

NORTH WEST CITY NEWS

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Forever Free

Puzzles & Trivia P18



YIRRAMBOI shines
Photo by Rachel Litwin

North Melbourne’s Meat Market provided the hub for Melbourne’s leading First Nations arts and culture festival, *YIRRAMBOI*, which consumed the city for 10 spectacular days of performance, art and storytelling in May. *Full story on page 9.*

New linear park for West Melbourne gets tick of approval

The City of Melbourne has endorsed plans for a linear park in West Melbourne, which the council says addresses concerns about loss of parking, safety for all road users, and traffic management.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Under the concept designs, which were approved by councillors at their May 2 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, the Hawke St linear park will extend from Railway Place to King St, with the final design including the retention of the Adderley St roundabout after community

concerns were expressed that it would be lost along with its traffic calming benefits.

Two-metre-wide separated bicycle lanes from Adderley St to Victoria St will also form as part of the street’s overhaul, which will see traffic cut down to one lane in each direction.

The northern side of Hawke St will make way for the linear park, which the council found to be the best option as properties on this side had vehicle access via rear laneways.

“This alignment provides an opportunity to create larger areas of continuous green space and to integrate with the two existing open spaces at each end of the street,” the plans stated.

Construction is expected to begin in early 2024 following several rounds of community consultation and workshops, with feedback being taken into consideration with the final concept design.

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Developer committed to working closely with mosque to build basketball court

The developer behind a proposed multi-million-dollar mixed-use project in North Melbourne says he is committed to working cooperatively and collaboratively with a neighbouring community group, which has plans to build a basketball court behind their mosque.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PLANNING

Developer David Wardlaw, managing director of Orb Property Partners, which has a permit to build a \$750 million complex including apartments on vacant plot of land to the north of a mosque and community centre on Boundary Rd, which is owned by the Australian Muslim Social Services Agency (AMSSA). Mr Wardlaw said that while he didn’t agree with the current designs of the proposed basketball court, he had “never stood in their way at all, and we’ve helped them and agreed for them to build it from my land”.

Mr Wardlaw said he wanted to set the record straight after an article, published in *The Age*, appeared to “incite religious, racial antagonism between us and them which has never been the case”. “It’s just nonsensical that we’ve had a bad relationship with the mosque, and that we’ve tried to do send them broke. I would say it’s the absolute opposite,” he said.

“Back in 2014 after having met [AMSSA secretary] Adam Mohamed, I made two offers to them, which they were keen to explore. I offered to build them a new mosque or alternatively we would have agreed to purchase their land for \$7 million.”

AMSSA is a not-for-profit group that provides various religious,

educational, social, and recreational services to the wider community and Muslims in particular. It has operated the mosque, a former warehouse, since 2010.

In October 2019, the City of Melbourne approved a planning application for AMSSA to develop the area behind mosque with an indoor community hall that will accommodate a slightly undersized basketball court that can also be used as a community meeting space.

However, the case was taken to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) after Mr Wardlaw, and the Marcocci Property Group, with the latter owning land and a warehouse to the south of the mosque (which is understood to be redeveloped and become home to the University Food Group), argued the basketball court “will result in an underdevelopment of the land”.

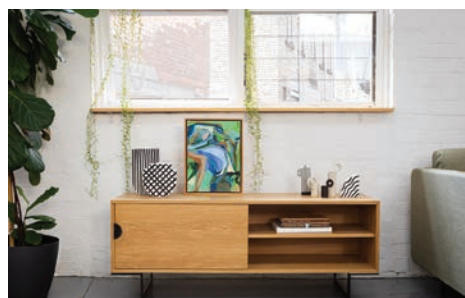
However, VCAT upheld the council decision to grant a permit in July 2021, with VCAT member Alison Glynn stating the proposed development “provides a demonstrable benefit in improving facilities at a valued community service”.

