aspirations and priorities for Melbourne's future.

In May, the Melbourne City Council – the Lord Mayor, the Deputy Lord Mayor and nine councillors – endorsed the draft Council Plan 2021-25, which sets out what Council will achieve during its four-year term to further the community's vision for Melbourne.

This four-year plan is delivered in yearly increments – the first of which is the Budget 2021-22 – which details the Council's funded activities for the coming financial year. This draft Budget was also endorsed by Council in May, and both plans were made available for the community to review and provide feedback.

### Planning for the future

The draft Council Plan brings together recent community insights to help us preserve and progress the city in six key areas:

- 1 Economy of the future**  
Building a strong and adaptive city economy and a sustainable future city.
- 2 Melbourne's unique identity and place**  
Celebrating the places, people and cultures that make this a vibrant and creative city.

- 3 Safety and wellbeing**  
Ensuring everyone feels safe and included as they participate in community life.
- 4 Access and affordability**  
Reducing inequality by ensuring access to housing, core services and information.
- 5 Climate and biodiversity emergency**  
Acting immediately to reduce our emissions and waste, and adapt to climate change.
- 6 Aboriginal Melbourne**  
Ensuring that First Peoples' culture, lore, knowledge, and heritage enrich the city's growth and development.

These six key areas will be brought to life with initiatives such as support to help businesses adapt and thrive, infrastructure and capital works projects, improvements to recreation facilities and more. As always, we will continue to deliver all council services including waste and recycling collection, library and community services, maternal and child health services and many more.

The Council Plan will be a "living document" and Council will report to the community on progress made, as well as any adjustments needed to meet our targets or adapt to new circumstances.

Following Councillor consideration of public feedback on the draft Council Plan 2021-25 and draft Budget 2021-22, they will be presented to the Council meeting on 29 June 2021 for adoption.

## A HEALTHY CITY FOR ALL

As part of the Council Plan, every four years we include an approach for how we will support our city's health and wellbeing. A liveable city is a healthy city and, since the last plan was created in 2017, Melbourne has gone through immense change. Last year we completed an extensive review that highlighted key issues for health and wellbeing. In March this year we asked Melburnians to help us rank these topics and share whether anything was missed.

This feedback, along with data and insights, has shaped the focus areas for our Health and Wellbeing Plan: public health and safety, housing and homelessness, and mental wellbeing. These topics have been integrated into the draft Council Plan 2021-25, and are the ongoing focus of many services and programs we provide to the community.



## A LONG-TERM VISION

Also included in the Council Plan is the Community Vision – your 10-year vision for the city.

In March and April of this year, we heard from more than 1400 people who live, work, study, visit or own a business in the municipality, to prioritise the community aspirations that were most important to them. Their insights informed the Community Vision, which is a refresh of Future Melbourne 2026, our existing 10-year vision for the city that was released in 2016.

Overall, the community's aspirations were for a city that:

- is healthy and safe
- considers climate change in everything that we do
- is inclusive, accessible and affordable.

Over our annual, four-year and ten-year plans, we will work closely with the community, and partner with other levels of government, as well as the public and private sectors to realise this vision.





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Your City of Melbourne community update



# BUDGET INVESTS IN STRONGER ECONOMY

**A rates discount, a boost for recreational facilities, job creation through capital works and a new recycling program are highlights of the City of Melbourne's draft Budget 2021-22.**

After helping to steer the city through tough times, the City of Melbourne has a detailed plan to lead Melbourne's recovery from the global pandemic.

The \$789.9 million city-shaping budget puts people first and delivers essential services and programs to rebuild and strengthen the local economy.

Record infrastructure spending of \$244.7 million will create jobs now and set the city up for future generations, while a \$21.5 million investment in events will attract people back to the city and boost business across the municipality.

## Economic recovery

The City of Melbourne has achieved a \$31 million turnaround since delivering a \$57.4 million deficit in last year's COVID-19 recovery budget, with a forecast deficit of \$26.2 million for 2021-22.

We've stepped up to support our business community as it faces the toughest trading conditions in decades.

We are proud of our response to COVID-19 – and we believe the city is emerging in better shape because of our economic stimulus support and fast action to deliver inventive programs like expanded outdoor dining.

We're focused on drawing more people in, bringing back the buzz and making sure the city remains a great place to live, work, visit and do business.

Our core services remain a priority – these include waste and recycling services, keeping the streets clean, and providing community services such as libraries, maternal and child health support, childcare, and support for older people.

In addition, the draft Budget includes significant progress on city-shaping projects. We're working to progress Greenline which will deliver one of the biggest transformations of the city since the opening of Fed Square in 2002. We want the Yarra River's Northbank to become one of the city's premier destinations for workers, residents and visitors.

The Queen Victoria Market precinct renewal is well underway and the Brens Pavilion in Royal Park is to be upgraded.

We're also investing more than \$10 million in the Kensington Community Recreation Centre redevelopment, which is due for completion in 2022.

## Reducing waste and cleaning the city

We will invest more than \$50 million to get rid of waste, scrub the city clean, remove graffiti, and improve lighting and safety.

Our bread-and-butter operations are essential to keeping our city running smoothly – we collected 45,000 tonnes of waste and recycling last year, which included more than 10,000 mattresses and five million cigarette butts.

For the first time we're introducing a food and organic waste collection, which will reduce landfill and create compost that can be used on our parks and gardens.

## Keeping rates low

After delivering a recovery budget last year that included a freeze on rate increases, this year we are continuing to keep rates low.

In recognition of the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, and to support businesses and the community during the city's recovery, we have made the unprecedented decision to absorb this year's 1.5 per cent rate increase by applying a rates discount. The City of Melbourne will forgo \$4.8 million in rates revenue by applying the rates discount.

Following Councillor consideration of public feedback on the draft Budget 2021-22, it will be presented to the Council meeting on 29 June 2021 for adoption.

## FAST FACTS

- Total draft Budget 2021-22: \$789.9 million
- Record infrastructure investment: \$244.7 million
- Rates discount: \$4.8 million surrendered in revenue
- Deficit: \$26.2 million
- Return to surplus: 2022-23
- Borrowings: \$147.7 million.

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

## 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](http://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](http://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

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NORTH WEST CITY LOCAL

Soccer at 60

Despite being “out-of-sight the oldest” soccer player on her team, Kensington’s Susan Rushworth believes it’s never too late to start something new.

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*

At 60 years young, Ms Rushworth played her first game of soccer for the Kensington City Soccer Club (KCSC) women’s league in May, something she wishes she had the opportunity to do years ago.

All it took was some inspiration from a 73-year-old lady from Perth she met at a recent soccer game in Melbourne.

“I met a lady from Perth in a coffee queue at a Perth Glory game who started playing in her 60s and was still playing soccer and enjoying herself, and I went, well I can do that,” Ms Rushworth said.

“If I want to give it a go, I’ll give it a go.”

Growing up in England, Ms Rushworth was surrounded by soccer from an early age.

Her father, sister and husband all barrack for Manchester City Football Club, so naturally she followed suit.

Her obsession with soccer peaked every four years with the advent of the World Cup, which she watched religiously.

But despite her passion for football, Ms Rushworth said she had never played competitively.

“I’ve never played competitive sport ever, mainly because I went to a girls’ school which offered netball, but I didn’t know the rules, so I didn’t get to play,” she said.

“Soccer crowds were quite rough then, so I didn’t go to games either.”

Formerly the president of the KCSC juniors, Ms Rushworth set her sights on playing in the club’s first women’s team in 2018. But her introduction to playing soccer was a series of false starts.

Ms Rushworth said the pandemic put an end to her 2020 debut despite beginning training in 2019.

“The first round of the 2021 season, we were set to go,” she said.

“But the team didn’t show up in round one, and in round two, we were set to play Warragal and we didn’t have the numbers, so we forfeited, so round three was our first match.” Despite vehemently declaring she is “not sporty” whatsoever, Ms Rushworth maintains positive outlook on being the eldest member of the KCSC.

“The fact I didn’t play competitive sport means I haven’t had injuries so in some ways my body is better off,” she said.

“The club is incredibly accepting, really friendly, and we’ve got quite diverse nationalities.”

“The coaches have said, ‘that’s okay, you’re one of the players’ – they’ve really supported me.”

On her team, the next eldest player is 35, with the average age sitting at around 25. The youngest player is just 16.

Ms Rushworth’s daughter, Lucy Churches, 17, even plays at KCSC in a different team having started playing when she was seven.

