

# NORTH WEST CITY NEWS

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Puzzles & Trivia - P22



Connecting community

Photo by John Tadigiri

Mohamed Sudi, a spoken word artist from Somalia, will share stories through poetry at the upcoming Melbourne Fringe Festival, enthraling audiences with a variety of tales from his homeland and the world. *Full story on page 7.*

## Businesses ready “to jump into action”

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
BUSINESS

Melbourne Lord Mayor Sally Capp says businesses in lockdown are at “the end of their tether” and has called for a clearer timeframe so they can plan to reopen.

Cr Capp said there needed to be more “transparency and guidance” from the state government in relation to the road map out of the extended lockdown as it was only heightening the uncertainty faced by businesses.

“Our traders are not demanding that our city reopens tomorrow,” she said. “All they are asking for is a timeframe to work towards. They cannot open their doors at a moment’s notice, nor can an event relaunch overnight.”

“Planning for reopening will do more than just lift spirits and provide financial certainty. It will play a key role in improving the emotional wellbeing of traders.”

“We need to discuss and determine the pathway out of lockdown that minimises the health risk but maximises economic and social activity.”

“Our businesses are ready and waiting to jump into action as soon as a roadmap is in place,” Cr Capp said.

“Whatever the health requirements, small businesses will innovate and adjust. But to do that, they need transparency and guidance from the state government at this critical time.”

Among those reeling was Sia Kaveh, who was forced to close his Hotham Juice and Gelati shop in North Melbourne for two months after revenue dried up.

“We are waiting to see if the customers are going to walk in,” he said after reopening his Errol St shop on September 7. “If not, I’ll have to completely shut it down and move out from this shop.”

*Continued on page 3.*

## Council delivers on promise to buy new parkland in Kensington

*After eight years of speculation and difficulty, the City of Melbourne has delivered on its 2013 pledge to purchase land in Kensington to give local families some much-needed open space to enjoy.*

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The land at 70-90 Chelmsford St was purchased for \$5 million and will be converted to a public park within the Macaulay precinct as part of the council’s strategy to create and expand green space across the city.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the land would create a new space for parents to take their kids and for the community to enjoy nature while helping to manage flooding from the Moonee Ponds Creek.

“Melbourne’s west is particularly low on public open space – that’s why we’re pleased to be taking the next step in turning this site into a place for people to gather and connect, relax and reflect,” she said.

The pledge – established by a Greens motion – to buy “first available” land in the Arden-Macaulay precinct, was first floated by the council’s environmental portfolio lead, Cr Rohan Leppert in 2013.

Cr Leppert said the council had been able to take an active approach to increasing outdoor community space since introducing new open space contribution rates to the Melbourne Planning Scheme in 2016.

He added that every time private land was subdivided, council required a contribution to help fund the purchase of public open spaces.

“In 2015, we invested \$1.7 million to purchase a property adjoining the Hawke and Adderley Park in West Melbourne – allowing us to more than double the size of the local park,” he said.

“And now we have made our first land purchase in the Macaulay precinct, in Kensington. We know that providing open space for a growing population is among the most important roles we will play in coming years.”

“Backyards in the inner city are shrinking and more people are living in apartment blocks. Our plan to expand open space will ensure people are able to enjoy more open spaces for recreation, public gatherings and relaxation.”

The purchase is set to unlock new parkland for a growing population in the upcoming Macaulay Precinct, which is tipped to reach 10,000 residents by 2050, according to the Greens.

The 3648 sqm site abuts the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor, and the project is expected to improve future opportunities for recreation, biodiversity and flood mitigation.

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CONTACT

Suite 108, 198 Harbour Esplanade  
Docklands 3008  
northwestcitynews.com.au  
Tel: 8689 7980

EDITOR

Spencer Fowler Steen

PUBLISHER

Hyperlocal News Pty Ltd  
ABN: 57 623 558 725

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## Final plan for Arden precinct revealed

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
PLANNING

The Victorian Government has released its final Arden Structure Plan for a new precinct in inner-city Melbourne which will be home to 15,000 residents by 2050, but some have criticised the plan as “deeply flawed”.

With the completion of the Metro Tunnel and the new Arden Station by 2025, Arden will become a new destination for Melbourne with 34,000 employees by 2050, according to government figures.

But Deputy Leader of the Victorian Greens and Member for Melbourne Ellen Sandell said it was “outrageous” that the plan included no public or affordable housing, only one primary school, as well as “bulky” and “dense” buildings.

“It is outrageous that the Victorian Labor Government has released a plan for a new suburb of 15,000 people that doesn’t propose any public or affordable housing,” Ms Sandell said.

“The suburb will be home to as many people as Bairnsdale but will only have one primary school and no high school, despite schools around it already being full to the brim.”

“If the government actually did this properly, this new suburb could be designed well, with environmentally sustainable design, proper limits on density and heights, and affordable housing and schools. We don’t want to see another development where property developers make a mint at the expense of the community.”

According to the Victorian Government, the plan commits state and local governments to deliver a “significant” component of social, affordable and key-worker housing for Arden.

It will do this by “encouraging” the provision of six per cent of affordable housing in new developments at a 50 per cent discount to registered housing associations, and by requiring that at least five per cent of all private housing be universally accessible.

The government has also confirmed that a state high school is currently being considered for the Arden-Macaulay area, adjacent to the

Arden precinct.

The Arden Structure Plan includes “active” transport, including new bike lanes, space for trams on several major streets, and the new Arden Station.

Around 13 hectares of open space, along with a one-hectare neighbourhood park, is proposed for the area helping aid flood mitigation.

Pieces of land will also be identified for a new government primary school.

Former Lord Mayor and chairman of the North and West Melbourne Association (NWMA) Kevin Chamberlin said the proposal is “substantial” and would have a “profound” impact on West Melbourne, North Melbourne and Kensington.

“It’s a perfect opportunity to put a development in place that complements the new underground railway outlet, which is at the heart of this precinct,” he said.

“We need to be cautious about height and density and acknowledge the desperate need for public space in this area.”

Mr Chamberlin also said it was an “ideal opportunity” to have a mix of development that provides, in addition to residential, good employment opportunities for the local community.

“The association has for some time been promoting the concept of residential employment opportunities and public transport in this precinct, and it would appear the government has taken this onboard,” he said.

But the Victorian Greens claim that Arden’s built form controls will result in bulky buildings that will “overwhelm” the public domain, resulting in Arden becoming almost as dense as the CBD.

The Greens also highlight a lack of clear planning controls to require environmentally sustainable design for the benefit of workers and residents in the long term.

Victorian Planning Authority CEO Stuart Moseley encouraged everyone to have their say.

To make a submission visit [engage.vic.gov.au/arden](http://engage.vic.gov.au/arden) ●

▲ The site of the new parkland in Macaulay.

## Council delivers on promise to buy new parkland in Kensington

*Continued from page 1.*

North West City News understands open space in Macaulay is difficult to come by, and further locations will only be delivered through land contributions when industrial sites are converted to residential sites.

Alternatively, future bitumen-to-park projects, including potentially near Alfred St by the Boundary Rd Reserve could deliver the much-needed parkland, or strategic site acquisitions.

The purchase was funded through the City of Melbourne’s Public Open Space reserve and builds on the council’s four-year plan to increase green open space.

The City of Melbourne along with super fund CBUS recently opened a new 2000 sqm public open space for Market St alongside the Collins Arch development in the CBD, marking the first park created in the central city since City Square was developed in the 1970s, Cr Capp said ●

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# Businesses ready “to jump into action”

Continued from page 1.

After spending \$300,000 on renovations on his shop which he officially opened in May last year, he said having to close his doors in July was “devastating”.

“There was no money left to run the shop. I cried a lot for the time and money I invested in this shop,” he said, adding he hoped he would be eligible for the state government’s COVID-19 hardship fund.

“You can’t close it and open it all the time. It’s not the way you run a business.”

“It was chaos, it was really, really bad,” Mr Kaveh said, who had to borrow money from friends and family.

During his two months away from the shop Mr Kaveh, a licensed builder, laboured where he could to make ends meet. But even then, he had to isolate for 14 days after a construction site in St Kilda was listed as a COVID exposure site.

He conceded reopening was an “absolute gamble” and was “not at all” confident of a pathway out of lockdowns.

“I have no idea how much we can make – we really cannot manage the business if there is no chance we can see the future of the business.”

Natalie Ragusa, who owns Aerial Studio in Kensington, had been forced to shut the doors of her hair and beauty salon yet again.

“It is so rough for small businesses to survive during this time,” she told *North West City News*.

“During the first couple of lockdowns there was a sense of support and encouragement from everyone and now we are left so deflated.”

Ms Ragusa said while she was grateful for government support it didn’t go far enough in covering the “payments and bills that still arise”.

“We are grateful for the support of our clients who continue to support us. We feel for all of the other small businesses in the area, we really are in this together and we hope that we will see each other out of this,” she said.

Matthew Northcott, manager of Code Black Coffee in North Melbourne, said his team had changed its food menu “to just simple take-away”.

“We just can’t justify purchasing thousands of dollars of food and potentially not selling it,” he said.

Mr Northcott said they had also cut back the hours of their kitchen staff, but was grateful for the continued support of their regular customers.

“We’re lucky that coffee is in demand ... it’s worse for restaurants that focus on dinner service, for example. We’re lucky to stay open at least.”

Kantaro Okada, who runs 279, a café in West Melbourne, said business – from selling only takeaways – was down about 50 per cent on normal trade.



▲ Sia Kaveh, who runs Hotham Juice and Gelati shop in North Melbourne, was forced to close his shop for two months.

“We’re okay for the most part being a café and selling coffee,” he said, but added “It is definitely slower this lockdown.”

“A lot of our staff are happy to stay home which takes the pressure off us having to give them a roster.”

While Mr Okada understood health was a priority, he said uncertainty for businesses meant he could not plan ahead.

“There’s some things we could make a call on if we knew sooner. If this goes on for another six [weeks] we might be out,” he said.

“We’re bleeding slowly but it’s not a big amount of loss. I think we’re much more fortunate than some people.”

Marita Smith, owner of GallerySmith in North Melbourne, said she was “desperate to open” and hoped “some sort of plan” out of lockdown would be announced as it was “very difficult for businesses to look to the future”.

Meanwhile, the federal and state governments offered a new round of support for small and medium businesses most affected by the



▲ Matthew Northcott, manager of Code Black Coffee in North Melbourne, says they have had to cut back staff hours to make ends meet.

*“We are grateful for the support of our clients who continue to support us. We feel for all of the other small businesses in the area, we really are in this together and we hope that we will see each other out of this.”*



extension of restrictions in Melbourne.

This included grants increasing from \$10,000 to \$14,000 for the Small Business COVID Hardship Fund as well as payments of \$2800 per week through the Business Costs Assistance Program.

Under the COVID-19 Disaster Payment, workers who have lost between eight to 20 hours work or a full day of work (over seven days) will get \$450 and \$750 for 20 hours or more of work lost.

Payments of \$5000, \$10,000 and \$20,000 per week will be available to licensed hospitality premises.

Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Paul Guerra said while he welcomed the funding, businesses needed a “clear roadmap that gives certainty around when they can expect to be able to open and trade again”.

The North and West Melbourne Precinct Association was contacted for comment ●



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# Major revamp of Kensington Recreation Centre under way

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

A \$42 million revamp of the Kensington Community Recreation Centre is under way with teams “tackling the mammoth task” of clearing out equipment before bulldozers move in.

It comes as the City of Melbourne unveiled designs earlier this year of the redevelopment which features a 25-metre pool, three indoor multi-sports courts, program rooms, community spaces and more – with works tipped to begin by the end of this year.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the centre had officially closed its doors on August 31 amid the prolonged lockdown to allow time to empty the centre as the council undertook the “next steps in the redevelopment process” which would create 170 jobs.

“We’re incredibly excited the redevelopment of the Kensington Recreation Centre is officially under way,” she said.

“This much-loved community hub has been in operation since 1976 and is in dire need of a revamp to make it bigger and better than ever.”

“As we gear up towards construction we’ll continue to give detailed updates to the community.”

“Behind the scenes our team will be tackling the mammoth task of preparing the centre for demolition, including emptying out the centre, removing a huge array of equipment and infrastructure, and disconnecting services.”

Demolition is “likely” to begin by the end of this year with the project expected to be finished by 2023.

According to the City of Melbourne’s monthly report, the major redevelopment will occur at the same site on the corner of Altona St and Kensington Rd.

“Once a contractor has been appointed for this project, the project team will provide nearby residents with regular updates regarding construction timeframes, any expected impacts



▲ Lord Mayor Sally Capp announces this month that a major revamp of the Kensington Recreation Centre is under way.



▲ Artist’s impressions of the redevelopment of the Kensington Recreation Centre.

and the program of works, including traffic management,” the report said.

When complete, the new centre will house “state-of-the-art facilities” including health and wellness areas, a water play area, a wrap-around café with multiple access points, and accessible change rooms including an accessible change facility.

There will also be three large flexible spaces suitable for a range of classes and community use, and better integration with JJ Holland Park. Sustainability features proposed include solar panels, a new green wall, and double glazing.

In terms of whether the centre’s programs and services would continue while construction took place, the council said it was “undertaking detailed planning to look at opportunities for current members and users”.

In December last year, the City of Melbourne endorsed the final concept design for the new centre and announced as part of this year’s budget that it would invest \$10.2 million in the centre’s redevelopment.

The Lord Mayor thanked the community for its patience, saying “we know the redeveloped Kensington Recreation Centre will become an icon for the area”.

Meanwhile, the City of Melbourne has asked the community to share a special memory or story about Kensington Community Recreation Centre through its “It’s time to get sentimental” callout.

“Maybe you met your partner in the gym, or maybe you discovered your passion for shooting hoops on the court or were involved in a community group which is held at KCRC. Whatever your story is, Kensington Community Recreation Centre would love to hear about it,” the centre said on its website ●

Stories can be emailed to:  
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▲ An artist's impression of a view looking north along Elizabeth St with the redevelopment at the Younghusband Woolstores site. Right: An artist's impression "silo-inspired" facade at the Younghusband Woolstores site.

# Green light for towers at iconic Younghusband Woolstores

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
PLANNING

A major revamp of Kensington's century-old former Younghusband Woolstores site has moved a step closer after the City of Melbourne ticked off plans despite them not complying with heritage policies.

As part of Impact Investment Group's ambitious proposal to revitalise the industrial site at a cost of \$87 million, the state government recently referred stage two of the plans to the council.

At their Future Melbourne Committee meeting on September 7, councillors voted unanimously in favour of the application that proposed to demolish parts of the iconic red-brick warehouses to make way for two towers more than 42 and 26 metres tall.

This was despite a council report stating the proposed demolition had not complied with the council's heritage policy, however, it recommended councillors support the six- and eight-storey towers because overall it achieved "an acceptable outcome".

"When the loss of this fabric is weighed against the overwhelming conservation of original fabric achieved in stage one ... the overall heritage outcome for the site is considered to be highly positive, and the extent of demolition has been supported for this reason," the report said.

The council report also noted the proposed eight-storey building exceeded the "preferred height" of the City of Melbourne's planning scheme, but due to the "sophisticated design response achieved" in stage two, council officers supported the additional height.

Speaking at the council meeting, Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece said while the application designed by architects Woods Bagot had not "strictly" complied with council's heritage policies, demolition "should be allowed in this case because of the considerable conservation of the Younghusband complex overall, and also because of the significant public benefits".

"To describe this complex as an iconic building is probably an understatement, it's probably the most iconic building I would say in this part of Melbourne," he said.

But he said the council was "viewing this complex in its entirety" and any demolition permit issued would be subject to a condition that stages one and two of the project were "very much linked" to ensure they were not "inconsistent" with the overall development.

"That's something that's particularly important because it should be noted that the site has been put up for sale, and we want to ensure that any future owners of stage two or of the entire complex must observe the requirements for the overall development of the site," he said.