Speaking candidly in interview with the *North West City News* in May, Mr Wardlaw said, “We’ve never had a problem at all other than objecting to a permit on a building which we didn’t think was a good

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LOVE YOUR NWC LOCAL, PAGE 03

A Furniture that turns a house into a home



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B Focus on business, events in latest council budget



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C Community consulted on new bike lanes



COMMUNITY, PAGE 08

D Tower residents urged to register for pay-out



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The deadline for the June edition is June 15

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New options explored for public space along Errol, Queensberry streets in North Melbourne

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne has proposed four different scenarios for the creation of a new public space next to the North Melbourne Town Hall.

The new space, proposed by the council in June last year, is expected to bring life to the urban landscape and provide a valuable space for residents.

The proposed preliminary layout options, which, at the time of publishing, were considered by councillors at their May 16 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, included using Queensberry St and linking the central median strip on Errol St.

A public space on its own in Queensberry St is proposed between Errol and Leveson streets.

“All preliminary layouts require completion of traffic impact assessments and car parking studies to be able to fully assess the viability of each option,” a council report said.

“It is proposed that this work be undertaken after which the preliminary layouts will progress to a functional design stage, including a further process of refinement and feedback from key stakeholders such as DTP (Department of Transport and Planning).”

The council explored an option to consider using \$100 million from the North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Docklands Transport and Amenity Program (TAP), which is a suite of streetscape improvement projects “to help to alleviate and leverage some of the effects and benefits” of the West Gate Tunnel Project, particularly for local and arterial roads in the City of Melbourne.

However, the council report stated the public space project was “not on the priority list” for TAP funding.

“Current council priority projects in the TAP are Spencer St Master Plan, Hawke St Linear

“All preliminary layouts require completion of traffic impact assessments and car parking studies to be able to fully assess the viability of each option.”



Park and Franklin St streetscape improvements, with all likely funding allocated to these projects,” it said.

While funding is unconfirmed, the report noted there was a “strategic justification for creating additional open space in the area of the North Melbourne Town Hall, with council’s Open Space Strategy (2012) identifying a need for additional open space in this sub-precinct”.

“Once confirmation of viable layouts has been determined, community engagement to determine the level of community interest and support for the viable layouts can progress,” it said.

The plans consider safe and easy access for people walking to and through the site, protected bike lanes along Queensberry St, maintaining existing bus and tram routes, and providing access for loading including for the Arts House.



▲ The four open space layout options (outlined in red, blue, orange and green) to be investigated by the council.

It will also allow for the impact of any changes to car parking, as well as consideration of the heritage-listed toilet located in the centre median of Queensberry St, and ensuring traffic flow is safe and legible, with access maintained to adjacent laneways.

The community has long called for the council to nominate a place within the City of Melbourne, preferably a public and civic space in North Melbourne, to honour the legacy of local activists in social and environmental planning, Ruth and Maurie Crow.

The naming of any new open space at North Melbourne Town Hall will be considered when the feasibility of the project has been completed.

A report and/or draft concepts will come back to council in March 2024. ●

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Furniture that turns
a house into a home



There is nothing more homely than a house designed to suit the occupant's personal style, and that is exactly what anaca studio is all about.



WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
BUSINESS

Founded and owned by French-born designer Anne-Claire Petre, the studio was born from a passion to create investment pieces designed to suit the customer or client's vibe.

"I love people coming into the showroom and having conversations with them and finding out how they live, because that's the best way for me to guide and help them make the right decisions for them," Ms Petre said.



Through these conversations, Ms Petre is able to determine the right fabric for the furniture and guide them based on whether they have kids or pets, or how much time they have to look after the piece.

"It's about more than just buying a piece of furniture, because it's an investment piece that is made to last, so it is about making sure they really love it," she added.

Furniture design is an area that Ms Petre has dedicated a lot of time and effort towards; after studying industrial design in Scotland, she worked in a number of furniture stores and with an interior designer.

Eventually everything fell into place and she took the plunge in 2012 by starting up anaca studio.

During this time she has gone from working out of her own home, to working out of a small

Collingwood design studio and then, in 2019, to a much larger studio in West Melbourne.

Having more space means Ms Petre can really make the space feel more homely, something she picked up from European furniture studios.