“My daughter is proud of me, and I’m glad because she could’ve seen it as an embarrassment!” Ms Rushworth said with a laugh.

In her first game, Ms Rushworth found herself subbed on for an attacker and quickly got within striking distance of the goals.

“But I panicked and got shouted at for not taking the shot. If it happens again, I’ll have a go!”

It’s an outlook Ms Rushworth said everyone should adopt.

“If you want to have a go just get over your embarrassment. You don’t have to ask for permission, just turn out. I don’t think age has to be a barrier,” she said.

KCSC is currently looking for more female players and urges anyone who is interested to give it a try. Visit [facebook.com/kensingtoncitysoccerclub/](https://facebook.com/kensingtoncitysoccerclub/) ●

▼ Susan Rushworth has joined Kensington City Soccer Club at 60 years old with her daughter, Lucy Churches, 17.



TRADER PROFILE



North Melbourne’s Wonky Trolley rolls on

While the latest COVID-19 lockdown has caused havoc for restaurants across Melbourne, Wonky Trolley is no stranger to serving under strict protocols.

WORDS BY *Ellen Blake*

The North Melbourne burger restaurant reopened under new owner Michelle Goring-Satin last year in the depths of Melbourne’s stage-four restrictions.

“We opened in September, which was lockdown number three. It was the strictest lockdown. The one where there was an eight o’clock curfew,” Ms Goring-Satin said.

But challenging circumstances have provided an opportunity for the new restaurant.

“It gave us the ability to put checks and measures in place and to perfect our product,” Ms Goring-Satin said.

Regarding the current lockdown, Ms Goring-Satin said Wonky Trolley was hoping for a quick return to normalcy.

“We’re like every other small business – struggling along and looking for the light at the end of the tunnel,” she said.

Despite the disruption successive lockdowns have brought, Ms Goring-Smith said she had enjoyed revitalising the restaurant.

“We took over a pretty rundown business. We just like a challenge and something different.”

Being a long-time resident, the main appeal of taking over the business was its Errol St location.

“It’s in North Melbourne. I grew up in North Melbourne. I went to North Melbourne Primary School and secondary school in North Melbourne,” Ms Goring-Satin said.

And in an expression of her love of the local area, Wonky Trolley’s menu has been re-designed as a nod to the suburb’s most iconic locations.

“All our burgers are named after streets in North Melbourne,” Ms Goring-Satin said.

“We have the Queensberry burger, we have the Arden, the Victoria burger”.

The Errol burger – named after the street on which Wonky Trolley sits – is the restaurant’s signature dish.

As Melbourne waits to reopen, Ms Goring-Smith is excited about Wonky Trolley’s future.

“The trajectory is improving, we’re heading in the right direction. It’s getting busier and we can’t wait to welcome more people.”

Wonky Trolley is located at 47 Errol St, North Melbourne ●

For more information:  
[wonkytrolley.com](https://wonkytrolley.com)



# An investment simply too compelling not to pursue

“Welcome to the 10<sup>th</sup> article 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 Mario Biasin, co-founder of Metricon Homes, Australia's largest builder, to share his thoughts around why the objective around housing all Australians is important, especially given his early beginnings as a migrant to Australia ...*

I have been involved in the residential building industry for more than four decades, playing a part in building homes for tens of thousands of Australians through Metricon Homes. With my co-founder George Kline, we had a clear vision when we started building back in 1976 – we wanted to build good-quality homes for Australian families at an affordable price. Both of us, as child migrants to Australia, were acutely aware of the role a home plays in anchoring people, giving them a sense of belonging.

I can clearly remember the moment I first became aware of homelessness in Australia and how it impacts people in a devastating way. I was in Sydney for a work trip about 30 years ago and saw rough sleepers – a sight I'd not witnessed in Melbourne. This started my thinking about how the construction sector could contribute to alleviating housing distress.

When I reflect on how the property sector has changed over time, and the impacts on homelessness, the biggest change from my perspective has been the price of land relative to construction costs. Around 45 years ago, the price of building a home was around twice as much as the land. This has shifted dramatically. Land now costs at least 50 per cent more than the home in most capital cities, while land prices in regional areas have also increased yet perhaps not at the same rate. Relatively, construction costs have decreased. Numerous efficiencies in the construction process – from raw material prices to different building practices – have significantly reduced the cost of building a house. Land prices have increased disproportionately within this equation. This has resulted in home ownership and even fair rental prices being unattainable for many Australians.

Active participants in the home building sector have a role to play in the solutions. Government, industry, corporates, funders and the community sector have the capacity to

collaborate to rethink how to provide more affordable housing solutions for the many people and families who are in desperate need of a safe roof over their heads. More intensive support for victims of domestic violence and those suffering mental health challenges will no doubt play a role too.

When I consider ways that our government, both state and national, could support better outcomes for those at risk of homelessness, two key opportunities come to mind. Firstly, government and councils own land in regional and metropolitan areas that is often well located and in close proximity to amenities. Could this land be better utilised as blended social, affordable and private market housing? Is some top-down urgency now warranted to drive activity in this area?

Secondly, the Victorian government has made an unprecedented commitment to enhancing social housing stock with the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build. Could this approach be used as a blueprint by other states to supercharge the development of social housing? Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) research reports that \$1 invested in last-resort housing generates \$2.70 of benefit to the community during the subsequent 20-year period, including health cost savings, improved quality of life and reduced crime costs, among others. Additional value would likely be achieved with secure tenure. Furthermore, as well as benefiting those in need of housing support, it would also stimulate economic activity and jobs. Is the business and social rationale of this investment simply too compelling not to pursue?

As a business, Metricon has stayed true to its original vision to provide quality homes for Australians from all walks of life. In 2018 we responded to the increasing challenge of homelessness by creating a division of our organisation purely focused on building

social, affordable and accessible housing. Called EveryOne, this business unit is part of our social responsibility to the broader community. EveryOne taps into Metricon's expertise to deliver well designed and competitively priced homes for government and community housing association clients, tailored for the tenants they support.

I'm proud to play a small role in unburdening more Australians from the stress of finding a safe and affordable home, one where they feel they belong. I also look forward to continuing the conversation about how we can collaborate to ensure that homelessness is significantly reduced.

*I hope you found the above perspective by Mario 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 Pradolín**  
FORMER GENERAL MANAGER AT FRASERS PROPERTY AUSTRALIA AND FOUNDER OF HOUSING ALL AUSTRALIANS (HAA)  
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## COUNCILLOR PROFILE

# Bringing Melbourne back better than ever

*Young, driven and full of ambition for reviving Melbourne from the pandemic – newly elected councillor Roshena Campbell is passionate about creating a better city than the one we had before COVID struck.*



The 36-year-old barrister and mother of three could be easily forgiven for already having enough on her plate, but her desire to help the city's struggling small businesses recover from last year's lockdowns was too great to ignore.

As chair of the council's city activation portfolio, the first-time councillor has wasted no time in leading that recovery and she told *North West City News* she believed a better CBD than the one we had before awaited.

"I think coming out of COVID we might actually have a better CBD – that's my real hope," she said.

"There are fantastic opportunities for Melbourne to reinvent itself as an innovation hub. We are an ideal destination for start-ups to begin their businesses and for businesses to grow."

"For so long, so many of those start-ups and innovative businesses have been priced out of the CBD. I think there's a real opportunity for them to come back into the heart of the city."

"Why can't we be another Silicon Valley where the people with the great ideas have the conditions to be able to bring them to life? I

don't see any reason why not."

Cr Campbell has practiced law for more than 10 years in a career which has seen her act in a number of Royal Commissions and represent some of Australia's largest companies, as well as state and local government bodies.

And while she might be a new councillor, she's no stranger to the political scene. A member of the Liberal Party with a long history of campaigning, she has been politically active since the age of 18.

But having been elected as the second councillor on Lord Mayor Sally Capp's ticket in last year's elections, she said nothing could have prepared her for a "COVID campaign" as conventional campaign methods were thrown out the window.

However, despite the challenges forced upon all candidates running for Town Hall, she said Team Capp's "clear plan to come back from COVID" had resonated with residents and businesses, as well as her own ambition for running,

"I think anyone who runs for council only does it if they're passionate about something. I made the decision to run between the two lockdowns and walking the streets of Melbourne broke my heart because my parents had a background in small business," Cr Campbell said.

"I know that for people that run a small business, it's their whole lives."

While a firm believer that councils should primarily "stick to their patch" of roads, rates and rubbish, she said she wanted this council to be ambitious in fulfilling the needs of its ratepayers by ensuring Melbourne came back strongly from COVID.