"That means that stage one cannot be developed in a way which is inconsistent with what's happening with stage two and conversely, stage two cannot be developed in a way which is inconsistent with what's been approved with stage one."

Under the stage two application, the early-1900s built Tallow Store No. 3 would be partially demolished to make way for a six-storey building, while the 1957-built Wool Store No.5 would be completely demolished to build a new eight-storey "silo-inspired" facade building at a height of 43.9 metres.

The proposed 26.9-metre-tall building to be built at the site of the Tallow Store would feature a box design with clear glazed cladding and be recessed behind the retained Elizabeth St facade, along with part of the southern facade.

The proposed site would house offices as well as food and drink shops, and a two-level basement for parking.

Heritage portfolio lead Cr Rohan Leppert described the former Younghusband Wool and Grain Warehouses precinct as "utterly special" and while the council's "heritage policy is probably strong enough" to refuse a demolition permit for stage two, he said the application was thorough and overall respectful of the site's heritage significance.

"If you consider all the heritage fabric across the entire precinct and just how monumentally

“To describe this complex as an iconic building is probably an understatement, it's probably the most iconic building I would say in this part of Melbourne.”

expensive it is to maintain, we really want an owner and an applicant who is fully committed to preserving that heritage fabric, and I think we've got a scheme put forward here that does do that," he said at the Future Melbourne Committee meeting.

He said it was vital a "tight arrangement" was in place for stages one and two "so that you can continue to have that masterplan precinct approach, no matter who owns individual parts of these buildings in the future".

Cr Leppert added that the fact that few objections had been submitted was a "testament to the work" of the applicant and the members of the community who had been "very deeply engaged" in having their say on the project.

Kensington Association president Simon Harvey said following a "fairly thorough discussion" the association was concerned a precedent would be set if the plans were approved.

However, given stages one and two of the project would be linked and a further condition added to retain the pedestrian and bicycle lane near the Kensington railway station, Mr Harvey

said members "feel okay about it".

"Given those two legal conditions ... I feel happy that it's progressing," Mr Harvey told *North West City News*.

While he conceded he wasn't personally "excited" about the plans, he understood it was "the best option that can be realised at this particular point in time".

Mr Harvey said he was still concerned about parking space which hadn't been raised by the association's latest meeting, but "it may well become an issue in the future".

"It's a great site and I just hope it works out."

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

Impact Investment Group, the owner of the site, announced in July that it was ready to offload the heritage site after paying \$30.25 million in 2016.

"The property is on the market and all proposals will be considered on their merits," Impact's head of funds management, real estate, Darren Brusnahan said.

"There may be an outright sale or a joint venture with a group that can deliver the aspirations that we have for the site, and that council supports."

Impact has not outlined why it has put the historic site up for sale, however, Mr Brusnahan last month said, "the long-term potential for Younghusband remains strong" and is "a strategic site that is benefiting from significant investment in road and rail".

However, any application permits attached to the land would be unaffected by any future change of ownership.

Under the proposed development, the complex would be transformed into a "beautiful industrial village" in three stages over five years. A green space, work spaces, and further office space is proposed for the development.

The approved application for stage two will be referred to the Planning Minister Richard Wynne who ultimately decides whether a permit should be granted ●

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# “Intolerable”: Aircraft noise to be addressed by overdue agreement

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Local residents have been disturbed by noise from helicopters and aircraft flying over the City of Melbourne for years, but an overdue agreement with flight operators could soon help keep the peace.

It comes amid ongoing complaints from Docklands and West Melbourne residents regarding increased operations at a new helipad at the recently-completed Victoria Police headquarters at the corner of Spencer and LaTrobe streets.

In 2016, the council agreed to develop a Fly Neighbourly Agreement (FNA) with helicopter companies in an effort to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on residents.

The FNA committed to a process whereby council would review the agreement each year with a range of residents and stakeholders, including aircraft operators, Airservice Australia, and Parks Victoria.

But these commitments were not fulfilled, and residents in the municipality continue to endure “intolerable health impacts” from non-essential flights.

At a Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting in February this year, it was found that the FNA had been quietly removed from the City of Melbourne website on the basis that it was an “expired document” following enquiries from the East Melbourne Group (EMG) in 2020.

In response to a public question to councillors in September 2020, a council officer-prepared statement notified the public that the FNA had become “largely dormant for two years”.

“Residents have continued to experience intolerable health impacts from non-essential flights since the abandonment of the Fly Neighbourly Agreement, with complaints to council and councillors continuing,” Cr Rohan Leppert wrote in his notice of motion.

“Helicopters hovering in place above a residence for extended periods, during a joy flight over the sporting precinct that takes in neighbouring residential areas, is the most common example of a flight pattern with harmful health effects for those on the ground.”

EMG president Ian Mitchell said that the East Melbourne community “suffers from hundreds of uncontrolled small planes and helicopters” every day.

“On some days there are flights every two to three minutes. Many



planes and helicopters do multiple circuits over our homes,” Mr Mitchell said.

“This is one of the most densely populated parts of Melbourne with hospitals and a population which has many sick and elderly people.”

“This has serious impacts on the health of people and their ability to enjoy using their homes and gardens.”

Sarah Wallace, a West Melbourne resident, recently voiced her concern regarding noise from helicopters on the Planning Alerts website.

“Residents have been enduring an increasing level of afterhours noise caused by the operation of Police helicopters around the sky above 313 Spencer St, West Melbourne,” she said.

While pointing out that residents were not “anti-police”, Ms Wallace said they had an “inalienable right” to rest, sleep, rest and rejuvenate after work, highlighting that the night-time noise from helicopters was impacting their mental and physical health.

A City of Melbourne spokesperson told *North West City News* that the council was continuing to explore options for a Fly Neighbourly Agreement with local operators.

“While the council does not have regulatory control over aircraft flight within the municipality, we will continue to play a role to educate and seek voluntary commitments from flight operators,” the spokesperson said.

*North West City News* understands the agreement would seek to ensure that helicopters do not excessively hover and fly below 100 metres.

The agreement would also not seek to influence flights by emergency and essential flight operators.

However, *North West City News* understands ongoing lockdowns and restrictions have limited and impacted discussions between council and local operators ●



*Spencer Fowler Steen*  
EDITOR  
SPENCER@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU



▲ Holly Gulliver and partner Sam Minns at La Tortilleria in Kensington with Toby Gulliver last year.



# TV celebrities wish Toby a happy 40th, thanks to Kensington community

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
COMMUNITY

When COVID canned a special 40th birthday celebration for Toby Gulliver, his sister from Kensington got creative and rallied the local community together sparking an outpouring of goodwill.

Mr Gulliver has Down Syndrome and his birthday is his favourite day of the year.

A party had been planned at their father’s farm in NSW with all the extended family flying in from different states.

It was going to be in the spirit of past celebrations they had organised for him, including a feast on Fraser Island, margaritas at La Tortilleria in Kensington and “epic” farm parties with “Frankenstein” spit roasts.

But when September celebrations suddenly became unfeasible due to COVID restrictions, his sister Holly Gulliver reached out to the Kensington Good Karma Network (KGKN) Facebook group for help.

“I was talking to a colleague and lamenting how bad it all is, and I said, ‘wouldn’t it be amazing if we could get some famous people to do some videos for Toby!’” Ms Gulliver said.

Apart from his own birthday, which Ms Gulliver said he viewed as absolutely the “most important day” of the year, her brother has a few other passions.

With that in mind, Ms Gulliver sent out a list of his favourite things to people in the KGKN.

The list included hit soap operas *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*, TV dramas *Water Rats*, and *Blue Heelers*, sporting clubs the Sydney Swans, South Sydney Rabbitohs and St George Illawarra Dragons, anything police-related, and singer Jimmy Barnes.

The response was overwhelming.

Thanks to the Kensington community, Mr Gulliver got to celebrate his birthday in style with more than 10 videos from his favourite TV actors and a local police officer on September 12.

Speaking to *North West City News* before the big day, Ms Gulliver said all of the videos contained personal messages to her brother and acknowledged how much lockdown “sucked”.

“He’ll lose his marbles,” she said. “We’ll put it on to a DVD because he loves DVDs.”

Mr Gulliver’s family are a caring bunch.

Currently living with his father on the farm due to the health risks associated with being in Ballina, where he

*“I was talking to a colleague and lamenting how bad it all is, and I said, ‘wouldn’t it be amazing if we could get some famous people to do some videos for Toby!’”*



usually lives and works independently, Mr Gulliver also received birthday videos from his entire extended family.

One of the videos was from their mother, who Ms Gulliver said was an “amazing” midwife trainer who was training local midwives in Papua New Guinea.

“Delta’s starting to rip through the hospital she’s at at the moment, but she’s flying back and will be in quarantine for his birthday,” Ms Gulliver said.

Midway through a phone interview with this publication, Ms Gulliver apologised and stopped the conversation to help an elderly lady move her bins while out walking in Kensington.

And last year before COVID struck, Ms Gulliver and her partner, Sam Minns, flew Mr Gulliver down to Melbourne and took him out to La Tortilleria where he enjoyed a delicious cake whipped up by Mr Minns.

This year, Ms Gulliver said her family “went mad on online shopping” and bought her brother a Jimmy Barnes stubby holder.

She said she was overwhelmed by the “beautiful gestures” from the community and wished to thank all those who helped organise the celebrity videos for Mr Gulliver’s favourite day ●

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# Local Somali poet performs at Fringe Festival

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*  
ARTS & CULTURE

Mohamed Sudi, a spoken word artist from Somalia, will share his stories through poetry at the upcoming Melbourne Fringe Festival, enthraling audiences with a variety of tales from his homeland and around the world.

Moving from Somalia to Kenya, to Saudi Arabia, and then to Malaysia, the trilingual author and slam poet now lives at the North Melbourne public housing estate with his mum, dad and eight siblings.

Mr Sudi said his upcoming solo show titled *Dhulka of Poetry* would be performed in Arabic, Somali and English, so audiences were granted an intimate window into his wealth of personal stories.

“I’m trying to make an impact on the community,” Mr Sudi said.

“I want to show people to not be afraid that you can share your story too.”

A veteran announcer performing at many gig venues for more than a decade now, and becoming one of five Melbourne grand finalists in an “Africa’s Got Talent” competition in 2015, Mr Sudi published his first poetry collection book called *Somalia Too Soon!* last year.

He also made an appearance in Live On Bowen 2014, a variety show produced by RMITV aired on Channel 31.

But for Mr Sudi, it’s not about the accolades or becoming famous. It’s about building bonds with his local community to help stave off social isolation through spoken stories.

Before COVID struck, Mr Sudi, 31, ran a poetry night once a month for people in the local African community. Here, people were given the opportunity to share their stories in a creative and fun way.

“*Dhulka* is about connecting the community in North Melbourne where a majority are Somali. I want to have a positive impact to show at least every person has a story to tell,” Mr Sudi said.



▲ Mohamed Sudi, a spoken word artist from Somalia, is trying to share stories and connect the community.

“Poetry is mainly performed in pubs, but these people are Muslim. They’re isolated, so that’s why we did it in the community centre in Flemington which they were familiar with it.”

“They can at least see that they don’t need to be shy, and sometimes that comes from poetry.”

Although many know Somalia for its gruesome civil war which Mr Sudi and his family fled in 2006, people familiar with the wedge-shaped African country protruding into the Indian Ocean have called it “a nation of poets”.

Mr Sudi explained that many Somalis communicated using poetry before they could write, with the English alphabet only introduced through British colonialism.

“Somalia is a nation of poets – we resolved conflict using poetry,” he said.

Mr Sudi has worked in hospitality to support himself through school and tertiary education, having completed a Certificate III in Early

Childhood Education and Care, all the while honing his artform through constant learning and performance.

But his first foray into the world of show business wasn’t an instant success.

“I used to do stand-up comedy using poetry in nursery rhyme style. But it didn’t quite work out with the comedy.”

Mr Sudi has recently applied for a grant through the state government’s Paving The Way Forward program to fund a poetry class once a month for six months for up to 25 students from Kensington, Flemington and North Melbourne.

Emilie Zoey Baker - an award-winning Australian poet, educator and spoken word performer – has agreed to teach the classes.

While Mr Sudi waits to hear whether his grant is approved by the government, he’s working at a restaurant in Albert Park and preparing for his upcoming show.

He said *Dhulka of Poetry* would feature a variety of stories focusing on Somalia, but also the recent Christchurch shooting in New Zealand, the pandemic, the Olympics and anime to name just a few.

Utilising different poetic styles such as haiku and slam poetry, Mr Sudi’s performance will be held in October over four nights (COVID-restrictions notwithstanding) from October 6 until October 8 at 7.15pm at the Trades Hall, Carlton.

His performance on Tuesday, October 5 will be accompanied by an Auslan interpreter. While most of his performance will be in English, some will be in Arabic and Somali with English descriptions on slides.

The performance is wheelchair accessible ●

“

*“I’m trying to make an impact on the community. I want to show people to not be afraid that you can share your story too.”*

”

# Councillor’s federal politics bid could pave way for city first

WORDS BY *David Schout*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

City of Melbourne Cr Roshena Campbell has begun a bid to enter Federal Parliament, in a move that could see her replaced by Town Hall’s first ever indigenous councillor.

Cr Campbell is one of several candidates seeking Liberal Party preselection in the outer-eastern seat of Casey for the upcoming federal election.

Should she be successful, Wiradjuri man Professor Mark McMillan would be elected to the City of Melbourne via countback.

Professor McMillan was third on Lord Mayor Sally Capp’s ticket in last year’s election, behind Cr Campbell (second) and Town Hall’s current longest-serving councillor Kevin Louey (first).

And while Team Capp did not receive the required 30 per cent of votes to ensure his place on council, being next on the ticket would see him take the position vacated by Ms Campbell.

Professor McMillan has worked in the area of human rights, in particular for indigenous Australians, and has held positions as Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor at RMIT University and Associate Professor of Law at the University of Melbourne.

Should Cr Campbell earn preselection, his elevation would be significant.

In 2016, Brooke Wandin was initially elected as the City of Melbourne’s first indigenous councillor, but stood down after it was discovered she did not live at the Kensington address she had nominated when registering for election.

Professor McMillan at this stage did not wish to speak about a potential countback.

For Cr Campbell, preselection success would see her quit as councillor less than 12 months into the role.

The seat of Casey was due to be vacated by

outgoing Speaker Tony Smith, and preselection was set to take place in September (although COVID-19 restrictions could see it delayed).

Casey has been a Liberal seat for the past 37 years, the last 20 of which have been held by Mr Smith.

Should Cr Campbell’s bid for preselection be successful, the 36-year-old would then have a strong chance of securing a lower house seat in Canberra.

However, the Coalition holds Casey by a margin of just 4.6 per cent, and it is expected to be a close contest on election day — due between now and May 2022.

Cr Campbell told *North West City News* she was currently “unable to comment unfortunately under the Liberal Party preselection rules”.

A current Fitzroy resident, Cr Campbell is a barrister with expertise in commercial law and corporate governance. The mother of three has represented some of Australia’s largest companies as well as government bodies.

She has acted in some of Victoria’s most significant litigations and a number of Royal Commissions, including for the Black Saturday bushfires.

Since being elected in November 2020, the first-time councillor has been a strong advocate for small business support during COVID-19 hardship through her role as city activation portfolio lead.

She has been an outspoken critic of plans for a medically-supervised safe-injecting room on Flinders St, describing the state government proposal as “nothing short of insanity”.

At a May 25 council meeting she called on the City of Melbourne to reject a safe-injecting facility on the basis it would “significantly hinder” the city’s COVID-19 economic recovery.

Cr Campbell has also been critical of the council’s cycle lane rollout that was pushed forward after the onset of COVID-19 ●

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# Customers come first on Racecourse Rd

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge  
BUSINESS

There was a different kind of communal spirit on Racecourse Rd, Flemington to the typical footy fever over the preliminary final weekend.

There was no waving of a red and blue Demons flag on Saturday morning.

A hand-written ad for Charlie's small sausages was more like it.

And an open door at the New Somali Kitchen was news to the community that their revered lamb cook Abdul was still on the job.