"The showroom is not really set up as a retail showroom, it is more of an experience of feeling what a vibe can be at home," she said.

While the showroom is full of stock that is for sale, mixed with some for show, Ms Petre said that she did a lot more made-to-order pieces.

"I do a lot of customisations and create bespoke pieces for clients, and of the products I have, if the standard sized products don't work for the customers space, then I am really flexible with customising its size or shape for them," she said.

Available from anaca studio is everything customers will need to make their space more their own; from accessories such as mirrors and coat stands or racks, to armchairs, solid timber bed frames, bedside tables, desks, coffee tables, sofas, ottomans, and much more.

Anaca studio is located at 211A Victoria St, West Melbourne, and is open Thursday and Friday from 11am to 5pm, Saturday 11am to 3pm, and closed Sunday and Monday. If these times don't suit, appointments can also be arranged. ●

For more information:
anacastudio.com.au

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Council sells off North Melbourne property, formerly home to health services

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne has sold off a building in North Melbourne, as well as two other “underutilised” buildings in the municipality that formerly provided community services.

The single storey building at 505-513 Abbotsford St, located near the Arden precinct, had been put on the market last year after a proposal was endorsed by the council last November, which included selling properties at 47-49 Canning St, Carlton, and 100-104 A’Beckett St, Melbourne.

The decision to sell was made as the buildings “did not support City of Melbourne’s future needs, meet the standards for accessibility or align with the strategic objectives outlined in our Council Plan 2021-25”.

The council confirmed the sale of the properties on May 10, saying, “Following the six-week EOI campaign, CBRE (which was engaged to conduct the EOI), successfully achieved offers for all three properties at market value”.

The announcement, made on the Participate Melbourne website, noted the offers were officially signed by the council on May 5.

“The proceeds of the sales will be used to help deliver the City of Melbourne’s community infrastructure projects,” it said, which a council report revealed would amount to \$15 million.

“We thank the community for their feedback through the consultation process, as well as CBRE for their work to deliver the EOI.”

“By selling these properties, we will reinvest the proceeds into city-shaping infrastructure projects and the capital works program. It was an opportunity to think about how we want to evolve as a city and be bold in creating a better future for Melbourne.”

According to a council report last year, the Canning St and Abbotsford St properties were deemed too small to meet the requirements under the Melbourne Planning Scheme for affordable housing.

The report also noted previous family and children services delivered from the properties have either relocated to new integrated family and children centres in Lady Huntingfield, North Melbourne Child Care Centre, North Melbourne Community Centre, or at the new Munro Community Hub to open this year.

The Abbotsford St building was formerly home to not-for-profit community health organisation Cohealth, which, as reported by *North West City News* last year, a Cohealth spokesperson said their organisation had always understood their lease agreement was short-term, with the City of Melbourne having “been very transparent about their sale plans”.

“We’ve enjoyed offering a range of child and family health services from Abbotsford St and have begun scoping other potential locations from which we can continue to provide these essential services,” the spokesperson said at the time.

The organisation expected to relocate this year and “can assure people that Cohealth will continue to offer accessible, community-based child and family health services for many years to come”.

Last year, the council had, controversially, also proposed to sell a building at 30-38 Gatehouse Drive, Kensington, which houses a vital family clinic to private organisation Midwives and Mothers Australia.

But a community petition launched to keep the much-loved clinic led to councillors voting in favour of extending its lease for two years.

Community feedback and consultation were taken into consideration for the sale of the properties. ●

Developer committed to working closely with mosque to build basketball court

Continued from page 1.

outcome, but could’ve been changed to be a win-win situation”.

Mr Wardlaw said he had been more than willing to work together to contribute to the development of the mosque’s facilities and basketball court, with positive communication made between both parties through emails shown to this masthead.

“The minute they got a permit and came to talk to me, we’ve just engaged with them positively,” he said.

Mr Wardlaw conceded his “real beef” was with the City of Melbourne for having objected to his development (at 59-101 Alfred St), which initially included a plan to gift a 500-student school. His application, for three 12-storey buildings and one eight-storey building, was ultimately approved by the state government in 2021.