With a diverse range of opinions represented on council, she said she was very confident that the newly elected team of councillors was both "energised" and "unified" in its passion to do just that.

"We've got some great plans at the council around what we're going to do with those vacant shopfronts, both in terms of bringing in new businesses, bringing in creatives and I think that we're starting to feel that vibrancy coming back to Melbourne. I think we're definitely on the right path," she said.

While she asked *North West City News* not to hold her Sydneysider roots against her, having lived, worked and studied in the City of Melbourne since relocating as a 20-year-old, we think she's done enough to earn an honourable pardon!

As a Fitzroy resident and former CBD resident, she is a strong advocate for the "15-minute lifestyle" that the city offers and, similar to her desire to drive business to the city, she is keen to encourage more residents to move in.

"The beauty of city living is that the way people think about dashing between meetings,

that's just how you lead your life. It's the fluidity around meeting all of your commitments that comes around from being right in the heart of things," she said.

"My children love the inner-city lifestyle; they love the fact that their playground is Carlton Gardens. They love the fact that the museum is not just a once a year come into the city thing, it's something they do every week. It's their backyard."

"I actually think in terms of raising kids, people say it's cramped in the city, but I don't think it is. Your world just becomes bigger and there's a great sense of community."

As Melbourne continues its recovery from COVID, she said it was important for the council to make doing business in the city involve as little red tape as possible.

"As a council need to do all we can to try to alleviate all of that uncertainty. Obviously, we have no control over border closures, but we can take steps to make it easier for businesses to trade," she said.

"We know that businesses have enough on their plates ... we want dealing with the City of Melbourne to be as easy as possible."

"I think the visibility of the hardship businesses suffered is so apparent to everybody; to visitors, to the people who've returned, but I am starting to see those green shoots." ●



**Sean Car**  
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## ROTARY CLUB - NORTH MELBOURNE

## North Melbourne Rotary Club is back In action



*Until recently, the North Melbourne Rotary Club has been back having face-to-face meetings, but it has been difficult to get into fundraising and general community activities.*

Well, late in May we got right into a community barbecue at the community consultation meeting at the Bedford Street Park which was run by the City of Melbourne to get local people's views on proposed changes to expand the park.

Our club has also just become a foundation member of the newly formed Rotary Inner Melbourne Emergency Relief Network (RIMERN).

This network has established premises in Brunswick and will collect unwanted furniture and household goods and distribute them to people and families that have been referred by local not-for-profit organisations. This will mean people who may have found or been provided with accommodation will be able to have them furnished using this facility.

The North Melbourne Rotary Club is probably one of the most diverse in the country. Though only small, we have just inducted a new member from Hong Kong and are about to induct another soon from Malawi. They join members from India, Poland, Cyprus, Greece, Somalia and a few home-grown as well. On top of that, on July 1 our Somali member, Sainab Sheikh, will take over from Neville Page as the new club president. We believe Sainab will be the first person from an African refugee background in Somalia to become a Rotary president. COVID permitting, the event will be an in-person one at the Mercure Hotel in North Melbourne. The public is welcome to attend and can book via the Trybooking link [trybooking.com/BRXQD](https://trybooking.com/BRXQD)

Our club is well known as a very friendly environment, and we would welcome meeting up with anyone interested in helping the community and knowing more about Rotary ●

**For more information, call Neville Page on 0414 673 611 or email [page@ghp.biz](mailto:page@ghp.biz)**



## ROTARY CLUB - FLEMINGTON &amp; KENSINGTON

## What is Rotary, you ask?

*Flemington Kensington Rotary has been working for the local community for more than 30 years.*

But what is Rotary you ask? We are not a clothesline or an engine, and not a rotunda. And we don't just cook sausages at Bunnings either!

Rotary is a service organisation, which raises funds to help people in communities locally and across the world. We are ordinary people who want to give back and help others.

You may have heard about our work with the Bill Gates Foundation to end polio, which is now almost unheard of except in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Or how we enable Youth Exchange sending year 11 students to live in another country for 12 months, or perhaps the work we do with scholarships for local schools.

Flemington Kensington Rotary does all these things and more.

Our main income comes from the Op Shop we run at 444 Racecourse Rd in Flemington, where a team of volunteers help by receiving, sorting and selling donated clothing, books, toys, household goods and bric-a-brac. We are much loved by collectors, young people in search of a special item of clothing, and people setting up a new home. We are also there for a chat!

With the announcement that supporting the environment is a new priority for Rotary, we have partnered with Moonee Valley Council and are developing a wildlife habitat and pollinator corridor along the Maribyrnong River. We have already planted more than 500 trees, groundcover and understorey plants near Fairbairn Park with more to come.

In recent years we have planted gardens at Debney Meadows and Ascot Vale West Primary Schools, helping students learn about where fruit and vegies come from and attracting birds and insects for pollination.



Our members have collected and helped to send 60-plus unwanted council playgrounds to children in Asia and Africa, bringing joy to them and saving landfill.

The Art Shows allow people to come together to celebrate and connect with others and appreciate the skills and talents of our local artists.

So, as you can see, we have many projects and activities and welcome those who would like to "give back". We provide networking, connection, learning and friendship to everyone. Get in touch or visit our website to see the range of our work.

Rotary – we are people of action ●

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





# Public housing residents' voices have to be heard

“*Deborah Glass, the Victorian Ombudsman, investigated the state government's lockdowns of high-rise public housing in Flemington and North Melbourne last year and came to the conclusion that residents' human rights had been violated.*”

Just how a democratically elected government could reject a finding of breaching human rights by an independent body in its own jurisdiction, defies my understanding of how democracy functions in Victoria. I worked throughout the COVID-19 crises last year to engage public housing tenants in

their own management of COVID-19 safeguards and preventive actions that met no response from the police and DHHS officials imposing the lockdowns. The City of Melbourne's Lord Mayor Sally Capp awarded me the city's Community Champion of the Year for 2020 in recognition of the work I did and the public housing residents who wanted an outcome different to detention lockdowns. No private housing was subject to a detention lockdown last year in Victoria. The government has a deadline of the end of this month set by Ms Glass to respond to her recommendations in full. One of the recommendations on page 20 of her report is: “The establishment of tenant representative bodies that can meet and engage with the relevant government agencies on issues that need resolution on estates: from maintenance to community health programs that can benefit residents.” The Save Public Housing Collective, which I am a spokesperson for, wants to see the establishment of tenant representative bodies that would be fully funded by the state government, comprising a peak body representing tenants state-wide and local or estate groups empowered to support their local tenants and run community programs.




### Public Housing Ombudsman

Ms Glass's investigation into the COVID-19 detention lockdown came after a very large number of residents asked her to do so. Many friends of residents and supporters of public housing in our community did so as well. Unfortunately, prior to this not all residents' complaints to the Ombudsman's Office received proper consideration for a range of reasons including resources. Last year a campaign was established calling for the establishment of a Public Housing Ombudsman in Victoria to end this problem. This has now been made more difficult with a new agency – the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – taking over the role of complaints management. Just tenants who talk to now is very unclear.

Many tenants want a Public Housing Ombudsman and more than 800 have signed the petition in support of this. I encourage all my column readers to support this campaign and sign our petition. On a sad note, early May we had the passing of a stalwart here at the Carlton Housing Estate. R.I.P. Jean Lazarus 1935 to 2021. Jean (aka Mrs Wobbles) was a beautiful and much-loved member of our community. What a colourful character she was. Personally, to me, it was heartbreaking. I will miss her banter, her conversation, and mostly her love ●