The Kulture Garage opposite Newmarket Station appeared to have closed but there was a mobile number posted on the window for those desperate to make a purchase.

Traders in this diverse shopping strip have been forced to be resourceful, working out ways of remaining welcoming to customers without disobeying the tough new regulations.

Pin Oak Beer & Wine had hot mulled cider available by 1pm in unmarked takeaway cups for consumption at home.

"It was a lockdown idea," Aayush said. "We have a keg of Willie Smith's cider. It's local."

The normal menu of seven dishes and complementary lamb broth has been replaced by one \$20 meal deal at the New Somali Kitchen during lockdown.

But according to one customer, the lamb shoulder, basmati rice and salad is enough to last three meals.

Abdul has little time for his usual niceties such as honouring the guest into his classy establishment with a "welcome home" as he works as both cook and front-of-house at the same time.

There's no denying that ceremonial life has been curtailed by the virus and that's the bottom line everyone is facing.



▲ Mathew Bonnici with a local delicacy.



▲ Aayush has lockdown cider by the cup.

Donatella Picasso, one of Abdul's customers, got COVID-19 last year on public transport but she's putting a positive spin on the experience.

"I'm a success story," the 62-year-old migrant from Italy said. "It is possible to survive COVID."

She had symptoms for just three days and isolated and was still grateful for the help she received.

"The community came to my rescue. People delivered soups to the door. It was amazing, part of my healing," she said.

Mathew Bonnici bought the butcher shop two years ago and discontinued the small sausages because of the difficulty of getting skins at a reasonable price.

"Every single child complained," he said. "But now they are back."



▲ Abdul from the New Somali Kitchen.

The sausages are named after Charlie, a local who worked at the butcher shop.

"He was clever but he couldn't read or write. He wanted to know how to serve customers." ●



Rhonda Dredge  
JOURNALIST  
RHONDA@CBDNEWS.COM.AU



## Island Wave moves to Kensington

WORDS BY Sean Car  
ARTS & CULTURE

One of Melbourne's most well-recognised pieces of public art is moving from the Queen Victoria Market (QVM) precinct to Newmarket Reserve in Kensington.

Island Wave by artist Lisa Young has been located at the Queen Victoria Market roundabout at the intersection of Queen and Franklin streets since 2003 after being launched by former Lord Mayor John So and then-councillor Kimberly Kitching.

However, *North West City News* can confirm that the steel sculpture will be relocated to a new home at Newmarket Reserve in Kensington as part of the City of Melbourne's QVM renewal program.

The roundabout is being removed as part of a reconfiguration of traffic arrangements in the market precinct, as well as the pending development of a development site at the southern end of the market's former car park along Franklin St.

The artwork was uninstalled from the roundabout in June over three days and is presently offsite undergoing modifications to strengthen its base structure in preparation for installation at its new home, which is understood to have a greater wind loading.

The foundation for the artwork has already been poured at Newmarket Reserve, however installation has been delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

A source within the City of Melbourne said installation would proceed as soon as current restrictions allowed for five people to be on site. The artwork will then be painted and re-surfaced on site over a two-week period, with landscaping works to be finalised once installed.

According to the University of Melbourne, the sculpture was created as the inaugural work for the council's Melbourne Collection Commissions, a fund for significant and permanent site-specific works by contemporary artists.

"Controversially, the sculpture replaced Tom Bill's With and With Each Other, which, despite having only a three-month permit, had remained on the roundabout since the 1998 Construction in Process Sculpture Festival," a University of Melbourne study said ●



Sean Car  
DIRECTOR  
SEAN@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

## Wiping the ducks clean?

WORDS BY Matt Harvey  
COMMUNITY

A mural of ducks in Kensington has seen a second instance of vandalism during Melbourne's extended lockdowns, reigniting a hearty discussion about street art.

The mural, at the corner of Wight and McConnell streets, depicts several ducks running on a beach and was commissioned by a local resident and painted by the artist Heesco back in 2020 before it was first defaced in August the same year.

New resident Nicole Hunter initiated a GoFundMe campaign to have the ducks restored once lockdown limitations were lifted.

"I walked past when it was being painted, and I kept walking past each day until it was all painted and I just loved it, it's just a happy image," Ms Hunter said.

"I'd just moved to the area and I didn't know anybody and I couldn't have anyone to my home and I was trying to think of ways to connect, so when I saw that I was like 'Oh, maybe I can do something'."

With Melburnians currently in their sixth lockdown in two years and movement limited to a five-kilometre radius, many have taken a more active interest in their local area.

"That's how I got involved really, it was lockdown and that's what you do, you walk around your five kilometre [radius]," Ms Hunter said.

The image is based on a photograph taken in Vietnam by former resident and owner of the wall in question, Peter Binks.

"It was such a random thing and so appealing, it's always been my favourite travel memory and photograph and it was nice to share it," Mr Binks said.

The GoFundMe campaign triggered public debate among some residents, with some wondering, "why should we pay?", while others argue that is the nature of street art.

The latter is a sentiment that the artist, Heesco, agrees with.

"It's just the nature of working in the public space. Anyone can potentially touch that wall. In a way the ownership moves on from me to



the public, it's everyone's wall, you know?" Heesco said.

Street art is a large part of the culture of cities and Melbourne takes a lot of pride in its support of street art, occasionally commissioning large street art works to "brighten dull spaces".

In May 2014 the City of Melbourne's Future Melbourne Committee approved a Graffiti Management Plan which continues to focus on eradicating graffiti through education and cultivating high-quality street art.

In Melbourne the annual cost to remove graffiti exceeds \$100 million.

The tagging artist was not the first to think of enhancing the ducks in this particular way, Peter Bink had originally considered dressing the ducks up.

"I had visions when it was first painted and I thought maybe we could make up some real bras and bikini tops to put on them and mount on the wall in 3D, but that was too hard," Mr Binks said.

Peter Binks is leaving the Kensington community and while thoughts of the future of the ducks stay with him he is happy for locals to decide the future of the ducks.

"A lot of communities wouldn't care about street art if it's tagged or defaced, but for some unknown reason the ducks have really captured the imagination and love of an incredibly wide cross-section of people across Melbourne," Mr Binks said.

"If people get it in their mind that they are going to deface something they do it under darkness and without warning. You gotta have rocks in your head to think there won't be someone out there who for whatever reason decides they want to add their little bit to the image." ●





▲ Cyclists use the Footscray Rd bike path as work continues on the West Gate Tunnel project. Picture: John Tadigiri.



▲ Winds whip up a dust cloud at Footscray Rd, West Melbourne. Picture: Facebook.

# Cyclists cop “mouthfuls of dirt” from major works

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
HEALTH

Concerns are growing over cyclists being “greeted with mouthfuls of dirt” as strong winds whip up dust from construction of the West Gate Tunnel project (WGTP), prompting the City of Melbourne to step in.

It comes as the council’s environmental lead Cr Rohan Leppert took to social media posting a photo of a dust cloud believed to have been picked up from the WGTP’s site in West Melbourne, which was accompanied by a message raising concerns about the safety of a bike path on Footscray Rd.

“I want to ensure that they [West Gate Tunnel project] fully understand the impact of dust rising from the construction site when it’s unsupervised,” Cr Leppert wrote on Facebook.

He also encouraged all users of the Footscray Rd bike path to send in photos if they “experience significant levels of dust” so the “extent of the problem can be understood”.

A West Gate Tunnel project spokesperson said there were plans and measures in place to make sure dust was “monitored and managed appropriately”.

“The West Gate Tunnel project aims to minimise local air quality impacts during construction by identifying sources of dust and other airborne pollutants,” the spokesperson said.

“We’re committed to protecting communities, motorists, workers, and the environment, with safety at the forefront of everything we do.”

In a statement, the West Gate Tunnel project said works were under way at the centre strip of Footscray Rd with controls in place to manage dust including using a water cart to wet the haul road.

“When the site is closed, the project relies on continuous dust monitors to alert the construction leaders if there are extreme high winds, prompting an inspection of the site to manage

any dust accordingly,” the West Gate Tunnel project said, adding soil was covered when being moved and work conducted away from homes “where possible”.

“As part of our mitigation measures, sites are also inspected weekly, and the weather forecast is considered in preparation of the works ahead.”

All measures were undertaken in accordance with EPA requirements, the West Gate Tunnel project said, which was reviewed internally and externally by the independent reviewer and environmental auditor.

Cr Leppert declined to comment about the matter as it was being investigated, but a City of Melbourne spokesperson said the council was “aware of the issue” and understood the West Gate Tunnel project was “engaging with Transurban to fix the issue”.

The \$6.7 billion West Gate Tunnel project, a new 17km road being built by toll giant Transurban, will connect Melbourne’s west with CityLink in Docklands and serve as an alternative to the heavily congested West Gate Bridge.

Construction began in January 2018 and was scheduled for completion in 2022 but delays related to disposal of contaminated soil have pushed back its opening until at least 2024. Transurban also recently estimated it could cost an extra \$3.3 billion to finish the project.

Bicycle Network spokesman Garry Brennan said he had personally witnessed the problem of dust being whipped up by winds along Footscray Rd where “bike riders have been greeted with mouthfuls of dirt from the adjacent road works”.

“There is a load of construction underway across Melbourne—roads, tunnels, bridges, buildings—and you have to expect some dirt to get airborne,” he said.

“But the builders have a responsibility to suppress that dust so that it does not become a nuisance to the community, and they have been

“*The builders have a responsibility to suppress that dust so that it does not become a nuisance to the community, and they have been failing at that task.*”

failing at that task.”

“Local councils should be taking steps to ensure that the situation is monitored, and enforced where necessary.”

Anthony McKee, a member of community group Western Connection, said he had noticed more dust at his home than normal.

“We live pretty close to the [West Gate Tunnel project] site ... it’s noticeable just simply when you are doing basic house cleaning,” he said, but added “whether it’s a result of those works I cannot be certain”.

Meanwhile, Dr Gabriel da Silva, a lecturer in the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at the University of Melbourne, who has been following the West Gate Tunnel project, said there was a potential for health issues to arise if dust levels weren’t properly monitored.

“Definitely, if there’s dust created in the process of digging up and moving that soil, well, then it has the potential to release into the air ... perhaps the contaminants like these perfluorinated PFAS type compounds that are there,” Dr

da Silva said, but made no suggestion the West Gate Tunnel project was not undertaking the appropriate dust management controls.

Professor Ross Vlahos, head of the respiratory research group at RMIT University, said dusts from construction sites can have a “tremendous impact on the lungs” and exacerbate underlying respiratory conditions like asthma and emphysema.

“It’s that chronic exposure that really is a problem,” he said, but noted “if it’s every now and then that residents are being exposed to air poor quality or dust, it’s not a problem unless you’ve got underlying [health] conditions”.

In terms of whether dust posed a health risk if it travelled long distances, Professor Vlahos, a principal research fellow at the university’s School of Health and Biomedical Sciences, said, “It’s all about how concentrated is the dust that you’re exposed to ... [but] by the time it gets to you, if you’re a fair way away, you should be relatively safe”.

Lidia Morawska, an air-quality expert at Queensland University of Technology and director of the World Health Organisation-collaborating International Laboratory for Air Quality and Health said it was “potentially a problem” if cyclists and walkers were breathing in dust “even if they are exposed for a short time to very high concentrations”.

Michele Goldman, CEO of Asthma Australia, said while her organisation had not been made aware of any dust-related concerns in relation to the West Gate Tunnel project, airborne dust could potentially irritate the lungs and cause asthma to flare up.

Residents with concerns or questions can call Asthma Australia ●

**Contact Asthma Australia:**  
**1800 278 462**

# New school for North Melbourne a step closer

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
EDUCATION

A new campus for North Melbourne Primary School is one step closer after the state government appointed a builder with construction to start this year.

The new campus is set to open in 2023 after it received a \$36.12 million boost in the 2020-21 state budget.

A state government spokesperson said the Victorian School Building Authority had undertaken “significant consultation” with the local community to hear about the facilities they wanted for their new, modern school.

Under the plans, it will feature a landscaped playground, an outdoor stage, tiered seating and flexi-space for events and performances as well as a competition-grade gym for basketball and netball.

A new kindergarten for three- and four-year-old children will be built on level five of the campus, including two rooms and opening onto outdoor learning and play spaces.

It’s a big win for the community which has campaigned for three years for the school to be a second campus of the existing North Melbourne Primary School, rather than a stand-alone school.

Megan Cusack, a member of the North Melbourne Primary

School council, said, “We’re absolutely pleased with the outcome that has been achieved and what it will bring to the North Melbourne community in terms of being more inclusive and forward thinking in integrating.”

“We’re grateful that our concerns have been taken into consideration and the best outcome for the community.”

Located on Molesworth St, the new school will cater for significant enrolment growth and offer a “superb education to all local students” according to the state government.

The new builder appointed is Hansen Yuncken whose projects include Greater Shepparton Secondary College, Monash University Caulfield

library, Bendigo Kangan TAFE’s city campus, and the Victorian Pride Centre.

The Education Department held a virtual information session in December last year where residents discussed the new school with the Victorian School Building Authority’s chief executive.

“The school community told us that they are keen to make the most of the unique opportunity offered by the proximity of the two school sites, and to ensure equity of access to the 21st century facilities the new campus will provide,” the department said.

Education design experts, principals at some of Melbourne’s other

new schools and key First Nations elders in the area were also consulted as part of the project.

A final cost of the new school is yet to be determined as construction progresses.

“We’re excited to deliver a brand-new campus for North Melbourne Primary School to meet the needs of the area’s growing population,” the government spokesperson said.

The new school is part of the state’s government’s commitment of building 100 new schools across Victoria by 2026 “to grow our education state” ●



# “Deplorable situation”: asylum seekers granted library access

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steem*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Asylum seekers being held in detention at the Park Hotel in Carlton will be able to access library services in the City of Melbourne thanks to a council motion which was passed unanimously in September.

There are around 45 men currently in detention at the Park Hotel in Swanston St. Before that, many if not all of them were detained on either Manus Island or Nauru and transferred to Australia under the medivac legislation for urgent medical care.

The motion, proposed by the council’s health, wellbeing and belonging portfolio lead Cr Olivia Ball, plans to deliver services to residents of the Melbourne municipality who, through no fault of their own, cannot attend libraries in person and are especially vulnerable.

Cr Ball said it was well-known that library services contributed to the health and wellbeing of people in closed environments such as prisons and immigration detention.

“So many locals feel deeply for the innocent men detained in the Park Hotel with no knowledge of what their future holds nor means to access justice. This is one small thing local government can do for this small cohort of residents in a deplorable situation,” she said.

Speaking at the meeting, librarian academic Jane Garner from Charles Sturt University, who has a PhD in the role of prison libraries, said that a United Nations General Assembly rule required that all people living in detention must be able to access a library.

“Reading for people living in detention takes on a much greater value than it does for those



of us with free access to books, libraries and information,” Dr Garner said. “People living in detention have vast amounts of unstructured and empty time to fill in, often for years at a time and with very few ways to fill that time.”

“This has been shown to have enormously detrimental effects on mental health and wellbeing, leading to destructive behaviours

*“So many locals feel deeply for the innocent men detained in the Park Hotel with no knowledge of what their future holds nor means to access justice.”*



and depression. Books, libraries and reading supports the wellbeing and mental health of prisoners.”

All councillors voted to pass the motion after Dr Garner asked the City of Melbourne to offer the same library services to people detained at the Park Hotel, as every inmate in Victorian prisons already has access to ●

## North Melbourne cleaner sweeps \$80 million in lotto

COMMUNITY

A local man who lost his job during lockdown and was working as a cleaner to make ends meet has become Australia’s third-biggest lottery winner ever.

The man, who wishes to remain anonymous, nabbed the winning \$80 million Powerball prize in August during Melbourne’s sixth lockdown, not long after buying a house in North Melbourne and losing his job due to the pandemic.

The overwhelmed winner said he would use his mind-boggling prize to set up his children for life, and having experienced his fair share of hardship, help as many people as possible.