“I was very unhappy with the City of Melbourne objecting to my permit saying that I had to provide for a road that would go through one of our buildings and then was going to go through the land where they had already agreed to give



the mosque a permit for an indoor basketball court.”

AMSSA secretary Adam Mohamed said the land was not for sale, and the state government had given them a grant of \$350,000 to go towards the development of the \$1.8 million basketball court. The remaining costs of the development is being obtained through community fundraisers and donations.

The Marcocci Property Group, which has been contacted for comment, also took the matter to the Victorian Appeals Board of Victoria, but their application was refused on March 1, 2023.

“It’s a very small project. We didn’t expect that from them [lodging an appeal at VCAT]; that upset us a

lot really, but what can we do. We try our best to always be a good neighbour to our community,” Mr Mohamed said.

“ASSMA is not only a mosque; it is a social hub for our community. It’s a very, very important place where they can socialise, and where our youth can also do recreational activities.”

Mr Mohamed said he believed the Marcocci Property Group would now seek to oppose the basketball court plans at the Supreme Court.

In a Facebook post, City of Melbourne Cr Rohan Leppert, acknowledged AMSSA’s “community service mission is profound, and let us never forget the lifesaving role AMSSA played during the hard lockdowns”.

“The planning system in Victoria is not concerned with who owns private land, but rather how land should be used and developed. I will refrain from commenting on any current or disputed planning or building matters, but I do think it’s important to recognise that places of worship and community facilities are entirely legitimate inclusions in the mix of land uses in this area.” ●

Council budget “big on delivery”

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne has drafted a record \$850.7 million budget for the 2023/24 financial year, despite posting an increased deficit as it forecasts a return to surplus in the 2025/26 financial year.

The council’s chair of finance, governance, and risk Cr Philip Le Liu said while it “wasn’t immune” from current inflationary pressures, the latest budget was “big on delivery”, while placing rising cost of living “front of mind”.

Headlining this year’s budget is a \$247.5 million infrastructure spend, which includes a further \$60 million for the renewal of Queen Victoria Market, \$17 million to kickstart Greenline, and a further \$28 million for the redevelopment of the Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation Centre.

For locals in the city’s north-west, the council has included \$16.5 million towards two new pocket parks, one of which will be located at Chapman St in North Melbourne, with the other located in Southbank. Construction will also begin on 2000sqm of new open space combining Courtney and Bedford St pocket parks this financial year.

The council has also included \$4 million towards its bicycle lane rollout, which will include new protected lanes along Arden St and Macauley Rd (*see story on page 7*), while \$6 million will be provided for the new Hawke St linear park in West Melbourne as part of the state government’s North and West Melbourne and Docklands Transport and Amenity Program (*see story page 1*).

This year’s budget also invests heavily in events (\$28.2

million), libraries (\$13.4 million), greening and sustainability, business support and creative industries, which includes \$2 million for new public art projects.

In partnership with the state government through the \$200 million Melbourne City Revitalisation Fund, the council will also establish a new creative hub at 217 Collins St in the CBD, known as “Collins Street Studio”, transforming more than 1100 sqm of office space into space for artists.

Following two years of rate relief for residents and businesses during the pandemic, and a modest increase in the 2022-23 financial year, the council will implement the Victorian Government’s rate cap of 3.5 per cent – doubling last year’s rise of 1.75 per cent.

However, the council said it would “help ease the burden on pensioners by providing a rates discount of up to \$253, one of the most generous in the state”.

Despite originally forecasting a return to surplus this financial year, this has now been pushed back to 2025/26 as the council recorded an underlying deficit of \$17.1 million, up from \$11.3 million last financial year.


Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the budget represented a “vote of confidence in our city – building momentum by delivering today and shaping tomorrow”.

“This budget is designed to overcome the current economic challenges, while realising our community’s aspirations for Melbourne – the nation’s fastest growing capital city,” Cr Capp said.

Feedback on the draft budget can be provided via Participate Melbourne until midnight on June 8, with the final budget to be adopted by councillors on June 27.