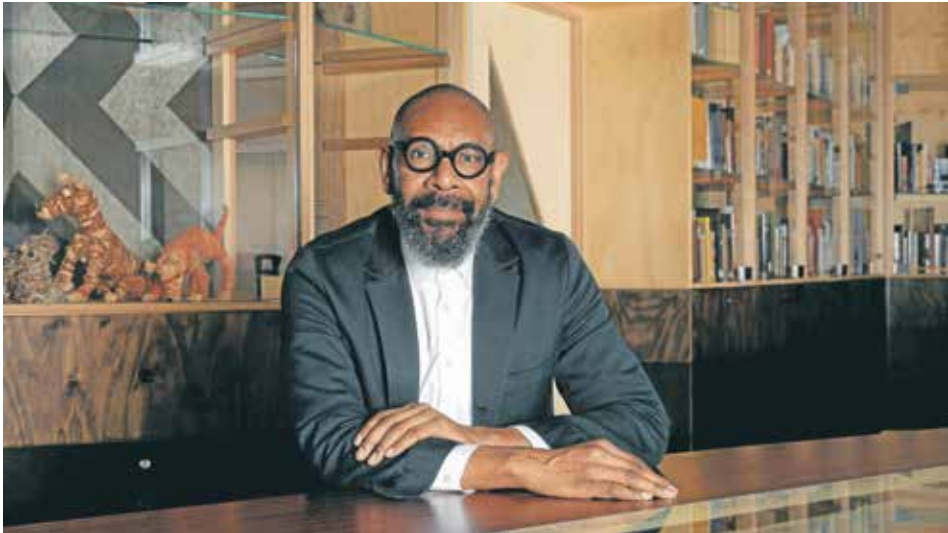
**For more information:**  
[change.org/p/daniel-andrews-prioritise-public-housing-to-protect-the-most-vulnerable](https://change.org/p/daniel-andrews-prioritise-public-housing-to-protect-the-most-vulnerable)



Cory Memery

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## ABORIGINAL MELBOURNE



# Celebrating National Reconciliation Week

WORDS BY *Ellen Blake*

The Koorie Heritage Trust is marking this year's National Reconciliation Week by partnering with the National Gallery of Victoria. Koorie Heritage Trust chief executive Tom Mosby said National Reconciliation Week, which ran from May 27 to June 3, offered an opportunity for the broader community to reconcile with Indigenous Australians and the injustices of the past. “It's about acknowledging the past and the reasons why the community faces some of the issues it does, such as a gap in education and health outcomes,” Mr Mosby said. “It's about understanding and trying to bridge the gap.” The centrepiece of the Koorie Heritage Trust's Reconciliation Week program was *The Rivers Sing* artwork, which was commissioned for Melbourne's new winter arts festival RISING. The large-scale sonic artwork was composed by acclaimed Yorta Yorta/Yuin opera singer Deborah Cheetham AO, with artists Thomas Supple and Byron J. Scullin. The piece was performed at sunrise and sunset along Birrarung Marr from May 26 to June 6.

In the six-week lead-up to its performance, *The Rivers Sing* has travelled along the Birrarung and Maribyrnong rivers collecting and layering the voices of singers for the work. The work aims to unite the urban environment with the landscape of the ancient meeting place. Alongside *The Rivers Sing* piece, the Koorie Heritage Trust hosted artist conversations and cast a projection onto Federation Square throughout the week. The theme of National Reconciliation Week for 2021 is “More than a word. Reconciliation takes action”, which urges people to focus on taking action to achieve equality between indigenous and non-indigenous people. Mr Mosby said too often the onus of reconciliation was put onto the indigenous community. “It's up to non-indigenous people to actually do the work and put reconciliation into action,” Mr Mosby said. This year marks 20 years since Reconciliation Australia was established in 2001 ●

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

## PARKVILLE GARDENS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION


# News from Parkville Gardens – June 2021

### *This bulletin from Parkville Gardens begins with good news.*

As a result of advocacy from our local member, Tim Read MP, the Victorian Government has allocated increased funding for our bus service. Thanks Tim, much appreciated! What this will translate to in practical terms remains to be seen, but any increase to the current limited service is most welcome. Like all Melburnians, the Residents' Association is relieved that COVID lockdown restrictions have been eased, however it's all but certain that the planned association dinner at the Reggio Calabria Club on the night of Friday, June 25 will be delayed. Please check our Facebook page ([facebook.com/groups/pgrass](https://facebook.com/groups/pgrass)) for updates on this. We are also waiting for the construction of the latest apartment tower at the southern end of Galada Ave. Here is what we learned from our meeting with representatives from the joint venture partners, Citta and Frasers, and the building owner and manager, Housing First. It will be 16 storeys, with 151 apartments. Nearly 100 will be one-bedroom units for older people, the remainder will be two-bedroom for couples and families. The entire building will be dedicated to social housing. State government funding has enabled Housing First to purchase the building from the developers. The ground floor will include a communal space for community development activities. There will be 112 car parking spaces. All rooms will be wheelchair accessible. Construction is expected to begin sometime in July, with completion either late 2022 or early 2023. The Residents' Association has three concerns arising from this building. The first is the suitability of Parkville Gardens for social housing on this scale. The neighbourhood has many wonderful features but none of the facilities that would support social housing clients – no shops, no services, no community centre and limited public transport. The nearest supermarket is kilometres away. These are all grounds for

querying the wisdom of locating social housing in the area without addressing its deficiencies for the new residents. The second is the scale of the building. The post-2006 Commonwealth Games planning scheme for the precinct foresaw a row of high-rise apartment blocks bordering on CityLink. This was amended in 2017 to allow for larger-scale development. Both the association and the City of Melbourne objected to this amendment unsuccessfully. As a result, it is still envisaged that a further three high towers will be built to the detriment of the area and one of Melbourne's most precious assets, Royal Park. This brings up the third issue, and that is the fact that for planning purposes Parkville Gardens remains under the control of the Minister for Planning, not the City of Melbourne. This deprives local residents of the protection of planning protocols, community consultation and avenues of appeal. This situation is long overdue for change. To end on a cheerful note, on May 22 local resident Ajith Vasanthakumar organised a very successful morning tea in Cade Square to raise funds for the Cancer Council (see report elsewhere in this edition). The sun shone out of a clear blue sky, the neighbourly spirit was warm, and the treats all too tempting. Thanks, Ajith! ●

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



Tom Knowles

TOM KNOWLES IS THE PRESIDENT OF PARKVILLE GARDENS ASSOCIATION.

PRESIDENT@PGRA.ORG.AU





# Faces of North West City

*What local business/restaurant do you recommend and which particular product/dish?*



**JOVANA**  
My favourite local business is a vegan restaurant called ARGİ (512 Macaulay Rd). I often have a vegan Banh Mi and coffee there.



**MOLLY**  
My favourite is Melba Social (524 Macaulay Rd) and all of the dishes there are good!



**CAT**  
My favourite local business that I like to support is Natopia. They sell beautiful comfy leggings.



**VOLKER**  
It's got to be the local pizza shop: Clay Oven, they make great woodfired gourmet pizzas and delicious dressings for salads. My favourite pizza here is "GAMBERI", which comes with king prawns and spinach!

THE KENSINGTON ASSOCIATION

## Community consultation (part one)

“Not a very sexy topic, but very important!”

Both “consultation” and “representation” have a myriad of ways in which the quality can be compromised. As chairperson of the Kensington Association I often “represent” our members in some way, and sometimes I interrogate myself about whether what I say is a personal view or “representing” an organisation perspective; in other words have I consulted adequately, or do I know what members think? Frankly, I often feel I’ve expressed a personal view for two main reasons ...

1. I can’t repeatedly ring around and test the mood for each issue (at some point all “reps” need to show leadership, don’t they).
  2. Yes, I sometimes do (rightly or wrongly) think I know what members will think; although the reality is clearly that not all members will think the same way.
- Oh, to be a benevolent dictator! (joking ... I think/hope).
- I’m writing this as a small-fry rep of a community organisation of volunteers. What about our local political reps who do more big-time stuff – Adam Bandt, Ellen Sandell and Rohan Leppert

for example? How do they manage? They’d have little time to “sweat the small stuff”! We wish them well in their juggling of time, ethics and dilemmas – bless their hearts! By the way, please don’t get the idea I’m devaluing the work that we do at the Kensington Association; I could argue that we are the link closest to the “coal-face”, so very important, and we should be able to do our “reps” and “consults” more effectively.

Actually, come to think of it – Kensington Association memberships are coming up for renewal – support us, join us! Hold us to account! There’s strength in numbers!

So, what does quality consultation look like? During the past month or so I’ve been a party to consultation several times. Let me tell you three of four stories that come to mind. The first was a couple of months ago when I sat down with reps from across Melbourne, together with the City of Melbourne CEO, the Lord Mayor Sally Capp, and some other elected councillors; we looked at the bigger picture across the city and prioritised a number of predetermined categories. We were helping to shape the council plans for the next year (and the next four years); other similar gatherings had already taken place across the city. How was that as a consultation? The cynics will say it’s just a “box-ticking exercise”! What do I say? On this I sit on the fence a little. I’m a bit cynical, but I also think that such consultations, together with what we can contribute via “Participate Melbourne” online, are a meaningful and valuable efforts to consult with the community. Certainly, the internet has opened up many ways in which good consultation can happen.