“I am so excited. I checked my ticket late last night. I couldn’t sleep after that!” the middle-aged family man said.

“I lost my job during one of the many lockdowns here in Melbourne. We had only just bought a home and didn’t see it coming. I’ve been working as a cleaner ever since to make ends meet.” “Like for so many people, these lockdowns have been really tough for our family. But I’ve always said, you’ve just gotta keep trying. Now, look what’s happened!”

With \$80 million in his bank account, the ecstatic local who is now Victoria’s largest Powerball winner said he wanted to make life better for his family and anyone he could help.

“I am certainly keen to pay off the mortgage and the other bills we have to begin with,” he said. “We’re going to set our kids up for life. That will be an incredible thing to be able to do. I am going to try and help everyone!” “There’s so much we will be able to do with this prize. It will change so many people’s lives!”

The winning numbers in the Powerball draw were 17, 10, four, 26, 19, 23 and 21, with the all-important Powerball number coming in as seven ●

## New laws to protect winter sunlight

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steem*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Parks across North Melbourne and Kensington will be protected from unreasonable overshadowing by developments under new laws being considered by the City of Melbourne.

The amendment to the Parks Planning Scheme will introduce “no additional overshadowing” for parks in low- to mid-rise areas such as Powlett Reserve in East Melbourne, a limit on the amount of overshadowing of parks in urban renewal areas and increased winter sunlight protection.

Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece said Melbourne’s parks faced a significant threat from new developments keen to take advantage of the city’s world-class open spaces.

“While there are existing planning controls to protect sunlight in the central city, no laws protect our suburbs, including the family-friendly havens of Kensington, North Melbourne and Carlton,” he said.

“Protecting our parks against inappropriate development is a priority for the City of Melbourne as we build back better after COVID-19.”

In the past year, the council has seen a three-fold increase in visitors to its parks which have served as a haven for locked-down locals to exercise and enjoy the outdoors.

The C278 Sunlight to Parks planning scheme amendment seeks to provide for this by introducing winter sunlight access to all parks within the municipality based on the winter solstice instead of the spring equinox.

While the current laws prioritise the use of parks by city workers during lunch breaks between 11am and 2pm, the amendment will increase sunlight protection hours between 10am to 3pm during winter.

A panel report into the merits of the amendment found the proposal successfully balances city growth with the protection of parks.

Laws to protect sunlight in Melbourne’s parks were introduced in 1999, when there were far fewer high-rise buildings in the city.

*“While there are existing planning controls to protect sunlight in the central city, no laws protect our suburbs.”*



Cr Reece said the sunlight to parks amendment would elevate the importance of parks as community assets and give the council a strong set of rules to follow when considering new development applications.

“Despite the COVID-19 pandemic we’ve continued to see a steady stream of development applications submitted to council,” Cr Reece said.

“This is the perfect time to consider these planning scheme amendments to future proof Melbourne’s parks.”

However, due to seven councillors, including Lord Mayor Sally Capp, declaring a conflict of interest during the Future Melbourne Committee meeting on August 17, quorum for the meeting was lost.

As a result, a report will now be prepared for the August 31 council meeting so the remaining councillors who do not have conflict of interests can decide on the amendment.

If approved by the council, the planning scheme amendment will be presented to the Minister for Planning Richard Wynne for final approval.

A delegated committee headed by Cr Elizabeth Doidge will consider submissions and finalise the council’s position in September ●



## Vision Australia need local puppy carers

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steem*  
COMMUNITY

Vision Australia is looking for volunteers who live in North Melbourne, Kensington, Flemington and West Melbourne to help raise puppies as part of the organisation’s Seeing Eye Dog program.

Carers will be given a puppy to look after for about a year – from around its eighth-week birthday to when it turns between 12 to 15 months old.

During that time, carers will provide a loving home to nurture the puppy, helping to socialise them and teach basic skills such as toilet training, to sit, and to walk nicely on a lead.

Anna Day, a previous carer, said it was a truly life-changing experience.

“Knowing that you’re part of a bigger future for them is very rewarding,” she said.

“Seeing how amazingly smart these dogs are and being a part of that, you’re playing a part in both the dog’s life, and the life of someone who truly needs it.”

Of course, it’s not all fun and cuteness. Dog carers will be responsible for regular grooming,

house training and exercise, and will be expected to be available for regular visits.

A fenced-in backyard is mandatory too.

The cost of all equipment, food, dog health care, vet costs and training is covered by Seeing Eye Dogs.

Carers will also receive ongoing support from a puppy development trainer as they progress, but looking after a puppy does require you to be at home most of the day.

Slightly older puppies may be more suited to a work environment where they can sit with you at your desk, go on longer walks and travel on public transport.

Once the puppies reach 12 to 15 months old, they will be returned to Vision Australia so they can begin their journey being companions for people who are blind or have low vision ●

**For more information:**  
[sed.visionaustralia.org/puppy-caring/what-is-puppy-caring](https://www.visionaustralia.org/puppy-caring/what-is-puppy-caring).





▲ Left: Kindred spirits Rebecca Riggs and Maddy Roberts at Hotham Gardens. Right: Maddy Roberts is proud of her '60s décor and city view.

# Feeling good about her choices

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge  
COMMUNITY

Young female professionals are making great choices and moving into Hotham Gardens, an idealistic estate developed in the 1960s to encourage people to own their own homes.

The 108-apartment estate was designed by architect Roy Grounds on behalf of the Master Builders Association Slum Clearance Ltd.

It was an original affordable housing project funded by the state government and it's still attainable for first home-buyers.

Maddy Roberts bought a one-bedroom apartment on the third floor six months ago. It cost her \$314,000, quite high considering agents were quoting less than \$300,000.

But Maddy has now joined other young professionals such as Rebecca Riggs who claim that North Melbourne is cool and the estate female-friendly.

"This feels like mine. It's nice to be in a space I've created," Maddy said, nestling into the 1960s décor, which she has resurrected with the help of her father, also a local resident.

The O'Shannassy St estate was designed with women in mind, Rebecca said. "Mine still has a fold-out wooden ironing board. It's close to original."

Each block of nine to 10 apartments has its own body corporate and younger residents wax lyrical about the features, particularly the 1970s yellow bottle glass in Block A.

"It's kind of cool," Rebecca said, whose father paid \$575,000 for a two-bedroom top-floor apartment here in 2015.

Maddy still lives with her boyfriend in a rented apartment in Brunswick East but when it gets too crowded with the two of them working from home she uses the North Melbourne apartment as a home office.

"We work in Docklands," Maddy said. "We could have walked to work from here."

“  
*Maddy has now joined other young professionals such as Rebecca Riggs who claim that North Melbourne is cool and the estate female-friendly.*

But unfortunately, her company has been one of those to vacate Docklands and rent new office space further out.

The apartment renovation project has helped Maddy deal with all the disruption to work. "I'm terrible at making decisions," she said about choices of product. "Dad kept me on schedule."

The apartment has a large balcony, an all-white décor with small square tiles in the bathroom, a plywood bench top, large laundry and a great leafy outlook.

Maddy can wave at her sister, who has also bought into the block, as she arrives home.

The real estate market is booming and Maddy had to fight off a large number of other bidders on a Zoom auction to buy the place.

An identical apartment opposite to hers sold recently for around \$370,000 so she feels vindicated.

She has just ordered an Aeropress coffee maker for her new blonde wood bench and is feeling good about her choices ●

# An extinction event in Siberia Lane

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge  
ARTS & CULTURE

As artists struggle to deal with pandemic red tape, at least some have been clever enough to find ways of delivering their work to a public desperate for a sliver of imagination.

Mike Makatron was permitted to paint a mural in a Kensington back lane during the lockdown because it was part of a construction site.

His cave is a surprising addition to the typical urban aesthetic of the former sale yards estate.

The image is based on Mike's memory of caves on the Yucatan Peninsula, sketched first then augmented at his desk where he works on concept design.

"They have beautiful, clear, fresh water. A lot are hidden," he said of the limestone caves, but he also pointed out that "this is where the asteroid fell that made the dinosaurs extinct."

Such momentous events, while not actually depicted in the peaceful water-filled cave now visible on Siberia Lane, have undeniably played a part in Mike's career.

He was studying fine art and working as a bicycle courier in New York during the 9/11 attack and watched the second tower collapse, but said it was a long bow to say that the disaster influenced his art.



▲ Mike Makatron and his inner cave.

Mike saw the flames out of his East End apartment window then watched with horror as people jumped off the burning building. He helped by making stretchers for carting the wounded.

As the pandemic closes in on Victoria, Mike resists obvious

connections between these events and his work.

"A lot of work I make has something unusual about it. I try to present a certain amount of stepping out," he said.

"I have more of an alliance to the psychedelic world and small

colourful questions about human connection to nature and how we are animals."

He likes an element of fantasy in his work, which he can bring out more on canvas than murals.

"A project like this can't be too weird. People have to like it.

Canvases are easier than walls."

He said to be an artist in lockdown "you totally have to find your own world." So much is frustrating, he said, particularly "feeling the anxiety of the country."

In the cave mural he likes the more textured, looser sections that "look for a happy medium of imperfection" and avoid repetition and straight lines.

These are the fill-in, narrative elements that are neither pool, in its hyper-real aqua, nor roots, fronds, leaves or vines.

Most viewers respond to the figurative elements with the cave evoking a feeling of seclusion so you can almost smell the moisture.

But often artists are more attuned to the spaces in between. These are the places where imagination has a chance to prosper in a time of uncertainty.

Twenty years on from 9/11 Mike's small mural on a garage in Siberia Lane is still commemorating an extinction event 65 million years ago ●

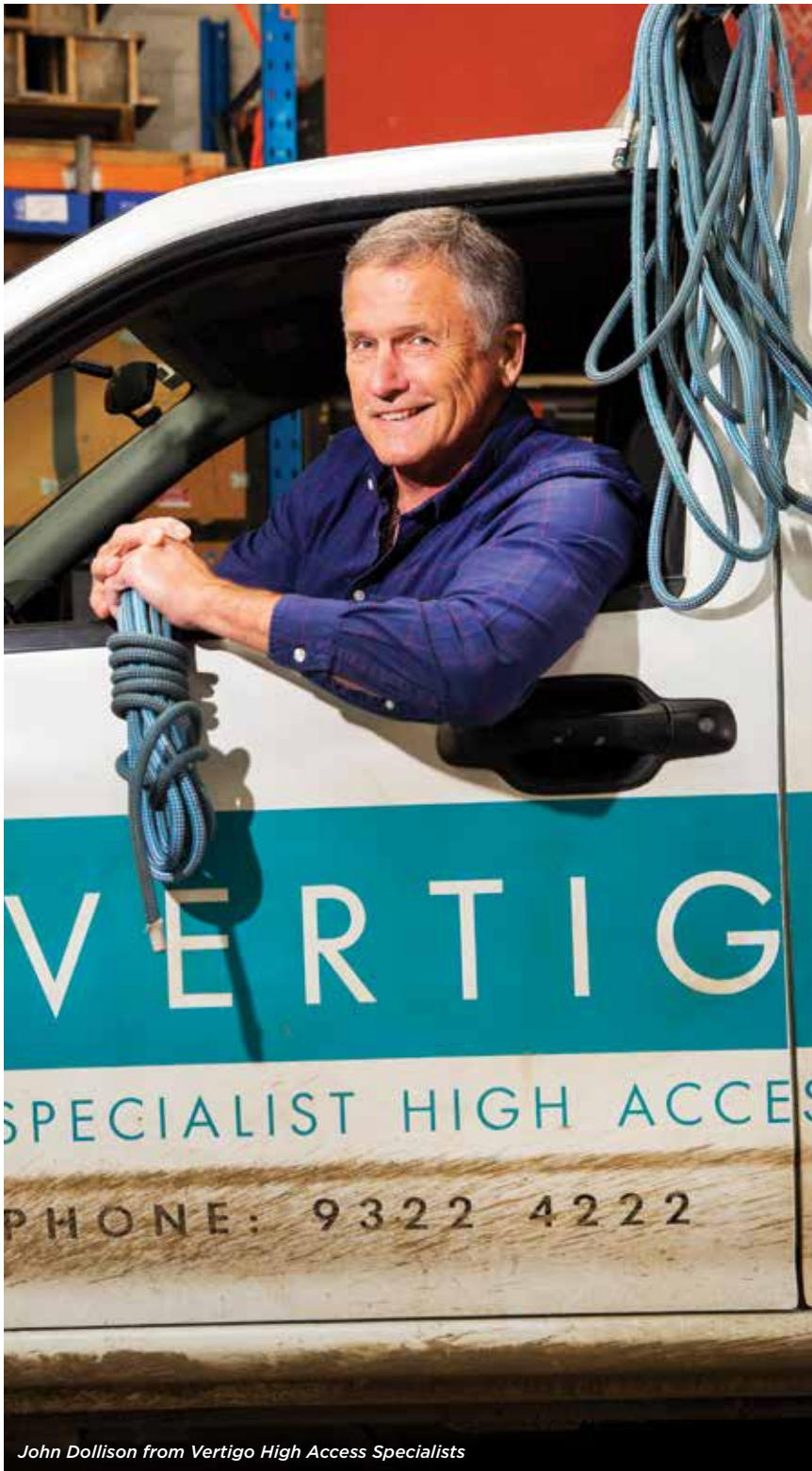
**For more information:**  
[facebook.com/MikeMakatronArt](https://facebook.com/MikeMakatronArt)



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# LORD MAYOR’S COMMENDATIONS

## AIMING HIGH IN BUSINESS



John Dollison from Vertigo High Access Specialists

**North Melbourne may be home base for the team at Vertigo High Access Specialists, but its expert climbers soar high and roam far.**

For 30 years, this rope access trades business has inspected, cleaned and installed safety systems at some of Victoria’s tallest and best-known structures.

‘We recently assisted with the replacement of all the speakers and lights at the Melbourne Cricket Ground,’ Vertigo Director and CEO John Dollison said.

‘We’ve done most of the big signs around Melbourne. Probably our biggest claim to fame is designing access systems on the roof of buildings so people can get down the sides to clean and replace windows.

‘We’ve also had a team down at Hazelwood assisting with asbestos removal at the old coal-fired power plant.

‘We still do a lot of inspections including the Bolte Bridge. We do a lot of tunnel work and we’ve even participated in a number of television shows, setting up ropes and rigging for them.’

Vertigo’s gallery of images is not for the faint-hearted. Technicians and tradespeople appear as tiny figures dotting the vast roof of a sports stadium or against a wind turbine. Their ropes stretch across treacherous seas, to help maintain offshore rigs.

The team works on everything from cathedral spires to huge glass structures and atriums, bridges, tunnels and massive advertising signs.

Vertigo is one of this year’s recipients of a Lord Mayor’s Commendation. This City of Melbourne program acknowledges the contribution of small businesses to our city.

At Vertigo’s headquarters, training and skills updates are constantly underway, as safety is paramount.

‘North Melbourne is a great location in terms of access to training and access into the city,’ John said.

‘Probably the bulk of our work is in the CBD and some of the outlying suburbs. It’s a great hub for us, we’d never leave.’

Vertigo employs about 20 people plus part-time staff.

‘We’ve had four core guys who’ve been with us almost the whole time. They’re well-respected in terms of knowledge and the history they have,’ John said.

‘The key thing is to find good people and hold on to them. We bring people into our facility and run them over all the rope moves and safety procedures. Safety is the most important issue.

‘We have a two-and-a-half storey warehouse, it’s a bright yellow building, you can’t miss it. We do a four-day training course and a one-day assessment and they have to requalify every three years. It looks like a risky business but the amount of safety measures and paperwork are substantial.’

John joined Vertigo 20 years ago after seeing the team’s performance in working on huge signage in China’s cities. He was based in Hong Kong, home to breathtaking towers across the horizon.

An economist and advertising executive, he could see the potential of the expanding international rope access trade industry.