To have your say: participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au ●

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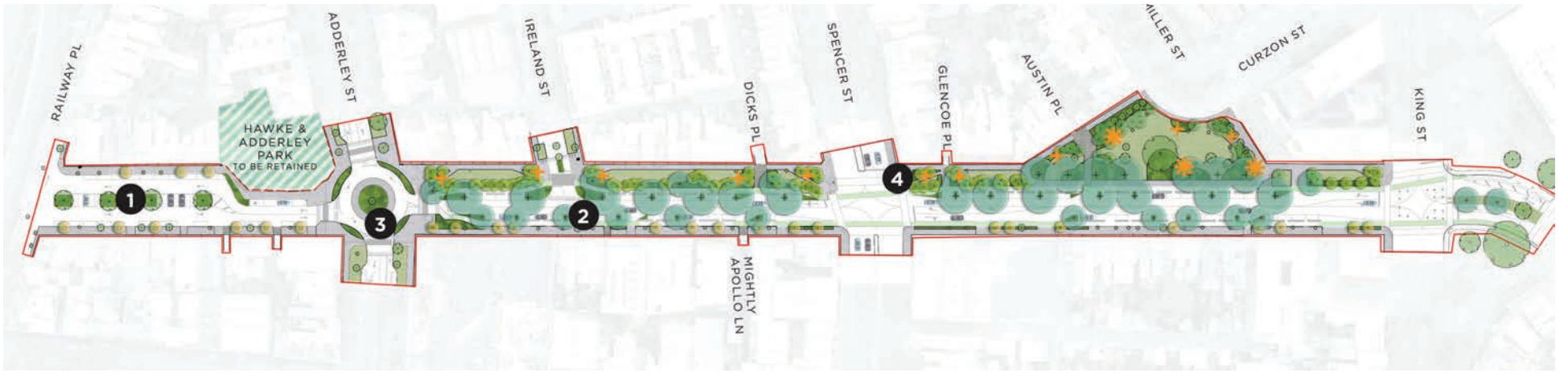


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Authorised by Evan Mulholland MP, Member for Northern Metropolitan Region, Unit 10, 2 Graystone Court Epping Vic 3076. Funded from Parliamentary Budget.



▲ The final concept for the Hawke St linear park.

New linear park for West Melbourne gets tick of approval

Continued from page 1.

However, while residents and businesses welcomed more green space to the area, some were worried about a total loss of 47 parking spaces.

Mathew Trainor, who co-runs Tricycle Developments in Hawke St, said that while he “definitely applauded” having more green spaces, it must not come at the expense of the community, given more apartment buildings were going up, adding to competition for parking.

“I already have trouble with clients and customers being able to park to access us, and it’s only going to make that significantly worse,” he said. “I lease two buildings; I don’t get a single carpark. I have to park in the street and get up and move my car every two hours. I play Russian roulette with parking tickets.”

Mr Trainor added there were many construction sites in the area, making parking a “nightmare”.

“The other day I got detoured in my own street because of a crane and within a block I hit a second detour with another crane on another building site.”



This concept plan represents the expertise that we have in our team and the feedback that we’ve had from community recognising the challenge ahead of us so it’s a great step forward.



Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the linear park was a “significant addition to this wonderful neighbourhood”.

“I’m really pleased to support it ... the Hawke St linear park is about improving amenity for

people that live work, study and visit [the area].”

“[The concept designs] address two things in particular: one is the challenge of increased traffic that we expect as a result of the completion of West Gate tunnel and the desire to improve amenity, to manage that, and of course, the second part is the community consultation to date.”

“This concept plan represents the expertise that we have in our team and the feedback that we’ve had from community recognising the challenge ahead of us so it’s a great step forward.”

Resident Anthony McKee said he and other residents were happy overall with the council’s revised plan for the linear park, which will see it stop at Adderley St rather than Railway Place, as was formerly proposed, providing a better moderation of traffic, however, a lack of parking was “always going to be a problem”.

“The City of Melbourne recently spent millions doubling the size of our park on the corner of Hawke and Adderley streets, but parking is probably more important to us,” he said. ●



▲ Staff (and pup) from the Apollo Cafe in West Melbourne.