Two or three weeks ago I organised a “consultation” with some City of Melbourne planners. In 2020 the association had asked for further

consultation on new “built form controls” that will come into effect later in 2021. For those not up with the jargon, “built form controls” are supposed to guide developers as to what they can and can’t do in relation to the size and shape of building developments. There were three planners and 12 to 15 of us from the association. How was it as a consult? Well, speaking personally (but I do know my feelings were shared by some other members), the three planners were professional and clear in helping us understand some of the ramifications of the proposed new controls. One also felt that they were doing their job sincerely in the best way possible within certain parameters; but was it a consultation? I cannot honestly say it was. It was information sharing, but they were in no position – through no fault of their own – to modify or change the proposed controls. This illustrates two or three ways that consultations lose quality. First, when those doing the consulting have no power to modify what they are sharing. Second, when the information being shared is quite complex and has itself been significantly workshopped beforehand, and third, there is commonly a timeline involved which may preclude further modification of what is being “consulted” about.

Very recently I hooked up in a fairly regular meeting – via Zoom of course – with the Lord Mayor Sally Capp, together with chair-people from other similar community organisations. Sally addressed us briefly, and then we each had about five minutes to raise our local issues of concern. I find these hook-ups are usually quite interesting and useful in order to gain a wider perspective of the diverse community issues, and I’m sure it serves valuable purposes for Sally Capp. She can test the mood of the

community and respond to first-hand issues of concern, and she is also seen to be listening and consulting. She does it well – professionally and sincerely one feels. How successful was this as a consultation? For me, having five minutes to voice concerns about issues (between others having their five minutes) feels too shallow and brief to be useful. Also, believe it or not, many of the issues the association is concerned about fall outside the scope of the Lord Mayor’s ability to directly influence – big ticket items like population, traffic controls, and development policy. All of these fall more into the state government basket.

A fourth consultation story, between the Kensington Association and the Assemble developers, deserves more attention, so I’ll postpone it until next month; it’s an interesting story. It illustrates the myriad variables that make consultation so challenging.

See community consultation (part two) ... next month! ●

**For more information:**  
[kensingtonassociation.org](https://kensingtonassociation.org)



**Simon Harvey**  
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INFO@KENSINGTONASSOCIATION.ORG.AU



# Healthy habits, happy animals

*How do you get a giant tortoise to step on to scales to be weighed? How does an elephant learn to lift its feet for a nail trim? How can we teach a gorilla to present their shoulder for an injection?*

WORDS BY Bianca  
ANIMAL TRAINING COORDINATOR

As Melbourne Zoo's animal training coordinator, these are the questions I'm asking myself every day. In my job I get to work with animals of all shapes and sizes, and I reckon it's the best job at the zoo!

At the moment I am working with orang-utans, a rhinoceros iguana, some Tasmanian devils, a snow leopard, elephants, wombats, a cormorant, a fur seal and so much more. My job is to manage all the animal training programs happening at the zoo and coach our keepers in those programs. Most of what we are doing is teaching animals to voluntarily participate in their own healthcare.

Yep, our animals are learning how to keep themselves healthy! And a lot of this training happens out on display around the zoo grounds. So next time you're at the zoo, feel free to stop and watch one of our training sessions.

We do a lot of healthcare training at the zoo. It's one of the main reasons we have so many training programs, because we want the animals to be active participants in their own healthcare. We want them to have a voice, and we want them to have choice and control over participating in those sessions.

We know that over the course of an animal's life they will need to visit the vets – maybe for a vaccination, for a blood draw, for an ultrasound or to receive antibiotics or another medication. Vets and keepers also need to keep an eye on the weight of animals so they can monitor their health and calculate any medicine dosages.

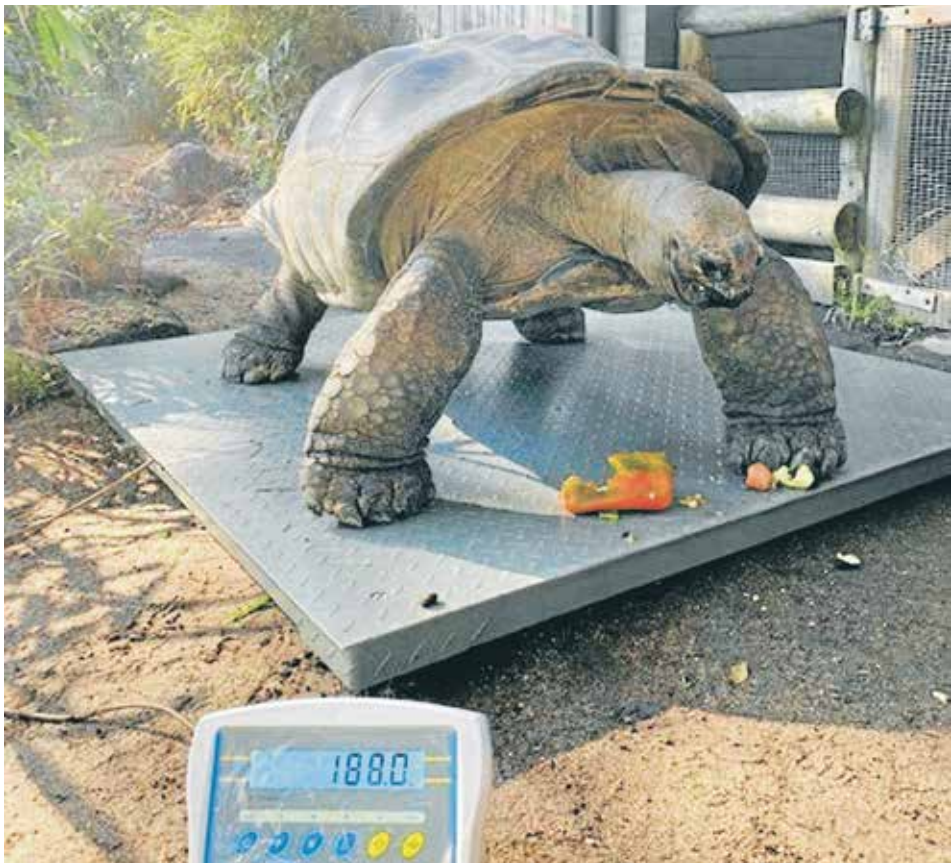
When animals choose to participate in their own healthcare it means we don't need to restrain them, we don't need nets and we don't need darts for them to get that anaesthetic, that medicine, that check-up or that weigh-in.

So how do we achieve this?

I can't talk to animals, but the way I communicate with animals is by observing their behaviour, and reading what their behaviour is telling me. I think of behaviour as an animal's superpower. Simple things like setting up a safe, natural environment for training or providing some of their favourite foods lets us unlock their behaviour superpower to achieve an important healthcare outcome. That's where our training programs come in. And you wouldn't believe how quickly our animals learn! I have been working with animals for years and I am still constantly amazed by them.

Sometimes a behaviour we think might take months to learn – like a penguin presenting its nail for a trim, or a giraffe choosing to lower its head for an tooth X-ray – takes just a few weeks, or perhaps even less. With the help of positive reinforcement, our animals are such amazing learners.

The key to this is trust. It's like a bank account. We put a lot of deposits in the trust account by giving them control during training. Our animals always have the choice to leave a training session, they are never punished if they choose not to participate, they will still get their balanced diet even if they don't take part. But we find that sometimes it only takes a



couple of training sessions to build up enough trust for them to voluntarily participate, and often enthusiastically. We just literally step back and watch them step on to the scales, or present that body part to the vet. And only then do we step in with special food items to positively reinforce that behaviour.

It's always important to remember that just as with us humans, all animals are individuals. Not all meerkats behave in the same way. Not all Tasmanian devils learn at the same pace. When we are working with animals it's always a study of one, that one animal in that one context at one point in time. And we always respect our

animals as individuals. They're all different and we're always learning.

I was asked recently what I have learnt from working with animals over the years. A big thing is that I've learnt never to underestimate them. Our animals are learning at an extraordinary rate, a rate that often surprises and delights me. Our animals show us that when we give them choice and control and when there is positive reinforcement, then we see learning go through the roof, and animals progressing so much more quickly than we anticipated. It's often a case of us trying to keep up with them! ●

## HISTORY

# Laurie Shipp – a childhood in North Melbourne in the depression years

*The following article is based on memoirs that Laurie Shipp completed in 2011. He died in April 2020.*

WORDS BY Felicity Jack

Laurie was born in 1929, the year that Wall Street crashed and set off a worldwide depression. By 1932, the height of the depression, Australia's unemployment rate was 32 per cent. But Laurie was fortunate that his father, a senior postman and caretaker of Errol Street Post Office, had a secure job and spacious accommodation above his workplace.