‘It was particularly servicing the offshore mining industry. Then Vertigo was one of the first to embrace that and start training and providing services for high rope access work in Australia.’

.....  
**‘North Melbourne is a great location in terms of access to training and access into the city.’**  
.....

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on their traditional services such as window cleaning as city office buildings were relatively empty during the lockdowns.

However, John said construction work has continued, with COVID-safe measures in place at all sites.

‘Recovery will take time and I feel sorry for smaller businesses and cafes and restaurants just now,’ John said.

‘I frequent the coffee shops in Errol Street and my wife and I love dining in the city. It would be great to see all that come back with some normality.’

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

### IN-BRIEF

#### WINDOW SHOPPING

More than 75 empty shopfronts will be transformed into makers’ spaces, art installations and pop-up shops to boost foot traffic and bring the buzz back to the city. Shopfronts in Lygon Street, Docklands and CBD east will be revitalised in the \$2.6 million program, part of the City of Melbourne and Victorian Government \$100m Melbourne City Recovery Fund.

#### MONEY WELL SPENT

Melburnians have claimed millions in cash back through the Melbourne Money dining discount program, with funds from the \$8.4 million scheme exhausted in less than five weeks. More than 270,000 meals were rebated, amounting to \$40 million flowing to more than 3000 city restaurants, cafes and bars.

#### BUSINESS SUPPORT

Do you run a local business? For one-on-one advice, contact our Business Concierge team on 9658 9658 (press 1 for business) or enquire online, and subscribe to our Business in Melbourne newsletter for regular updates, opportunities and activities for city businesses. Sign up at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/business](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/business)

#### 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)



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ABOUT THE LORD MAYOR’S COMMENDATIONS

The business owners showcased on these pages are recipients of this year’s Lord Mayor’s Commendations. Each has operated in the City of Melbourne for 10 or more years.

The commendations, established in 2005, recognise how important small businesses are to the city’s prosperity and liveability.

Photographic exhibitions celebrating this year’s winners are on display in September at the Block Arcade and City Library on Flinders Lane.

To read our full profiles on these businesses and more, visit [magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au](http://magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

DOCKLANDS HEALTH

Head to Docklands Health to get expert care from a passionate team of allied health professionals.

Led by Dr Michael Edgley, Docklands Health has gone from strength to strength over a decade, helping patients access treatment that is as fast, holistic and cost-effective as possible.

‘At first it was just two of us in a tiny room. Ten years on, we have about 13 practitioners across all sorts of disciplines, including chiropractic care, physiotherapy, psychology, nutrition, podiatry and pilates,’ Mike said.

‘Over 10 years, I’ve seen families grow up and workers progress up the corporate ladder. We know couples who’ve got married and had children who now attend Docklands Primary School, which didn’t even exist a few years ago. I really appreciate this aspect of the job.

‘If the pandemic had occurred eight years ago, Docklands really would’ve struggled, but the community



groups – like those formed through Library at the Dock, Probus and Rotary – are now quite well established. This helps people feel more connected.’

PAPA GINO’S

When Gino and Silvana Brosca met working in a northern Italian bar in the 1950s, it sparked a family legacy culminating in Carlton institution Papa Gino’s – which they opened together in 1973.

‘Food and serving people runs deep for the Broscas,’ the couple’s son and Papa Gino’s owner Alex Brosca said.

‘All the kids and grandkids do a stint working part-time at Papa Gino’s.

‘Some stay, and some go on to other things. Everyone comes back for a feed.’

When asked what sets them apart, Alex says it’s the sense of family.

‘When we started, we were one of only a handful of pizza restaurants in the city, and we became a popular eating spot for neighbourhood locals.

‘We’re still serving the locals, despite the demographics changing somewhat.



‘A lot of the faithfuls we still welcome by name, and we enjoy meeting new students as they make Carlton their home each year.

‘COVID has had an impact but we’ve sailed through downturns before and can do the same this time.’

DOMAIN DRY CLEANERS

John Athanasiou jokes about working in a small shop space, but vast, bejewelled worlds crowd into this dry cleaning business in South Yarra.

Precious costumes from Frozen, a gown from Kylie Minogue – all find their way to Domain Dry Cleaners.

Many of Australia’s leading performing arts companies such as Opera Australia and Melbourne Theatre Company trust John’s expertise in cleaning their elaborate costumes.

‘We did the Australian Ballet for 40 years. We’re doing Harry Potter and the Cursed Child and Frozen... and we’ve done many international bands too,’ John said.

A second-generation family-run business, Domain Dry Cleaners has been a South Yarra landmark for more than 40 years. John’s father George opened its doors in the 1970s.

While it’s hard work, John has a warm and amusing approach when looking back over his accomplishments.



‘I break out in a sweat with some costumes. Aladdin was full-on – covered in beads, velvets, silks, that was challenging,’ he said.

‘Kylie Minogue’s dress – they wanted it the same day. It was fully pleated and I just had to shut the shop and dedicate my day to that.’

CAMILLA GOUGH

If you’ve ever wandered through the gothic halls of Melbourne’s iconic Manchester Unity Building, you may have seen Camilla Gough at work – a master jeweller who turns stories into tiny, exquisite works of art.

For more than 25 years, Camilla has created uniquely personal, 100 per cent handcrafted jewellery for customers seeking a memento of love or loss, or simply a beautiful piece to treasure.

Camilla works with gold, diamonds and precious gems, with a particular focus on rare and coloured diamonds.

Her commissions evoke landscapes, flowers, architecture, ocean shorelines and even rockpools, designed in response to customer stories. It’s meticulous work and full of detail.

‘I love hearing people’s stories, which are sometimes deeply personal. After these conversations, I write and draw to develop a design,’ Camilla said.



‘To come and get a piece of jewellery commissioned takes a sense of courage. Sitting opposite a craftsperson having to express yourself isn’t for everyone. But there’s a magical vibe around it.’

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

KEEP IN TOUCH

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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

All the ingredients to a balanced life

“  
To many locals living in the North Melbourne area, the sight of a man balancing a large bottle of water on his head as he walks or even rides his bicycle through the neighbourhood will be all too familiar.  
”

WORDS BY Sean Car

Well known and highly respected by many in the local community for sharing his passion for healthy living with others, it's fair to say that 63-year-old Sassy holds more than a few secrets when it comes to living the best life.

Originally from Jamaica and abiding by Rastafarian culture, which is deeply rooted in healthy eating and a spiritual connection to the Earth, Sassy has lived in Australia for 41 years; the past seven of which he has called North Melbourne home.

During that time, he has earned a reputation for helping others in his community through any means possible. But as a chef, his greatest source of inspiration for giving back has been through the power of food.

Having established a garden in the backyard of his neighbour's vacant property on Little Curran St over the years, Sassy has been able to use his passion to grow fresh food and cook meals for many in the community.

From pumpkin, corn, beetroot and carrots to kale, zucchini, eggplant and tomatoes, Sassy's



garden offers just about everything from nature's pantry, which he uses to regularly cook vegetarian meals on a woodfire.

But not only that, you can also find him tending to a few chooks on the block, while he also keeps bees to produce fresh honey for friends. All in all, Sassy seems to have all the ingredients for a well-balanced lifestyle!

And as for balancing a bottle of water on his head, he told *North West City News* it was for "exercise".

"I do it for my posture," Sassy said. "People

will often take pictures of me as I ride my bicycle sometimes with a bottle on my head."

It's a technique which continues to attract plenty of interest from locals both young and old, some of whom Sassy said he had taught the posture aiding trick to over the years and the results were always good!

Having previously operated the restaurant Sassy's Jamaican Kitchen in Fitzroy for many years and played music around the city as "Melbourne first reggae DJ", he is well known throughout town and continues to share his



passions with others.

As a proud father of six children, that same philosophy has always extended to his family and he attributes everything that's good in his life to the influence of his mother, who he described as his "hero".

"If I can see someone needs help, I help that person. This is how I was brought up by my mother," he said. "My mother is my everything. My mother is my hero."

"She taught me so much about caring and sharing. When I came to Australia, and I thought of all the things that my mother taught me when I first travelled and I thought 'oh, my mother never travelled, how can she know all of these things?'"

"She said, 'son, I was in this world before you. What I know you never can know that! Learn as much as you can learn from me'."

Sassy's healthy lifestyle continues to prove influential to those around him.

During his 41 years living in Australia, he said he'd only ever had one doctor who he had never visited due to sickness, but only to "know if I'm short of something".

After once likening Sassy's insides to that of a "16-year-old skinny girl", he said that his doctor had even taken a leaf out of his diet!

But for Sassy, healthy eating goes hand-in-hand with a healthy community and the power of helping people and connecting with his neighbours continues to be his driving force.

"People must live together," he said. "How many people do you know who live next door?"

"Get to know your neighbours. Say hello to the people who live next door. It's important!" ●

METRO TUNNEL

Metro Tunnel cross passage construction at halfway mark

While the Metro Tunnel Project has said goodbye to its four massive tunnel boring machines – Joan, Meg, Mille and Alice – there's still some serious digging going on under the city as work on the project continues.



▲ The nine-kilometre twin rail tunnels are now complete.

With the nine-kilometre twin rail tunnels now complete, the focus within the tunnels is on the 26 cross passages that will serve as escape routes for staff and passengers in an emergency.

There will be a cross passage about every 230 metres along the tunnels, all the way from Kensington to South Yarra.

While smaller than the rail tunnels they

connect, they will still be an impressive size at four metres high – the height of a single-storey house.

At each site crews carry out geotechnical drilling above ground first to check ground conditions. In some places grout is injected into the soil to strengthen it before digging starts underground.

The passages are built by breaking through the walls of the rail tunnels, which are braced with steel, and then excavating between them with equipment including a wall saw and an excavator-mounted jackhammer.

Once mining is complete, the cross passages are reinforced with steel, waterproofed, and lined with concrete before a floor slab is poured.

Construction of each cross passage takes around six months, with work taking place concurrently across different sections of the Metro Tunnel.

As each cross passage is completed, floor slabs are poured in the rail tunnels and fit-out starts with the installation of cable trays, brackets and plumbing.

Fourteen of the cross passages are now complete, with work to dig and fit out the remaining 12 expected to be finished by early next year.

At the same time major progress is being made across the Metro Tunnel Project's five new underground stations at Arden, Parkville, State Library, Town Hall and Anzac (St Kilda Rd), with the project on track to open to passengers in 2025 ●

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



COUNCILLOR PROFILE

Quiet achiever is as passionate as ever

“While he may have been around Town Hall for more than 20 years, Cr Kevin Louey said that the pandemic had meant “throwing the rule book out” when it came to being on council.



Combined with eight years working as former Lord Mayor John So’s chief of staff, the fourth term councillor has more experience at the City of Melbourne than just about anyone. But while the devastation that COVID-19 has caused on Melbourne continues to dampen many people’s spirits, Cr Louey is as passionate as ever to put his experience to good use for the city’s residents and businesses. Stemming from his days working for John So, he’s earned a reputation as a councillor for his ability to network and get things done behind the scenes. In his words as part of a *Councillor Profile* in 2015, he told *CBD News* it was the “small things, the non-sexy stuff”. While Cr Louey’s never one to grandstand and seldom will he speak at council meetings, he said he was “always available” to get his

“hands dirty” by working collaboratively to achieve good outcomes for locals. “I’m definitely not here for the sexy stuff! But since the pandemic, there is no manual that you can pick up to being on council, I think you can forget it,” he said. “I have been around for a while and I’m available.” “I always like to get my hands dirty, because keep in mind that’s where I came from working behind the scenes with John So where we’d take notes, log things and take action. When you spent eight years on the outside, you collaborate and you work together. We tend to like doing things on the ground, not in the office.” “If people want to pick up the phone, if there is a bureaucracy issue with council, sometimes it’s minor, but as long as you put it in the right basket someone will look after it.”

“Residents are our very cheap version of precinct managers on the ground and they’re not scared and certainly not shy in raising issues with us. We all want to try and help.” Heading into last year’s council elections, there was plenty of intrigue as to whether Cr Louey would go around again for a fourth term, and if so, which team he’d throw his support behind. Having negotiated the first spot on former Lord Mayor Robert Doyle’s tickets at previous council elections, his experience and influence proved telling again when he ran first on Lord Mayor Sally Capp’s winning team in 2020. He praised the current group of councillors and said it was Sally Capp’s ability to bring people together and get things done for the city that were his prime motivations in opting to run with Team Capp. “She’s [Sally Capp’s] a great leader. She works very well with the government of the day and has been great as the spokesperson. It’s about deliverables and she’s able to deliver,” he said. “It is a great, workable council. It’s non-controversial. The pandemic has helped to open people’s eyes to look at the much bigger things rather than the small issues. Sally is certainly more than qualified. She’s proven in terms of being able to work with residents or business.” With a strong background in business and the Chinese market, Cr Louey’s expertise is being put to good use again as chair of the council’s business and global opportunities portfolio, and deputy lead on small business. He is also the City of Melbourne’s appointment to the advisory committees Enterprise Melbourne Pty Ltd and Business Partner City Network. His deep understanding of the cultural and business etiquette required to operate successfully in China has been central to the council’s strong relationship with the Chinese community over many years. While the pandemic may have seen Australia’s relationship with China impacted adversely, Cr

Louey said with the City of Melbourne’s own office based in Tianjin, Melbourne was well-placed to pick up where it left off once borders were reopened. But while international students, tourists and workers continue to be sorely missed in Melbourne, he said the council was continuing to “look local” in its pursuit of rebuilding the city post-COVID. In praising the council’s management led by its CEO Justin Hanney, Cr Louey said it was his firm belief that Melbourne had all of the dynamics to bounce back from the pandemic bigger and better than ever. “In local government we’re very grassroots. We feel every bit of pain that our residents and businesses feel. The ‘three R’s’ are almost I’d say out, and we need to look as a capital city government and be more creative. I don’t have the answers by the way!” he said. “As a council, we’re lucky that we’ve got a CEO with great relationships with the state government and he works with the state very, very well. They’ve got high regards for him – [Mr Hanney is] a man who is on a mission and he will complete his mission.” “We’ve got all the major drivers [to bounce back]. We’ve got the bones to grow from. It’s a lifestyle here in Melbourne.” “The council is committed to the regrowth, we’ve positioned our budget to support our businesses but we need to get the traffic back. We have a council committed to supporting our businesses and residents through this pandemic.” ●



Sean Car  
DIRECTOR  
SEAN@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

THE KENSINGTON ASSOCIATION

Community

*The Kensington Association is – in essence – about community betterment, enhancement, improvement ... much like many community organisations I suppose – churches, schools, community centres, Rotary, the Neighbourhood House, businesses and the City of Melbourne.*

All of us have our particular focus of activity and cohort of active and interested participants; all of us want to make Kensington a better place to live. Many readers of *North West City News* (NWCN) will have read the excellent (recently concluded) 12-part series on the provision of housing in our society. In short, the message from the series was – *everyone needs a good roof under which to make a good home* ... yes, everyone! Not just any old “roof”, because they don’t all serve our modern and special care needs, particularly since our homes are also becoming the places where we “work” and “learn” as well as eat, sleep, chill, love, and nest. It goes without saying that no matter how warm and wonderful our neighbours are – we are unlikely to feel Kensington is a great place to live if we don’t have a good “roof”! I’ve recently been reflecting more precisely on the role that the Kensington Association (KA) plays in this pursuit of good homes for our good people and making Kensington a good and better place to live. Once you’ve got your “roof” we at KA don’t mow your lawns or fix your gutters, but we do try to keep an eye on the streets, the paths, the trees, the resting places, the services, and the traffic etc., to make sure they are in good working order, and that nothing is a particular pain (in the arse) for residents.