Brendan Rees
JOURNALIST
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BINS BOOST CONFIDENCE FOR MEN LIVING WITH INCONTINENCE

A trial of free incontinence product disposal bins across the City of Melbourne has been expanded to three extra locations to make the service more accessible to the community.

The bins are now located in the men's and all-gender toilets at the following Council-owned facilities:

- Carlton Baths
- City Library
- Fawkner Park Senior Citizens Centre
- Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre
- Kathleen Syme Community Centre
- Kensington Neighbourhood Centre
- Library at the Dock
- Melbourne Town Hall public toilets (on Collins Street)
- North Melbourne Community Centre.

Melbourne is the first capital city in Australia to install incontinence product disposal bins in Council-owned facilities.

The 12-month trial began in September as part of the BINS4Blokes men's health campaign, an awareness and advocacy campaign promoting the installation of incontinence bins in public toilets.

The City of Melbourne is an inclusive and accessible city and we want people who experience incontinence to have access to the facilities so they can feel confident to get out and about.

In launching the trial, Councillor Jamal Hakim said it's important more people have access to proper disposal bins for their incontinence products - particularly given many instances of incontinence can be much better managed with the right resources.

"With the proper facilities to dispose products, we hope those living with incontinence can continue getting out and about, and doing what they love when they're here in the City of Melbourne," Cr Hakim said.

"The trial will not only showcase a practical solution for those living with incontinence, but importantly, raise awareness and facilitate a much-needed conversation on the topic."

The bin trial runs until the end of September.

For more information, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/bins4blokes



HOW TO GET YOUR FLU VACCINE

With a significant flu season predicted this year, we are now taking bookings for flu vaccinations through our new online booking management program VaxApp.

Bookings are now available for our community sessions, individual appointments and for the first time, on-site workplace immunisations.

Influenza vaccination significantly reduces the risk of contracting influenza and passing the virus to family, colleagues and friends.

For more information and to book, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/flu vaccine

Community consultation sought on protected bike lanes

The City of Melbourne is seeking community input on draft designs for three kilometres of protected bike lanes in North Melbourne and Kensington.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Blake Lee*
TRANSPORT

The proposed kerbside bike lanes will run 1.5km and 1.4km, respectively, in each direction on Arden St and Macaulay Rd, and would be separated by kerbs and parking bays.

Residents who have so far participated in council pop-up sessions to give their thoughts on the proposed designs told *North West City News* they had welcomed the idea, particularly for children commuting to school.

“It would be a positive impact and make it safer for all riders,” North Melbourne resident and parent Anthony Kolber said.

Nathan Reading, a regular bike rider, said he was also in favour of the plans.

“The first thing I noticed living in Kensington with riding on Macaulay [Rd] and Arden St was that they’re less than ideal as they are,” he said, having moved to the area in February.

“To see the plans, it’s going to make my commute a lot nicer, and I think overall add to the safety of people on bikes, especially that section between Stubb St and Boundary Rd, where it gets narrow.”

“I’m not a parent, but I know I would feel a lot more confident with a lot more separation from trucks and cars.”

According to the council, the project provided significant east-west routes connecting to the hospital and university precincts to the north of the CBD.



Arden St is an important link through to the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail and through Lloyd St to the trail on Dynon Rd.

However, the draft designs proposed to remove 41 parking bays on Arden St while 40 parking spaces would be lost on Macaulay Rd.

“While the location for the bike lane improvements is final, some examples of things we might be able to change as a result of your feedback include parking controls, drop off and loading zone locations, pram ramps and street amenity improvements,” the council said.

Consultation is under way until May 24 after which finalised designs will be submitted to the Department of Transport and Planning.

As reported by *North West City News* in June last year, the installation of protected bike lanes

on Arden St and Macaulay Rd were expected to begin before the end of 2022 after the City of Melbourne confirmed the projects were in their final stages of approval.

However, the council confirmed it had been held up by the Department of Transport.

The schedule for the delivery of the project is not known.