Laurie appears to have enjoyed a childhood with few constraints. He was friends with Jock McPherson, the caretaker of the adjacent Town Hall, who allowed him access to its many rooms and corridors. He used the large hall to successfully try out his first model aeroplane, a small wire and fabric construction driven by a rubber band.

He felt great trepidation when he climbed to the top of the clock tower, having to negotiate steep stairs and ladders in the dimly lit, dusty structure through a series of levels. He aimed to time his climb to avoid the scary, deafening chime of the striking clock. The clockwork was a point of wonder to his young eyes, with huge gears slowly rotating, and levers poised for their next move. The culmination, of course, was to emerge through the trapdoor on to the

platform at the top of tower where a superb view unfolded.

He did not have to climb the tower to gain a magnificent view because the windows of his apartment gave a sweeping view from Mount Macedon to Fishermans Bend. It also took in the Flemington Racecourse. Although he could only have been five in 1934, he recalled having an excellent view of Scott and Black landing at Flemington Racecourse after winning the MacRobertson Air Race from England to Australia to celebrate Victoria's Centenary. The brilliant red aircraft was clearly visible from his front windows as it came in to land.

Laurie was able to access the roof of the building through a high window in the unit passageway that left him free to roam the roofs of the buildings between Queensberry and Raglan streets. He spent many hours on the roof watching the activities at Fishermans Bend government aircraft factory where, during the Second World War, American aircraft were being assembled and tested before operation in the Pacific.

The Town Hall held one of the two large movie theatres in the vicinity. The second was the Loco in Victoria St. A third theatre, the Imperial Palace in Errol St, was destroyed by fire in 1930 and never reopened. Saturday matinees were a feature of Laurie's week, but on hot days the theatre doors remained open, and he was able to view many free films.

Laurie recalled that the projection box was a cantilevered shack attached to the inside rear wall of the main hall, with access by a ladder fixed to the wall. Entry was through a trap door



▲ Laurie Shipp aged about 12 years old.

in the floor. One night the projectionist fell ill, but with no assistance available, he was forced to keep climbing up and down the ladder in between the showing of slides that were a precursor to the first film. Laurie was called on to help. To give himself time to recover, the projectionist placed fresh slides in the slide transport of the projector every few minutes, and instructed Laurie to count slowly to 30 and keep moving the slide transport from side to side. He could just reach the slide transport by standing on the tips of his toes.

One of the features of life in North Melbourne in the '30s was Friday night shopping. A gala atmosphere pervaded Errol St as all shops remained open with lights blazing for the crowds of people moving up and down. Laurie can clearly remember "an old Chinaman" carrying cans of dim sims on each end of a long pole

as part of the scene, stopping now and again to sell a few.

One of Errol St's main attractions was Fitzgerald's Department Store, and buses used to run regularly from the North Melbourne Railway Station as well as from the General Post Office in central Melbourne. Laurie remembers it as huge, busy, and interesting, particularly at Christmas time when Father Christmas was in attendance. He spent hours watching the little containers on cables being shot off by the salespeople to carry money up to the cashiers on the mezzanine floor and sliding back down the cables again carrying the sales dockets and change.

The family shopped at the Victoria Market with the old family wicker pram (minus hood) and came home with fruit, vegetables, freshly roasted peanuts and, if finances allowed, a live chicken and/or crayfish.

The next-door Mechanics Institute (now the North Melbourne Library) was often used for various functions. During the depression years this provided warmth and shelter for those who could not afford to heat their homes, and it also provided entertainment in the way of billiards. Laurie complained that the noise of the play would often keep him awake at night.

Laurie played football for North Melbourne from 1949 to 1951 and later three seasons for Yallourn in the Latrobe Valley Football League where he worked for many years as an engineer. Although he lived elsewhere, he maintained a close contact with North Melbourne for the rest of his life.

### Felicity Jack

Felicity has been a member of the Hotham History Project since it began in 1995. You can join through the website: [hothamhistoryproject.org.au](http://hothamhistoryproject.org.au)

The Hotham History Project is interested in the stories of the people and places of North and West Melbourne. We are keen to involve people in our activities and meet regularly for walks and talks. We maintain a website that is full of historical interest ●



VANISH



▲ Charlotte Smith, VANISH manager.

VANISH – who we are

Adopted people, people who lived in children’s institutions, donor conceived people, mothers and fathers separated from their child, donor parents, siblings and other relatives all use the services of VANISH, a charity established three decades ago.

VANISH was originally the Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help, set up when the new *Adoption Act 1984* gave adopted people the right to access their adoption information and original birth certificate. At that time thousands of adopted people applied for their records and before too long the Department of Community Services had an 11-year waiting list. It was then that a group of individuals founded VANISH, believing there was a need for a dedicated service run by and for people affected by adoption. Over the years the service expanded to include searching on behalf of forgotten Australians (also known as care leavers) and people affected by donor conception.

In 32 years VANISH has undertaken more than 31,000 searches. Each person who comes to VANISH has their own unique story and reason for searching. Some just come for support. The ways in which adoption, state wardship and donor conception affects people’s lives is not well understood, which is why they are drawn to a specialist service run by people who can empathise.

The majority of people asking VANISH to find their family are adopted people. Some want to search as soon as they turn 18, but it is more common for them to start searching in their middle years, or even in their 60s and 70s. People who have just found out they are adopted, or donor conceived come for help to find out the truth about their origins, or because they need medical information. Mothers, fathers, siblings and other family members search too, for a range of reasons but usually because they are seeking connection or reconnection. People

who come for support might be dealing with a significant change such as having been contacted by their adult child and not knowing how to respond or build a relationship.

VANISH results can be life changing. Assisting people to piece together their identity or find their parent or long-lost child is possibly the most rewarding job there is. It is very common for people to say they are surprised by the strong emotions that arise when they search or are found, so having a dedicated support service is extremely helpful. Yet it is not all rosy – there are situations that can cause disappointment and sadness, for example when a parent or child has died, or does not want contact, or when it is revealed that the adoption was unethical, even illegal, and relatives were left traumatised and grieving.

From 1928 to 1984 there were around 64,000 adoptions recorded in Victoria with the peak being in the 1970s. It is now clear that many of these adoptions were not arranged with the informed consent of the parents. A Senate Inquiry in 2011 found that forced adoptions occurred throughout Australia as a result of policies and practices essentially established to remove infants from unmarried mothers and give them to married couples.

On October 25, 2012 the Victorian Parliament offered an apology for Past Adoption Practices. On March 21, 2013 then Prime Minister Julia Gillard delivered the National Apology for Forced Adoptions. The Great Hall was packed; it was an incredibly moving event.

Yet apologies are rarely enough, and now the Victorian Parliament is undertaking an Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoptions. Through submissions and hearings, the Legal and Social Issues Committee have heard from mothers who were subjected to extreme emotional, psychological and physical pressure to consent to their child being adopted, and who have suffered lifelong impacts as a result. The

committee has also heard from adopted people about the complex grief, identity confusion, loneliness and other ways they have been affected by being separated from their mother and family and being raised by strangers. The committee has heard from only one father so far, but research shows that fathers also suffer the loss of their child and struggle with the repercussions over their lifetimes.

The secrecy and silence surrounding closed adoptions meant that grief was kept private, or deeply buried and denied. The expectation that a person should recover and be fine resulted in shame and self-blame for many. This is why it is so important that the voices of people affected by adoption be heard and that support services be provided. It is also why some are calling for justice and reparation.

It takes a lot of courage to speak about subjects which have been covered up or considered taboo for decades. It also takes a lot of courage to apply for one’s records and undertake a search. Mothers were often told they should forget about their child, move on with their lives and never attempt to make contact because that could ruin the child’s life. Adopted people were often told that their parents did not want them, or were not fit parents, or even stories like their parents died in a car crash. So, it is not surprising that people take time building up the courage to do a search and find out the truth. If and when they do, VANISH is always ready to help.

To contact VANISH call 1300 826 474 or email [info@vanish.org.au](mailto:info@vanish.org.au) ●

For more information or to donate visit: [vanish.org.au](http://vanish.org.au)

“In a quiet office nestled among cafes and apartments in North Melbourne, a small, dedicated family tracing team help people find relatives they have either never met or have not seen for decades.”