We also try to make sure that anyone who wants to build a “roof” near you doesn’t make your life “less good”. That’s often the hard part! I’ve also been interrogating the meaning of “community”, and what makes a good one. Thich Nhat Hanh (a renowned Buddhist monk and peace activist) tells the story of a conversation he had with Martin Luther King in 1966. He said, “we had a discussion about peace, freedom and community, and we agreed that without a community we cannot go very far”. Nice quote, but what are they thinking that the word means? If we say to our non-Kensington friends or family – “yeah, Kensington is a great community” – what makes us think that? I’ve said that we need a “good roof” to feel it’s a great place, but while that certainly helps, there is no guarantee. So, what is the operative factor?! Is it trees, safety, relative peacefulness, people, services, or open space? Each of us has our own sense of what it means. It doesn’t take many thought experiments to realise that “people” are a critical factor in any assessment. But what if it’s a very densely populated precinct, or on the other extreme, quite desolate? Either would be challenging! For me it boils down to the connections or relationships between people, and the “quality” of those connections. We know, for example, how neighbours, particularly those next door, can make or break our



feelings about our “hood”. For much of inner suburban Melbourne “home” has been a terrace or a detached house of some size and shape, but in Kensington we are gradually accumulating more apartment-style homes within large apartment blocks – namely Macaulay Rd developments. What will this mean for our future sense of community? Will an aggregation of such homes challenge or facilitate “quality” connections between people? Following one line of logic, “attached”

or “connected” buildings might facilitate “attachment” or “connection” between people, but we know that’s somewhat faulty logic; it’s more complex. While we need “connection” we also need “privacy”, while we need personal closeness, we also need space, we like “activity” but also yearn for tranquillity. Yep, we’re hard to please, what suits one might not suit another, and when it comes to change we are cautious, suspicious, or protective of the status quo – often with good reason, but not always. The park development immediately east of Kensington Station is a case in point; strongly opposed by many neighbouring Rankins Rd residents, but now established it seems to be warmly embraced! In summary, the success or otherwise of this gradual change in Kensington, particularly around Macaulay Rd, will depend on balancing the human need for quality connections with the need for quality space. One final reflection on “community”. A functional sense of community cannot happen when the area is too large and geographically divided. Kensington is divided by some major roads and railway lines which interfere with a sense of community. I think what we are really seeking is a more focussed and cosy sense of “hood”, where those human connections can be facilitated. Looking at the map I think Kensington has six or seven “hoods”. One could say – like a radio playlist ... “old ones, new ones, loved ones, neglected ones” ... and changing ones! ●



Simon Harvey  
CHAIRPERSON  
INFO@KENSINGTONASSOCIATION.ORG.AU



ABORIGINAL MELBOURNE



As part of the Koorie Heritage Trust’s Blak Design initiative, 11 First Nations artists will present their handmade jewellery at a contemporary exhibition celebrating indigenous design.



# Changing direction: Koorie artist turns road signs into jewellery

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*

*Blak Jewellery: Finding Past, Linking Present* will run from September 4 to November 14 at the Koorie Heritage Trust Yarra building, if COVID restrictions allow.

First Nations artist Lisa Waup said the six-week Blak Design program leading up to the exhibition had been “life changing”.

“I was a student at RMIT back in the ‘90s and I always used to look longingly at the smithing department that used to be down in the basement,” Ms Waup said.

“It’s always been a dream of mine, so I jumped at the opportunity to work with masters in the field.”

“I feel incredibly fortunate, and the support has been mind-blowing.”

As the first of its kind in Australia, the Blak Design program was created to provide a platform for nurturing sustainable, indigenous-led design businesses.

Ms Waup, along with 10 other artists, took part in six-weeks of hands-on jewellery design and making workshops under the guidance of jewellers Blanche Tilden and Laura Deakin, as well as small business skills tutorials.

With a passion for gold and silver smithing, Ms Waup honed her skills over the course of the program to produce her final work, *Our Way*, using custom-made aluminium traffic signs.

“I was interested in using everyday objects to create a new meaning, and in this case *Our Way* explores the power and peril of traffic direction and warning signs and their ability to control and disorientate First Nations people on their own land,” Ms Waup said.

“Historically these signs are marks of

violence, control and racism, and for me its inspiring me to disrupt, undo and fracture their original ambition.”

As a woman of Italian, Gunditjmara and Torres Strait Islander descent, Ms Waup was inspired to alter the symbology of the signs after she found one lying on the side of the road.

Creating three pieces of jewellery, her intention was to take a “symbol of oppression and spin it to a positive direction of liberation”.

“I wanted to take a stagnant western sign and create an immersive experience for the viewer which moved backwards into family, culture and country and forward into the future,” Ms Waup said.

*Our Way* consists of three works – a bracelet, a neck piece and a pair of earrings – which are all cut out of one square of a direction sign.

Ms Waup said that by using every part of the square, the jewellery was sustainable and zero-waste.

“I hand-sawed a square bracelet, and inside that square I’ve cut the neck piece out, and within that neck piece I’ve cut a circle in the middle of it which I’ve divided into two to make the pair of earrings,” Ms Waup said.

“There was a lot of sawing and filing so it doesn’t fit perfectly but they come together as the idea of the text was to pull it apart and change its direction.”

Another artist, Kait James, said the program had been an incredible way to honour her love and connection to her ancestors and her country.

“What I love most about the program is how we’ve all learnt the same incredible skills using different materials, then used them to turn our stories into jewellery and wearable art that is so



different from each other,” Ms James said.

“My work has been based around my love of sheoaks or ngarri in Wadawurrung, and the connections to my ancestors. Using different material to look at form and movement but also combining my love of colour to create various different pendants and necklaces.”

Koorie Heritage Trust CEO Tom Mosby said Blak design was a celebration of First Nations innovation within the Victorian design space.

“Blak Design is the continuation of a series of projects and discourse the KHT has delivered since 2014, exploring Australian contemporary First Nations design,” Mr Mosby said.

“These projects aim to promote First Nations design principles and best practice methodologies and theories to the broader design community while supporting and mentoring First Nations designers.” ●

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

HISTORY

# The Lort Smith Animal Hospital

*The Lost Dogs’ Home was founded in 1913. It was the beginning of a difficult period, with the outbreak of war the following year, followed at its ending with the Spanish flu, and then the beginning of the Depression.*

The home was overwhelmed with dogs and, although its charter mandated that destruction of dogs should be its last resort, the home simply didn’t have the resources to provide the care that many needed. The hospital just couldn’t keep up with demand.

A major threat that gave the home a bad name was the perception that it provided dogs to the University of Melbourne for vivisection. In fact, it was the Melbourne City Council which had a contract to provide the university with 60 dogs every year, but the home was stigmatised by association as the home was also under contract to take dogs from the council.

In 1928 a number of women, some of whom were supporters of the Lost Dogs’ Home, founded a new organisation to promote the wellbeing of animals – The Animal Welfare League. A band of Melbourne’s elite society formed the committee. It held balls, organised theatrical performances and garden parties to raise money, but also lobbied for better public education. Money was distributed among several animal welfare groups, but the Lost Dogs’ Home was soon complaining that it was dissatisfied with its portion of the revenue.

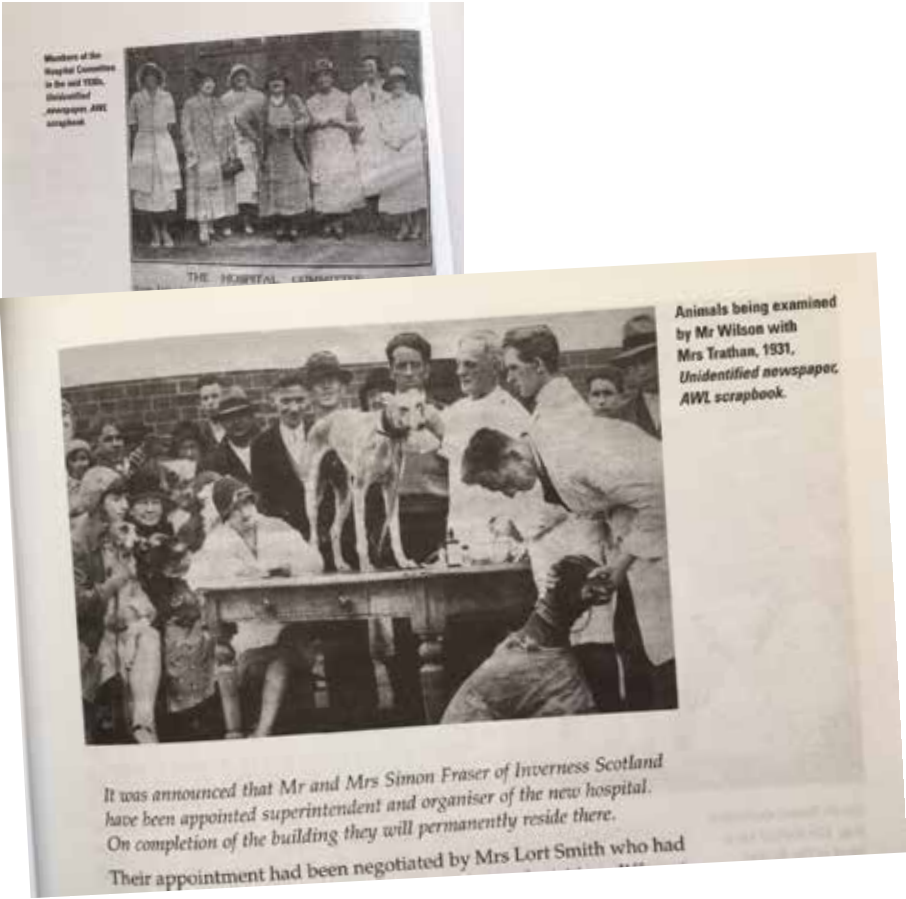
The Veterinary School of the University of Melbourne had, for several years, run a clinic for people unable to afford veterinary bills, but in 1928 it had to close due to a shortage of students wishing to enroll. The League was asked to take over the clinic, which was opened

on March 1, 1930 by Lord Somers, Governor of Victoria. It opened two afternoons a week, later extended to three. It is somewhat ironic that the first animal clinic that the league opened was at the request of the University of Melbourne, the institution that had proved so disastrous for the reputation of the Lost Dogs’ Home.

The aspirations of the league blossomed to encompass the idea of building its own animal hospital. This was strongly opposed by the Lost Dogs’ Home, which was in the process of building its own hospital – though whether this was as a result of the competition isn’t clear. But bitter animosity between the two organisations developed, with the home making several overtures to the league for the two to amalgamate. The league was implacable in its refusal to consider such a move.

Premises for the new hospital were found in Villiers St, North Melbourne and the foundation stone laid in 1935. It was named after Charles Lort Smith, chairman of the Lost Dogs’ Home in 1926. He was also solicitor for the Victoria Racing Club and the Victoria Amateur Turf Club. Although he had died four years before the foundations were laid he was honoured because he had drawn up the constitution for the Animal Welfare League which auspiced the new hospital.

Charles married in Louisa Montgomery in 1926 and this gave Louisa the resources to pursue her pioneering work in animal welfare.



She travelled in Europe and around Australia looking for best practice to bring to Victoria. She was a formidable woman and met all of life’s challenges head on. She was described as, “Short and stout, she was more like a hansom cab than a fashion plate in build. She had intense blue eyes, and a stare from her could stop any animal beater in his tracks”. She took a leading role in the formation of the Animal Welfare League and also, for some years, a prominent role in the administration of the hospital. She was strongly supported by her sister, Marion Montgomery, a dancing teacher

who taught many of Melbourne’s social elite.

The Lort Smith Animal Hospital was opened on November 13, 1936 by Sir James Barrett, Chancellor of the University of Melbourne and has continued to serve community for 95 years.

*Felicity Jack has written two books – Faithful Friends, which deals with the early history of the Lost Dogs’ Home and the Lort Smith Animal Hospital, and the Kindness of Strangers, the history of the Lort Smith Animal Hospital. The former is available from the Hotham History Project website, the latter is available from Spinifex Press ●*



## ROTARY CLUB - NORTH MELBOURNE



## Jazzing up the Zoom meetings

*With this extended lockdown a lot of people are starting to get a bit tired of Zoom meetings but the Rotary Club of North Melbourne has just responded to this by stepping it up even more by trying to make its meetings more interesting and entertaining.*

This has been done by the variety of speakers it features each week as well as extending invitations to a wider audience of attendees.

Just in the past few months our speakers have covered...

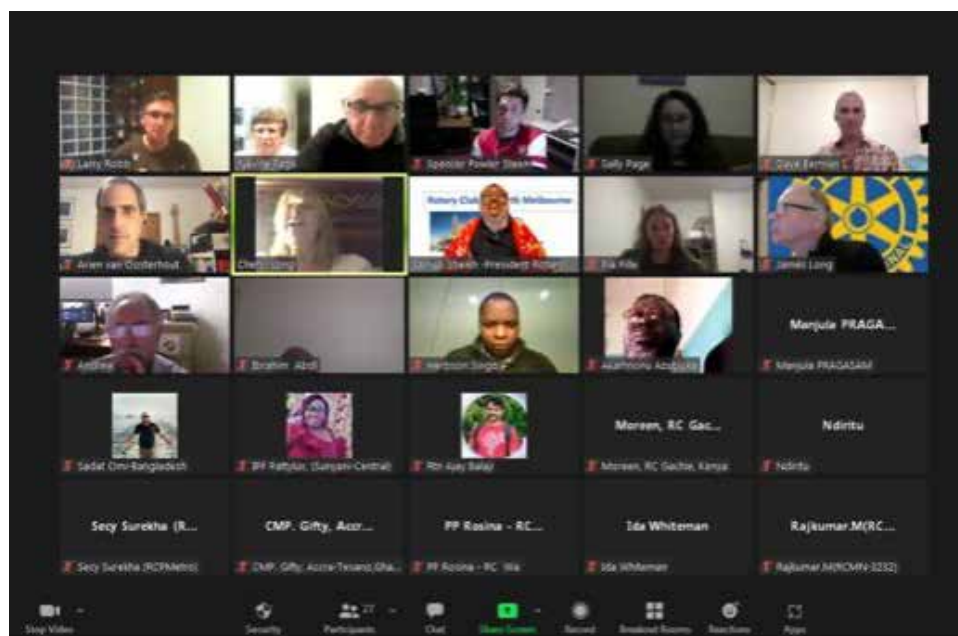
- Local North Melbourne issues with Ariel Valent, director of the Centre speaking about all of its activities.
- Health issues with Mohamed Mohideen, a microbiologist and president of the Islamic Council of Victoria and manager of the engagements and partnerships – COVID-19 Response and Vaccination Program. He spoke to us about the facts

relating to COVID-19 and the importance of vaccination.

- Personal interest issues with Yidan Xi, executive manager of The Chateau Yering Hotel and the youngest member of the Melbourne Rotary Club. She spoke to us about her life as an immigrant and a Rotarian.
- Mental health issues with Dave Berman, a life coach and hypnotherapist. He spoke to us about the benefits of laughter on our mental immune system and conducted a Q&A session incorporating laughter sessions which was quite a site on the

screen to see everyone laughing.

Though the North Melbourne Rotary Club only has 15 members we have averaged about 30 people at each of these meetings. Some of the other attendees have been friends from the North Melbourne Good Karma Facebook page and others from other Rotary clubs. Some of these other Rotarians have come from countries around the world such as India, Sri Lanka, Japan, Ghana, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa. We always welcome new faces. If you are interested in our next meeting, please contact our president Sainab Sheikh via email at [sainab.sheikh@gmail.com](mailto:sainab.sheikh@gmail.com) ●



## ROTARY CLUB - FLEMINGTON &amp; KENSINGTON

## Thank you, Edith

*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are principles of Rotary and well known at the Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington.*



As one of our younger members said when speaking about this topic, "Equity is inviting people to a party but inclusion is dancing with them".

Edith Chen, a long serving member exemplifies diversity, equity and inclusion in all she does for the community. Originally from Taiwan, Edith migrated to Australia in 1972 and has called Melbourne home for the past 25 years.

Often seen cycling around Kensington and Flemington on her way to activities, Edith works with elderly Chinese migrants, volunteers with the multi-age choir, commits to working in our Op Shop and teaches English to migrants. She has been a long-time supporter of Kensington Neighbourhood House, with Council On The Aging (COTA) and Seniors Victoria.

Recently, Edith was interviewed together with her friend Lee for a podcast *Women, Arts and Activism* as part of the Victorian Seniors Festival Reimagined. To listen: [seniorsonline.vic.gov.au](https://seniorsonline.vic.gov.au)

Edith has been an active member of the Flemington Golden Age group that launched a bilingual book funded by Moonee Valley City Council titled, *A Golden Age in Flemington: 10*

*Years of Active Ageing.* The book documents the activities of Chinese seniors engaging in their community, the challenges they have faced over a 10-year period, and the work that Edith and her group have achieved in connecting this community. For more visit [cotavic.org.au](https://cotavic.org.au)

Flemington Kensington Rotary welcomes people from all cultural, linguistic, vocational and social backgrounds and encourages members to develop projects and activities which spark their passion, as with Edith.

Thank you, Edith for all that you do for our community and in Rotary ●

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



## PARKVILLE GARDENS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## Get outdoors!

*Spring has arrived and made lockdown strolls around Parkville Gardens more inviting. Blue skies, warm sunshine and glimpses of blossom and flowers do much to lift our spirits.*

Times are tough for many in the community but we are fortunate to have easy access to open space and beautiful parks. Hopefully the natural assets of the neighbourhood are playing their part in helping everyone cope until we can meet again as a community.

In the meantime, there are cheerful things to report. The first is the good news that committee member Michael Thom has successfully secured funding for the Parkville Gardens Residents' Association (PGRA) to stage a Children's Week event. Kids aged from six to 12 years can look forward to an orienteering adventure here and in Royal Park on Sunday, October 24 from 10am to 3pm. Put the date in your diary today! More details next month.

The second is that the City of Melbourne will be replacing street lights with brighter Sylvania LED lamps by the end of the calendar year. That addresses residents' concerns about parts of the area that have not been well-lit. Thank you, City of Melbourne!

By the time you read this, PGRA will have submitted its application to the City of Melbourne for funding for community events in 2022. We hope we will be successful but we won't know until mid-December.

Before that we'll be holding our 2021 AGM. COVID permitting, we'll meet in person on the evening of Wednesday, November 17 – another date for your diary. This is a not-to-be-missed opportunity for local residents to come together and share your ideas and opinions on what can be done to make Parkville Gardens an even better place to live. And if you're passionate about the place, become a PGRA member if you aren't one already (contact us at [members@pgra.org.au](mailto:members@pgra.org.au)) and consider putting up your hand to become a committee member. Fresh

faces, fresh ideas and fresh energy are just what we're looking for.

Last month I introduced an agency, Dementia Australia, that has premises here. Sharing the site on Oak St is a campus of the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health (formerly the Mental Health Research Institute). The Florey Institute is the largest brain research centre in the Southern Hemisphere. It specialises in diseases of the brain and mind that affect nearly five million Australians each year.

Some of the many conditions under study at the Institute are Alzheimer's disease, autism, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and COVID-19. The day-to-day work that's done at the Parkville Gardens campus includes the collection of neuropsychology data about cognition and behaviour from healthy volunteers and people with dementia.

For more information about Florey's work, its *Brain Matters* magazine or its free public lectures visit [florey.edu.au](https://florey.edu.au) ●

**Residents can find us:**  
[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](mailto:PRESIDENT@PGRA.ORG.AU)





# Faces of North West City

What’s keeping you entertained or busy during lockdown?



SEBASTIAN  
Lots of gardening and being in the sun. I’m a student studying environmental engineering.



SELIM  
The internet. Bulgarian and Turkish local news. I’m also working at a call centre for emergency faults with an electricity distributor.



MADDY  
I’ve been doing a lot more cooking than normal, experimenting with baking cakes, and my housemate and I have started binge-watching a lot of shows on Netflix.



MATT  
I’ve just been working a lot. I’ve taken up more work in construction and that sort of thing. I’ve been watching a bit more Netflix, just finished *American Sniper*.

CRITIC

.....

## Comforting little constructions

Abstract painter *Andrée van Schaik* has sold five out of the seven paintings shown in this year’s *Spring 1883 Art Fair*.

This is despite the fact that the fair, which is held each year at the Windsor, had to go online because of the lockdown.

Last year’s fair suffered the fate of most events and was postponed.

This year, several galleries responded quickly to the impending threat of another cancellation and showed work however they could.

Neon Parc Gallery’s gutsy little CBD venue, mounted a COVID-safe group show over three days in August.

That exhibition lasted only two days before it, too, was shut down, not giving people much time to actually see the work.

“Three paintings sold in the first two days in the flesh,” Andrée told *CBD News*.

The sales were pleasing but she said it was disappointing that a year’s work was only up for two days.

“You do like the work to be seen after all that effort,” she said.

Spring 1883 organisers have been sending around curated highlights by celebrities such as Rachel Griffiths.

This is frustrating for those who get a kick from actually seeing the work rather than reading about it.

Neon Parc has a Spring Preview catalogue they are sending out that focuses on the images.

Van Schaik’s blunt little abstracts are inspiring with their bold cut-up shapes and their jokey references to the greats.

The painter wisely refrains from commenting on her own work and wouldn’t be drawn



on the question of how she manages to keep the work light-hearted in a year of ups and downs.

She did say that she has been through some bad patches.

“I feel like I can’t see friends to get relief from what I’m doing,” she said.

She didn’t get an opening and didn’t have a chance to photograph her work on the walls.

*Already 2021* shows a cut-up interior with a few animal prints, a hand and a window, perhaps a commentary on our own domestic hells.

*Liminal 2021* combines body parts with Japanese patterns and *Overture 2021* is a rather fey, soft rendition of Matisse-like patterns.

How comforting these modest little constructions are compared to the heavy-duty posturing surrounding the pandemic ●



Rhonda Dredge  
JOURNALIST  
RHONDA@CBDNEWS.COM.AU



## City Life

“There are no short cuts to my place.”

*Racecourse Rd*



MELBOURNE ZOO

# Creating connections to nature in the heart of Melbourne

*What do gardens mean to you? Are they a place to relax, or to escape, or to explore, or to get dirty in?*

WORDS BY Sarah  
MELBOURNE ZOO HORTICULTURE SUPERVISOR

For me, gardens are all these things and more. And as a leader in Melbourne Zoo's horticulture team, I feel like one of the luckiest gardeners in the world, especially now it's spring!

When I reflect on the past year-and-a-half of this pandemic and what we have all been through together, I realise that gardens are more important now than ever – we're all craving our connections to nature and open spaces. In the Melbourne Zoo gardening team, our work is all about creating special places, places for people to connect with nature, to spend time with loved ones, to be alone, to think, relax, reflect, explore and enjoy. While animals will always be the stars of Melbourne Zoo, we know our gardens are just as special for many of our zoo members and visitors.

I've been working for Zoos Victoria as a gardener for about 15 years. This is how I make my contribution to conservation and the zoo's mission of inspiring a love of wildlife. It's an honour to be able to do this work in our inner-city location where open space, trees and gardens are so precious.

A lot of people don't realise, but we have around 3000 trees at Melbourne Zoo. There are many hundreds more shrubs and grasses. Our historic trees are amazing. We have remnant River Red Gums that have been here for hundreds of years. There is our iconic Moreton Bay Fig, perhaps as old as the zoo itself. When I tell people I'm a gardener at the zoo, they often have a special family memory to share with me. Many generations of one family may have sat underneath one of our historic trees, or perhaps someone you know got married in the gardens. The gardens are part of Melbourne's history and I am so excited about the part they will play in the future also. As Melbourne Zoo continues to be transformed, our gardens will be changing and evolving too.

Our team actively contributes to the zoo's mission of fighting wildlife extinction. Our nursery team grows plants for the critically endangered Lord Howe Island Stick Insect. We grow tropical plants for the zoo's glorious Butterfly House. We also grow food plants for some of the zoo's animal residents. And our green spaces are a source of food and refuge for all sorts of local birds, insects and other wild animals. The gardens are so much more than something to look at!

As zoo gardeners, we explore a range of microclimates to create a range of experiences matched to the animals that live in different parts of the zoo. Obviously, we can't perfectly recreate lowland African temperate rainforests here, and we aren't trying to, but we can come close to it and we can certainly create gardens that immerse people in a landscape. We use a



mixture of plants from the continent where the animals live in the wild, but then also experiment with Australian native plants to create a strong sense of place with a local flavour.

We try to make this immersion a gradual process. Our inspiration is always the natural world. You will start on the fringe of one of our animal precincts, perhaps at an estuary or a creek that leads into a rainforest. The plants get denser as you go deeper in. There might be a clearing in the middle where you can glimpse an elephant or an orang-utan. And as you gradually emerge from the landscape the plantings change again, just as they would if you were exploring a wild habitat. It's a creative challenge that as gardeners we love and thrive on.

Sustainability is central to what we do here. We're careful with water, smart with our plant selection and we're passionate about mulching and composting. We always consider Melbourne's temperate climate, our city's sometimes harsh summers and wet winters as well as

changing weather patterns.

We want people to interact with these gardens, to run their hands across a plant, feel the texture of a leaf, or smell a flower. We are trying to create places for people to immerse themselves in. And, of course, we know that so many children visit our zoo, so we have them in mind when designing our gardens, the need to make garden spaces welcoming, safe and inclusive for everyone who will use them.

It is such a privilege to be one of the custodians of these Melbourne Zoo gardens. I pinch myself every day. For me, the greatest moments are when I see a young child or a family or a couple in love connecting with our gardens. This connection to nature is so special and so important. If you're reading this, even if you can't visit the zoo, why not explore a local park or stand beneath a tree near your home? Find that connection to nature near you. We need this more than ever right now ●

PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS' NETWORK

# COVID outbreaks

*The government's response has not been police-led as with last year's lockdowns – a welcome change! They are meeting with communities in online sessions and there is organised support with food and other resident needs.*

The deplorable state of lifts in towers has, though, added huge levels of anxiety. Despite a large allocation of funds last year in the government's first response to the pandemic, it has not been translated into fixing these problems in towers where outbreaks continue.

Residents and community groups from the Carlton housing estate are soon meeting with Minister for Housing Richard Wynne to discuss the safety, security and overcrowding issues, among other things. We are highly skilled residents, we will ask for some control of management, we have lived experience.

As per the Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass's recommendation to have fully-funded residents' committees on public housing estates, this will be high on the agenda.

Overcrowding reduction has been a botched program with households sent all over Melbourne, breaking connections with local networks and friends and now face uncertainty over long-term housing security.

**Homelessness**

In my August column I described the homelessness crisis in our state. This month the state government has to provide a formal response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness: [parliament.vic.gov.au/lsic-lc/inquiries/inquiry/976](http://parliament.vic.gov.au/lsic-lc/inquiries/inquiry/976) and there were a lot of organisations demanding it be addressed.

Grassroots campaigns like Geelong Homelessness Action Group (GHAG) have recently stated that the government is "lying" to the people of Victoria (their words not mine) ...

"Today at the COVID presser in response to

questions about housing people experiencing homelessness the state government went into spin overdrive. [Martin] Foley stated people are being housed under the state's Big Build project, give us a break! There's currently over 110,000 people on the Housing Register, that's 52,000 household applications and we know there's many more people needing housing that are not even registered. The Big Build is proposing a meagre 12,000 properties over four years. We're not fooled by spin, this government is not doing enough and is lying to the people of Victoria" (GHAG Facebook page 19/8/21).

The Save Public Housing Collective (SPHC) is tracking what is happening on demolished and other public housing estates ([map.save-publichousing.com](http://map.save-publichousing.com)) and it is clear that GHAG are not unfair in their assessment.

One of the Big Housing Build projects taking in three demolished public housing sites, including at Victoria St and Holland Court in Flemington, won't have any construction starting until 2024 at the earliest. Read more at [infrastructurepipeline.org](http://infrastructurepipeline.org).

The Holland Court demolition and redevelopment will have ZERO public housing built; there is no clarity on accommodating people who are homeless; only promises of market rental housing (yes market rents on public land!), some affordable (less than local market) probably for "essential workers" – teachers, nurses, etc., and community housing which pushes tenants into housing cost stress with rents set at 30 per cent of household income and other charges for use of facilities on site.

The National Housing Finance Investment

Corporation (NHFIC) created by Scott Morrison when he was the federal treasurer, which is not funding any new public housing, was able to quickly find \$400 million to help fund the three sites project soon after it was announced without any publicly available due diligence on why.

**NSW already a disaster with this approach**

The NSW Tenants Union recently exposed this approach by governments to how they fund new housing: [tenants.org.au/blog/tale-alan-and-annie-living-affordable-housing-and-retiring-paid-work](http://tenants.org.au/blog/tale-alan-and-annie-living-affordable-housing-and-retiring-paid-work)

**Outcomes: nothing but insecurity!**

The policy is all about a new class of Australian and overseas private investors, including superannuation funds, making profits out of destroying public housing. Essential workers are brought in to engage them in gentrification and forced displacements of the very people they care for and educate and should be in solidarity with.

**Ethical, real experts in housing support public housing**

Dr Tim Williams is one of these experts. Dr Williams in the past was the chief executive of the Committee for Sydney: [thefifthestate.com.au/columns/spinifex/the-reasons-behind-our-housing-crisis-are-clear-if-we-care-to-look/](http://thefifthestate.com.au/columns/spinifex/the-reasons-behind-our-housing-crisis-are-clear-if-we-care-to-look/)

In my past columns I have drawn readers attention to Dr David Hayward's (Emeritus Professor at RMIT) opinion piece on the intrinsic value of public housing: [smh.com.au/business/the-economy/private-landlords-are-losing-billions-should-we-keep-picking-up-the-tab-20210615-p58154.html](http://smh.com.au/business/the-economy/private-landlords-are-losing-billions-should-we-keep-picking-up-the-tab-20210615-p58154.html)

**Housing should be a human right in Victoria**

The Victorian Government has an opportunity to lead Australia in committing to a program of public housing build which will start the journey to delivering this human right. This can happen this month when it responds to the Parliamentary Inquiry.


The government has initiated a review of what it calls social housing regulations in Victoria. Social housing is now a very flexible term in our state. Affordable housing is included and the terms of reference talks about setting up regulations to enable "competitive neutral" bidding for state funds against public housing. The review has the very strong appearance of working to deliver the NSW nightmare.

I call on the state government to observe what I believe is its existing obligations to the UN Covenant on Housing and this should be the principal outcome of the Review.

COVID responses and housing insecurity have to be dealt with together in Victoria.

If there are remaining doubts on Victoria's obligations, it can be legislated and then backed with a massive build of public housing ●

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



Cory Memery

CORYMEMERY@YAHOO.COM



# Pet's Corner

## Toast visits Toast

“Although Toast wasn’t quite cut out to be a trickster show dog like his siblings, he has still managed to become a local celebrity in North Melbourne where he struts his stuff.”



WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*

Owner Anna said she purchased him in regional Victoria in 2015 after visiting a dog show.

“We were looking to get a dog and we were trying to find a breed that would work for us, because back then I worked outside of home,” she said.

“So, we needed a dog that was okay being left alone and was smart and trainable. We went to the dog show back in 2015 and that’s where I found out about this breed, and his mother was at the show and pregnant and that’s how we got him!”

Toast is a Keeshond, a breed of dog also known as a “Dutch barge dog” after they were frequently seen on barges traveling the canals and rivers of the Netherlands, according to *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

They are known for their intelligence and obedience, making them naturally brilliant show dogs.

Coincidentally speaking to *North West City News* outside of Toast Kitchen Café in North Melbourne,

Anna said her Toast was “very silly” with “lots of personality”.

“He’s a little local celebrity! He’ll walk by and people will say, ‘there’s toast!’ she said.

When it comes to Toast’s diet, it remains unclear if he enjoys eating his namesake, but Anna did say that he ate pretty much anything.

“He’s an omnivore and eats cucumbers and tomatoes and loves cheese,” she said.