Pet’s Corner

Penni stays in her lane

North West City News caught up with Lucy and her pet Jack Russell, Penni, in Kensington.



WORDS BY John Tadigiri

Born a country dog, Penni now lives with Lucy in the big smoke with many of the traits we associate with inner-city living. She’s a fussy eater with an appetite for kangaroo and lamb and enjoys a leisurely stroll in the park. But she’s not a fan of “pats or cats”.

“If I take Penni for a walk, it kind of relieves her and makes her an easier dog to handle. But we need to keep reminding people that she is an anxious dog. So, she is not as social as you’d expect most of the dogs to be,” Lucy said.

“So, that’s why we have to take this specific lead that says ‘Caution’; to let people know that she’s not a dog that you can go up to and pat.

But most people won’t take any notice of the lettering on the lead. She doesn’t really like pats or cats.”

As a country dog, Lucy said Penni was always at her happiest whenever they went on regional day trips.

“She’s a country-born dog, so whenever we take her to the country, she’s the happiest we ever see her. Plus, we have some special moments where we’ve been able to see our friend up in the country where we got her from, and Penni has been able to reconnect with her mum a few times,” Lucy said.

“Penni never forgets her mum, she gets excited every time she sees her.” ●

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# Sharing our surplus

## What does this mean?

In permaculture there are three ethics ...

1. Care for the Earth;
2. Care for people; and
3. Fair share - limit your consumption and share your surplus.

Bill Mollison and David Holmgren first developed these in 1978 and since then they have been expanded on and interpreted in many ways.

These principles were designed by evaluating long-lived indigenous, sustainable civilisations. One of the things that kept these civilisations existing for so long was that they had ethics to guide them in the decisions and actions they made.

### Inequality in surplus

Bill Mollison said that if we took more than our need of resources, we were taking from someone else, and that we needed to take responsibility to set our own limits. How do we recognise when we move from need to over consumption?

Today trillions of dollars of wealth are in the hands of a very small group of people, predominantly men, who are increasing their wealth exponentially often at the expense of the planet and others. Trying to get the wealthy to share their surplus in this way is something I have pondered.

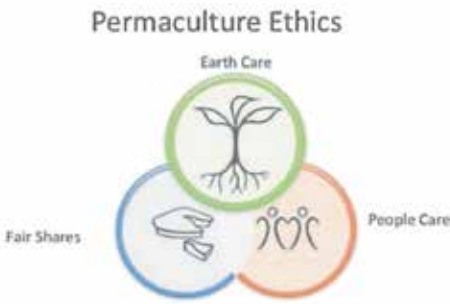
Many governments are fuelling this inequality crisis by massively under taxing corporations and wealthy individuals, yet underfunding vital public services, leaving the rest of us to shoulder the taxes and prop up these services – which impacts on our surplus.

### Identifying our surplus to share

In permaculture the icon that represents “sharing your surplus” is a pie and a slice of it represents the taking of what we need and sharing what we don’t, recognising that there are limits to how much we can give and how much we can take.

A definition of sharing is the joint use of a resource or space, it is the process of dividing and distributing and can actually mean giving something as an outright gift. This is different to the share economy that monetises surplus/sharing.

Your surplus can include physical as well as other assets – money, time, expertise,



knowledge, creative gifts, car, tools, food, flowers from your garden, seeds, space in your home, compost, organic food scraps, clothes, land, back garden, washing machine, electric goods.

At times we receive more than we need, an abundance. For example an established fruit tree is likely to produce more fruit at a particular time or season that we can eat, preserve and/or use so we can share the bounty with others in our community.

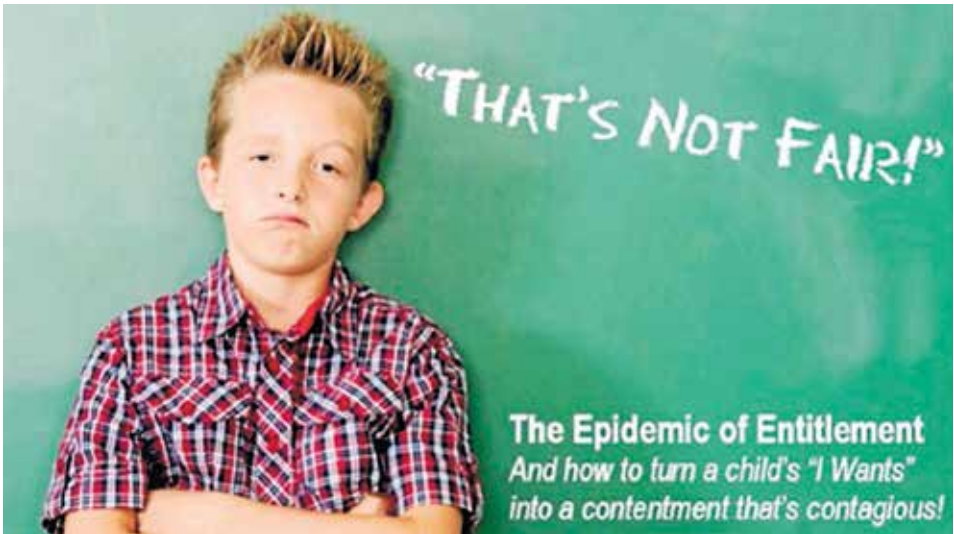
### Surplus versus waste

Once we set limits to our need, we can identify what extra we have and distribute this so we don’t add to the waste stream.

In permaculture we talk about waste in terms of systems – anything that overflows from our system that cannot be used/shared elsewhere creates waste. The responsibility is to then to adjust our systems accordingly and return excess back to where it came from.

Our current wasteful commercialised food system is an example of how food is produced using extreme amounts of fossil fuels and chemicals that degrade land and pollute our waterways in the process. The excess produced is then distributed to those in our communities labeled “vulnerable and food insecure”. This food often being of poor quality containing many food miles and chemicals to keep it “looking good”.

Instead of these organisations discarding their excess poor-quality food in our neighbourhoods (increasing fossil fuels and carbon emissions at each point) they should rather adjust their systems accordingly to produce less, thereby reducing their damage to our planet and freeing up resources to support local food solutions to feed people with nutrient-rich, chemical-free and low-mile’s food.



### How and where can we redistribute our surplus

Our front gate is a place where excess food can be placed with a simple sign saying, “help yourself”. There is a food app in England called OLIO where people with extra food post a picture online for anyone to pick up – it’s a simple gift.

There are many online networks where things can be shared or given away. Volunteering has always been a way to share our surplus time. The “open source way” is an avenue to share technology expertise.

Your own neighbourhood is a smart place to start sharing your surplus. Even spare space in backyards is shared with locals who don’t have any space to grow food.

Money is an easy one to redistribute – think about using your surplus money to go directly to those who need it and in activities, which empower. Microfinance without big interest rates allows our fellow humans to lift themselves out of their situation – sometimes there because

of our taking more than our needs. Be wary of paying for corporate hierarchical structures of NGOs and charities.

During lockdown I was reintroduced to the idea of tithing.

By finding the right balance of need and surplus in our own lives we provide positive examples for others, so that they can find their own balance. By focusing on what is appropriate for us to do, rather than what others should do, “we stay in our own lane”.

Collectively, the majority of us can take easy steps to rebalance inequality with a simple act of sharing with others ●



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# Digging done for Metro Tunnel mega machines

*Four huge tunnel boring machines (TBMs) have finished 20 months of digging under Melbourne to create two nine-kilometre-long rail tunnels for the Metro Tunnel Project.*

The incredible feat of engineering included tunnelling just 1.5m underneath the City Loop as trains continued to run, as well as digging 12 metres under the Yarra and seven metres below the Burnley Tunnel.

TBM Meg recently arrived at the Town Hall Station site 25 metres under Swanston and Collins streets, following the breakthroughs of Millie, Joan and Alice.

TBMs Joan and Meg dug their final 670 metres under Swanston St from the State Library Station site over the past three months. TBMs Millie and Alice began tunnelling in December to complete their final 1.8km leg under St Kilda Rd and the Yarra River.

It’s been a huge undertaking for the four machines, which have tunnelled on six separate legs between Kensington and South Yarra, installing more than 55,000 curved concrete segments to create a waterproof tunnel lining.

The TBMs have dug as deep as 40 metres below ground (under the northern end of Swanston St) and tunnelled through basalt rock, gravel and silt and clay. After starting work progressively from August 2019, the TBMs tunnelled an average of 90 metres a week, with TBM Alice recording the best rate of 195 metres in a single week.