Always keeping a vacuum cleaner at the ready due to how much hair Toast sheds, Anna said she liked to take her companion for walks around Melbourne, the longest clocking in at 20 kilometres across two days.

“He also likes to go to the beach,” she said. “He doesn’t know how to swim, but he loves to splash around.”

“There’s not much else to say, we love him, and he loves us.” ●

### ENVIRONMENT

## What is your legacy?

*When you leave this planet – what legacy will you leave behind from your actions?*

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its latest report in August, which is a comprehensive assessment of the physical science of climate change and states there is a narrow path to avoiding climate catastrophe, but only through immediate, deep and sustained emissions reductions.

The report is years in the making and draws from a new generation of highly advanced climate models and scenarios. It is the work of literally hundreds of scientists from around the world and is put through an extraordinarily rigorous process of review.

The findings are very clear and simple – we need to cease activities that emit carbon (reduce emissions to as close to zero as possible) and we need to remove CO2 from the atmosphere.

It took me awhile before I could bring myself to read the findings, as I wanted to avoid feeling despair and responsibility.

However, I need to face the reality and ask myself the difficult question – what am I doing, what part am I playing in the climate catastrophe?

I cannot rely on our government and big business benefitting from the status quo to make any real change.

I, as an individual, living in a first world country enjoy privilege, choice and freedom to act. I have agency and power through my money, voice and actions to help bring down carbon and cease supporting carbon emission activities.

A simple question to ask is – is this action of mine, earn and spend of my dollar, going to contribute to creating carbon emissions or removing CO2 from the atmosphere? There is enough information around for me to do the maths.



Below are some actions to take now, which will make a difference with minimum effort. Most you don’t need to leave your house for. Are we really at the point where we have to be convinced that we don’t have to get off our arses to help our planet?

#### Get woke

Notice and become aware of the power you have as an individual. Stop making excuses. In Australia our contribution to carbon emissions is killing people, species and biodiversity.

#### Change your bank/financial institutions/ Investments

Where do you keep your money? Unfortunately, investments in planet-destroying industries such as fossil fuels and mining still reap huge financial returns. If you continue to bank with an institution that operates this way – you are making a clear choice.

Put your money with a bank, like Bank Australia, who refuses to fund industries that contribute to fossil fuels, and your super with an ethical super fund.

Imagine if 40 per cent of average Australians transferred their money to an ethical financial institution that did not support the fossil fuel industry – overnight our planet would have a chance, new low carbon or no carbon industries, planet regeneration ideas would have a chance to be funded and invested in appropriately to fix the damage.



#### Planting a chemical free garden with productive plants, flowers and trees

Healthy soil is the easiest and quickest way to bring back carbon to the earth. Trees and plants take in CO2.

Clive Blazey founder of The Diggers Club in the September 2021 issue of the *Diggers* magazine said, “If we revert back to managing the sun’s free energy and free carbon by using plants, we can sequester (appropriate) enough carbon to increase soil organic matter by 1 per cent which will bring down ten tonnes of carbon per acre, helping bring down carbon back down to earth to ensure the future of our planet.”

If you don’t have space to plant ask neighbours, councils, private business owners if you can plant a tree in spare land. There are enough vacant, unloved bare, little plots of land everywhere in the inner city of Melbourne.

Plant trees while you search the web. Change your search engine to Ecosia which uses the profit they make from searches to plant trees where they are needed most. They have planted over 133 million trees over 9000 sites.

8 Billion trees is a carbon-offset company that runs large scale planting operations in the Amazon rainforest. By supporting them you directly fund the conservation and planting of trees in a critical area.

#### Set up your own compost and/or use local community compost hubs

Take responsibility for your own organic food scraps. The high carbon footprint in having your organic waste trucked out and processed in a factory each week is unnecessary and negligent when we are facing climate havoc.

#### Be a “clicktivist”

Donate to Environmental Justice Climate Council activities. Getup and Avaaz and organisations direct activities that focus on stopping carbon emission activity and bring down carbon. Sign petitions which call for direct action.

This is not a comprehensive list – If you could do but one of these you are making a difference.

When your grandchild asks you in the future – “You know during the time when the world was facing a climate crisis, what did you do?”

How will you answer?  
What will be your legacy? ●



Jacqui van Heerden  
CO-CONVENER OF TRANSITION TOWN KENSINGTON  
JACQUIVANHEERDEN@GMAIL.COM



KENSINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE



What does a Neighbourhood House do when the neighbours are in lockdown?

*This is a question that has been playing on my mind lately.*

WORDS BY *Rebecca Smith*  
MANAGER,  
KENSINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

Kensington Neighbourhood House is “a place to meet, share information, develop skills and break down isolation and other community barriers.” So, what happens when the entire community is isolating? How do we support people when we have to close our doors? How do we follow our mission while keeping our community safe?

Rather than crawling back under our doonas (and believe me, that is a very tempting option), the team here at KNH has risen to the occasion and come up with ways to provide the support our community needs.

Some things have moved online. The weekly “Kensingers” community choir and our Study Support Program can switch from face-to-face to Zoom relatively easily. The Kensington Sister Circle – a facilitated peer support group for local African-Australian women – has also been able to move online.

For other programs, it’s not that easy. Many of our adult English class students do not have the digital literacy or the data plans to cope with online learning. To overcome this barrier, our intrepid EAL teacher prepares work for students every week and either emails it or posts it out along with a reply-paid envelope. She then follows up with individual phone conversations every single week. These calls help

with language learning but are also a wellbeing check – making sure people are okay, offering support if they’re not. Our letter box is full of returned homework each day. Not a single student has left class.

Last month, we had to close our Morning Childcare Program to all but the children of authorised workers. This was a blow. The sound of children playing, singing, laughing, even the odd tantrum, helped our house feel alive during previous lockdowns. It’s terribly quiet now. To help support families, our Early Childhood Educators have recorded stories and songs on YouTube and are providing activity packs each week for children to collect. Kite-making supplies, playdough, a photo “treasure hunt” along McCracken St. Little things to stay connected with our littlest participants.

In the office, our printer, scanner and photocopier are working overtime. Do you know how hard it is to get things printed when you don’t have the equipment at home and the libraries and Officeworks are shut? Just as we did last year, we offer a “click and collect” printing service to the community. People email their documents and we print them out and put them on the verandah for collection. VCE practice exams, homework, resumes, job applications, authorised worker permits, the list goes on. In 2020, we printed more than 3100 pages for the community. I wonder how many it will be this year?

Sometimes it all seems a bit too hard. That’s when we need to call on others. Feeling daunted by the idea of organising a remote afternoon tea for Adult Learners’ Week, our education coordinator reached out to the Kensington Good Karma Network for help with baking. Well! Before you could say “caramel slice”, she was inundated with offers. As a result, we were able to provide more than 600 packs of beautiful baked treats to our adult students, our Wednesday Seniors group and our Study Support families. Way to go K-Town!

Continuing the community generosity is the McCracken Street Food Share Pantry. This “give what you can, take what you need” pantry is run by a group of amazing volunteers from our front verandah. Dozens of people visit every day to donate supplies and to collect much needed food. We’re currently providing more than 500 items a week to people in need. The most requested item? Coffee! It’s inner-city Melbourne after all.

Another volunteer program – Conversations Over The Front Fence – is making sure that isolated community members receive regular phone calls. Sometimes just one person checking in for a chat can make all the difference.

It’s by no means perfect. And it’s not enough. We are desperate to welcome people back to “our house” again. But for now, the daily efforts of our staff and our community members remind me that people are kind, generous and basically amazing.



Want to help?

Be a good neighbour. Say hello to others in your street whenever you get the chance. Small human connections mean a lot, particularly for people who are living alone.

Donate supplies to the McCracken Street Food Share Pantry when you’re out for your daily exercise. Top 10 items are pictured here, but all non-perishable food is welcome. Deliver to 89 McCracken St, Kensington, 9am to 5pm week days.

Volunteer with the pantry. The team needs volunteers to help out with restocking and collecting supplies on mornings Monday to Friday. Contact: [pantry@kenhouse.org.au](mailto:pantry@kenhouse.org.au) for more information ●

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



*Rebecca Smith*  
MANAGER KENSINGTON  
NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE  
[INFO@KENHOUSE.ORG.AU](mailto:INFO@KENHOUSE.ORG.AU)

TRADER PROFILE

Small businesses’ time to shine

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*  
BUSINESS

During one of the toughest years for business in history, the longevity of 50 of Melbourne’s locally loved small businesses has been recognised by Lord Mayor Sally Capp.

Recognising small businesses’ contribution to the City of Melbourne, the Lord Mayor’s Commendations has been encouraging and celebrating businesses since 2005.

The businesses making the inner north-west proud this year are Alpha Lewis Signs, Nutshell Graphics, The Network Group, Vertigo High Access Specialists, The Drunken Poet and Jissara Hair.

And Lord Mayor Sally Capp is hoping the latest recognitions will provide hope for the future.

“Melbourne’s small businesses have endured the toughest trading conditions in decades, and we want to recognise and support them as the city recovers,” Cr Capp said.

For the six inner north-west businesses selected, the recognition is not taken lightly.



▲ Left: Alpha Lewis Signs director and co-owner Paul Lewis. Right: Nutshell Graphics founder Sue Allnutt.

“It’s important to have positive stories out there in the marketplace and it’s a great sign and a good initiative by the council,” Vertigo High Access Specialists CEO John Dollisson said.

Alpha Lewis Signs director and co-owner Kim Lewis said her business could have closed down due to circumstances out of its control.

“So, it’s been really nice to have a little happy moment and celebrate all our wins over the

years,” she said.

Despite lockdown still being in place, Lord Mayor Sally Capp is hopeful the recipients will have their chance to be honoured at Melbourne Town Hall, which is something founder and CEO of The Network Group, Keran Wicks, is very much looking forward to.

“I can’t wait till we can have a few drinks to celebrate not just the business, but my terrific

staff who have built the business with me,” she said.

Like a lot of successful small businesses, the strength of family and a supportive local community is their backbone. And for owner of Jissara Hair, John Gissara, this statement remains true.

Established in 1954, the Kensington business has been passed down from father to son, and has continuously been recognised by the council for its dedication to the community.

But this year is particularly special for Mr Gissara, as it is through extreme difficulties that he has been able to see his two young children “comprehend that they can achieve things like their father” through perseverance.

“It’s all about family and local support. We wouldn’t have been here for this amount of time if we didn’t have local support,” he said.

The City of Melbourne is built on small businesses and if the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that now is the time to celebrate and support everything they provide ●







# What's On: September 2021

Community Calendar (please check current covid restrictions)

## SCIENCEWORKS AT HOME

Online

Everyday

Take a tour of Scienceworks exhibitions and enjoy a range of family friendly activities.



## ANIMALS AT HOME

Online

Every day

Check out the 24/7 live streams of some of your favourite animals at Melbourne Zoo.

<https://www.zoo.org.au/animals-at-home/>

## MELBOURNE MUSEUM AT HOME

Online

Everyday

Can't make it to Melbourne Museum? Take a virtual tour of the exhibitions, hear from a museum expert, dive into learning resources or get inspired by a range of family-friendly activities.

## CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION FROM THE ROYAL WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

Online

Wednesday nights. 6pm–9pm

Childbirth education via online livestreaming.

## JAPAN AND ME

September 10 – October 7

Online

Book at [connect.ngv.vic.gov.au/43349/44570](https://connect.ngv.vic.gov.au/43349/44570)

Share in a child's early art experiences and discover artworks from the NGV together with online sessions designed for children.



## DARK TIME TALK

September 16, 23 and 30

8pm – 10.30pm

Online

[www.darktalktime.com](http://www.darktalktime.com)

[benmichaellandau@gmail.com](mailto:benmichaellandau@gmail.com)

Sitting in the dark on the phone, you share a conversation with a stranger then say goodbye, a little lighter than before.



## FREE EXERCISE ONLINE

The Carlton Baths Facebook feed is filled with free workout videos. Scroll down the page to find low-impact workouts, Pilates and the ever popular yoga classes.

Kaya Health free online workouts

Charge your body and mind with indoor-phins via Kaya Health's free online workouts.

## FREE THE PARK HOTEL REFUGEES

Online meetings available.

Every night, 6pm.

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



## TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE WRITING GROUP

Fortnightly on Tuesdays 5-6pm

Online writing group via Zoom for trans and gender diverse young people. The workshop will also be for any other queer-identified people between the ages of 13 to 25 to connect and get writing. FREE  
[youngadults@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:youngadults@melbourne.vic.gov.au)



## ART PLAY AT HOME

Online

[www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/arts-and-culture/artplay/](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/arts-and-culture/artplay/)

Your home is full of creative possibilities - you could draw, dance, make music, write or play. Explore a range of ArtPlay activities at home ranging from puppetry to creative writing, music to drawing - all developed by artists - for a range of ages.

# Business Directory

## Association

**North & West Melbourne Precinct Association**

w: [northwestmelbourne.com.au](http://northwestmelbourne.com.au)  
e: [northwestmelbourneprecinct@gmail.com](mailto:northwestmelbourneprecinct@gmail.com)

**ELLEN SANDELL**

STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE

(03) 9328 4637 office@ellensandell.com 146 Peel Street North Melbourne VIC 3051

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[QVM.COM.AU](http://QVM.COM.AU)

## Politician

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Fiona Patten MP  
LEADER OF REASON  
(03) 9386 4400 | [fionapatten.com.au](http://fionapatten.com.au)

## Real Estate

Call Chris on 1300 997 514  
Email [chris@chrissnell.com.au](mailto:chris@chrissnell.com.au) Visit [chrissnell.com.au](http://chrissnell.com.au)  
Servicing Melbourne City and Metropolitan Melbourne

**Chris Snell**  
REAL ESTATE

- Sales
- Leasing
- Rental Management

✓ Melbourne Resident ✓ Melbourne Agent ✓ Making Property Personal

## Shopping

**THE DISTRICT DOCKLANDS**

[thedistrictdocklands.com.au](http://thedistrictdocklands.com.au)

## School

**SCHOOL OF LIVING MUSIC**  
SINCE 1999

A: 53 Little Baillie Street North Melbourne  
Ph: 03 9329 0503  
Email: [info@livingmusic.com.au](mailto:info@livingmusic.com.au)





## COVID-19 VACCINE

If you are eligible, now is the time to book in for your COVID-19 vaccine. Having a safe and effective vaccine available in Australia helps protect you, your family and your community from coronavirus. To learn more, visit [coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine)

إذا كنتم مؤهلين للحصول على لقاح كوفيد-19، الآن هو الوقت المناسب لحجز موعد لكم لأخذ اللقاح. يساعد توفر لقاح آمن وفعال في أستراليا على حمايتكم وحماية عائلاتكم ومجتمعكم من فيروس كورونا. لمعرفة المزيد، يرجى زيارة الموقع الإلكتروني [coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine)

如果符合新冠疫苗接种资格，请尽快预约。在澳大利亚接种安全有效的疫苗，有助于保护个人、家庭和社区免受新冠病毒的侵害。更多信息请访问：[coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine)

如果符合COVID-19疫苗施打资格，请尽快预约。在澳洲施打安全有效的疫苗，有助於保護個人、家庭和社區免受新冠病毒的侵害。更多資訊請訪問：[coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine)

Haddii aad u qalanto, hadda ayaa ah waqtiga loo samaysto ballan talaalka COVID-19. Inaad qaadatao talaalka laga hello Australia ee wax ku oolka ah wuxuu ka caawimaa adiga, qoyskaaga, iyo bulshadaada coronavirus-ka. Si aad wax badan uga ogaato, booqo [coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine)

Nếu hội đủ tiêu chuẩn, giờ đây là lúc quý vị lấy hẹn để được chủng ngừa COVID-19. Việc có sẵn thuốc chủng ngừa an toàn và hiệu quả ở Úc giúp bảo vệ quý vị, gia đình và cộng đồng của quý vị không bị bệnh coronavirus. Muốn biết thêm thông tin xin vào trang mạng [coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine)

[coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine)



CITY OF MELBOURNE