The machines have removed 600,000 cubic metres of rock and soil, or around one third of the total 1.8 million cubic metres to be excavated for the entire project – enough to fill the MCG 1.2 times.

While the TBMs have finished the rail tunnels between the project’s five stations, road headers – huge digging machines excavating the CBD station caverns – are still at work digging the final section of tunnels alongside the platforms at Town Hall Station.

With their work in Melbourne finished, the



four TBMs are being dismantled underground and retrieved, with the “skin” of each TBM shield to remain in the tunnels to form part of the permanent lining. The remaining components will be assessed for potential reuse on other tunnelling projects.

Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan said, “The Metro Tunnel will connect key locations including the Parkville medical and education precinct, St Kilda Rd and the Arden Precinct to the rail network for the first time and is supporting thousands of jobs.”

Work on the Metro Tunnel and other critical infrastructure projects has continued during restrictions. To ensure the safety of all workers and the community, all work undertaken operates under a COVID-safe plan ●

**For more information visit:**  
[metrotunnel.vic.gov.au](http://metrotunnel.vic.gov.au)



STREET STUDIO

Lockdown in Kensington

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *John Tadigiri*  
COMMUNITY

North West City News  
*photographer John Tadigiri*  
*roamed Kensington during*  
*the June lockdown to see what*  
*locals were up to.*



ARTS HOUSE

Humanities and tech collides in new production

WORDS BY *Ellen Blake*  
ARTS & CULTURE

Humanity and technology collide in new Arts House production Melbourne theatre company Chamber Made is readying to perform their new production *SYSTEM\_ERROR* at the Arts House in the North Melbourne Town Hall.

*SYSTEM\_ERROR* explores the increasingly dependent relationship between people and technology while contemplating the imperfections of humanity.

Chamber Made artistic director and performance-maker Tamara Saulwick, whose career in the theatre spans more than 20 years, said the production explored the relationship between bodies and technology.

“In the work, we are exploring a fascination with the inherent failings in all systems, whether they be biological or technological,” Ms Saulwick said.

*SYSTEM\_ERROR* is centred around a custom-made technical system designed by contemporary dance-maker, composer and instrument designer Alisdair Macindoe.

The system functions as a live mixing circuit, with hundreds of metres of electrically conductive tape placed across the performance floor.

In the show, performers act as conductors through touch to trigger a soundscape and data visuals on a large projection screen.

“Since a young age, I have always enjoyed creating new systems for communication and expression by deconstructing musical instruments and electronic devices. The sound design for this project is a continuation of that compulsion,” Mr Macindoe said.

Arts House artistic director, Emily Sexton, said *SYSTEM\_ERROR* was a fusion of art forms.

“For many years, Chamber Made has



▲ The performance include hundreds of metres of electrically conductive, interactive tape placed around the stage.

nurtured this very exciting pairing that builds on their extraordinary knowledge and practice. This beautiful tactile instrument seems like it has trapped two people inside a computer network as they contemplate memory, connection, relationships and mortality,” Ms Sexton said.

The production runs from the July 7 to 11 at the Arts House in the North Melbourne Town Hall. The show will start at 7.30pm on

Wednesday to Saturday, while the Sunday performance will begin at 5pm.

As part of its *Salons* series, Chamber Made will also host a discussion about *SYSTEM\_ERROR* at Arts House on June 30. The artists will speak on the collaborative process of creating the work, including a demonstration of the instrument, projections and technology ●

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and mortality.*



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







# RECYCLING ORGANIC WASTE



We're reducing waste going to landfill with our new weekly food and garden waste collection

**Put food and garden waste to good use with the City of Melbourne's new organic waste collection. Coffee grounds, banana peels, even lawn clippings can all be composted to benefit Melbourne's parks and gardens.**

We've listened to the community's concerns around recycling and from June we are introducing a food and garden organic waste collection service - an important step in addressing climate change impacts. We'll begin by supplying more than 9000 single-unit properties and single-storey apartment blocks with new food and garden organic waste bins.

Increased recycling will help us reduce emissions citywide, and bring us closer to a circular economy, which aims to eliminate waste by reusing and recycling resources.

Organic material disposed of in landfill also generates methane, a gas that has a climate change impact 25 times greater than carbon dioxide. That's why it's important we process this organic material differently.

From June, residents in single unit properties, such as a house or townhouse, and single storey apartment blocks of fewer than 30 dwellings will receive:

- A new lime green-lidded food and garden organic waste wheelie bin (120-litre)
- a kitchen caddy for collection of food scraps
- a roll of 52 compostable caddy liners to avoid bin odours.

This will be a staged approach, and we'll work with the community to find innovative ways to offer this service to multiple level apartment buildings and highrise Melbourne.

## COLLECTIONS FREQUENCY

Did you know most 240L recycling bins collected with the current weekly service are only half-full?

With this data, when households receive a food and garden organic waste wheelie bin, there will also be improvements to their overall kerbside collection service - recycling collection will shift to fortnightly.

Any household with a smaller bin will be able to upgrade their recycling bin to 240L.

For more information, visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/foodgardenwaste](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/foodgardenwaste)

## IN-BRIEF

### NO MORE LIBRARY FINES

In good news for library users, City of Melbourne libraries will no longer fine people for overdue items. During last year's lockdowns all library fines were put on hold - and this will continue indefinitely to make sure everyone in the community can enjoy our library services. All borrowers are encouraged to continue to return items by the return date.

### DREAM FACTORY

From Aussie classics to contemporary concept cars, this exhibition captures the story of design and innovation at General Motors Holden in Fishermans Bend, home to Melbourne's most successful city-based automotive factory. Visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/dreamfactory](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/dreamfactory)

### VIRTUAL VISITOR HUB

Planning a trip to the city? Drop a line to our virtual visitor hub for local recommendations on how to make the most of your time in Melbourne. Visit [whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au/visitor-info](https://whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au/visitor-info)

### BUSINESS WORKSHOPS

If you're an inner city small business owner in Melbourne's city centre, Docklands or Southbank, explore our virtual and in-person workshops in June. Get support with marketing, budgeting, resilience and change and digital transformation, and more. To find out more contact our Business Concierge Service on 9658 9658 (press 1 for business) or visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/innercitysupport](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/innercitysupport)

### CITY BATHS RESTORED

Works are underway at Melbourne's oldest bathing site, the Melbourne City Baths, to restore the brickworks, replace roof tiling and repair the timber ceiling planks in the pool halls. These works will help preserve the building for future generations.

### 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](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/aboutcouncil)

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

### Connect with us

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[@cityofmelbourne](https://www.twitter.com/cityofmelbourne)



## OLDER PEOPLE CONNECT

**Stay active and connected with City of Melbourne programs for older residents. Whatever your preferred pace, explore our social and recreational activities to stay healthy and meet others.**

### Connect Café

Plan a visit to Connect Café, a new series of free weekly technology support sessions at South Yarra Senior Citizens Centre (66 Toorak Road West, South Yarra).

You'll be joined by tech experts from Lively who can provide support in English, Cantonese, Mandarin and Hindi. The sessions are designed to help people learn new skills in a one-on-one setting. Participants can bring their own device or use one that is provided.

You'll find help with:

- connecting to wi-fi
- setting up and using email
- video chatting with friends and family
- finding information about services
- learning about what is happening in the neighbourhood and more.

### Chair yoga and seated dance

Enjoy an hour of gentle stretching, breathing and relaxation with chair yoga. Or try moving to music at a free social seated dance class at Kathleen

Syme Library and Community Centre (251 Faraday Street, Melbourne). No prior experience necessary and all abilities welcome.

### Tai Chi and tea

Experience the health benefits of Tai Chi overlooking Fawkner Park followed by a social morning tea at the South Yarra Senior Citizens Centre.

### Advance Care planning

Interested in making an Advance Care plan but unsure where to start? Helen Carr from Carers Victoria will lead a two-part workshop at Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre

to explore the care you might want if you became seriously ill.

The program is open to families and carers or anyone wanting to gain a greater understanding of Advance Care planning. Explore health care options and discuss how to appoint a Medical Treatment Decision Maker, complete an Advance Care directive, and more. This is a relaxed, honest and safe space to talk about how you can stay in charge in later life.

To register and book for any of these activities please contact Healthy Ageing on 9658 9190 or email [healthyageing@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:healthyageing@melbourne.vic.gov.au)



Experience the health benefits of Tai Chi