To have your say on the project, a final pop-up session will be held at Canning-Macaulay Reserve (corner of Canning St and Vaughan Terrace) on May 20 from 10am to 12pm. ●

For more information:
participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/arden-macaulay-bike-lanes



Footscray Road closed citybound

! From late-May to mid-June 2023



Footscray Road citybound between Dock Link Road and Appleton Dock Road will be closed from **8pm Friday 26 May to 5am Friday 16 June 2023** while work continues at the elevated road above Footscray Road.

Use Dynon Road instead. Drivers should plan ahead and allow for extra travel time.

Traffic changes in the area

Footscray Road westbound will reopen from 26 May with changes to the traffic lanes and the walking and cycling path. Please follow on-road signs and allow extra travel time.

Visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au/disruptions for more information.

In partnership with:



Keep in mind there are other disruptions during this time.

Find a detailed list at bigbuild.vic.gov.au



A new resource helping to address stigma and discrimination has officially launched

The City of Melbourne, alongside a number of the city's outreach support services, has officially launched a City Drug Support Services flyer on how best to help vulnerable community members.

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
HEALTH



The flyer, which details all of the wraparound services in the city, is aimed at informing residents, traders, workers, students, and visitors of who to contact if they come across someone who appears to be experiencing difficulties.

Speaking about the flyer – an initiative of the Melbourne Alcohol and Other Drugs Network – at a launch event at a Melbourne Town Hall on May 10, Lord Mayor Sally Capp said it was an “incredibly valuable resource” to have within the city.

“This resource empowers everybody to be able to have a more positive and improved experience when they are confronted with drug and health issues on our streets, but importantly, it also makes a difference for the people impacted by drugs, addiction, homelessness, mental health, or current financial stresses,” Cr Capp said.

“Anybody that is in need is deserving of help,

of organisations which formed a partnership to address alcohol and other drug-related issues.

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) works closely with LDAT to develop and deliver evidence-based activities, and ADF CEO Erin Lalor said the information gathered helped to inform the brochure and its “purpose to address stigma and discrimination”.

“We really wanted to understand what could be done for people experiencing homelessness in the CBD to feel safer and more included, and to create a more welcoming environment for people who live and come into this community,” she said.

The informative flyer has already begun circulating around the municipality, through outreach workers, peer support workers, and stakeholder engagement staff, as they interact with residents and businesses each day.

They will also be distributed through the



and this resource and tool is important to making a positive difference in people's lives and changing people's lives.”

The flyer is designed to be used as a tool that helps people to make a difference, and details what support services to contact depending on the situation, and how to deal with someone who looks to be struggling.

Information within the flyer was gathered following the results from a survey conducted by the Local Drug Action Team (LDAT), a group

of City of Melbourne's neighbourhood partners and alcohol and other drug services when they attend local meetings, such as residents' group meetings or business precinct meetings.

The City's drug support services are brought about through the efforts of Cohealth, the City of Melbourne, The Salvation Army Melbourne Project 614, Victoria Police, the ADF, The Living Room, Yarra Drug and Health Forum, Drummond Street Services, and Melbourne City Mission. ●



▲ Media action at 33 Alfred St.

Tower residents urged to register for pay-out

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
COMMUNITY

Letters from the Supreme Court of Victoria have been delivered to the 3000 residents of the North Melbourne and Flemington towers advising of a proposed settlement from the State Government over the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020.

The government has agreed to pay \$5 million to those locked up in the towers during the pandemic.

Sources close to the case estimate this will amount to around \$2000 per adult over 16 and half that for a minor.

The letters do not apologise nor mention the word “compensation” but invite people to register for a class action.

They invite people to become a group member if they were present at 9 Pampas St, 159 Melrose St, 76 Canning St and 12 Sutton St, North Melbourne, and 120, 126 and 130 Racecourse Rd, 12 Holland Court, Flemington from July 4 to 9, 2020, and 33 Alfred St from July 9 to 18, 2020.

The Alfred St tower gets a special mention because residents were locked up there for an additional period, for a total of 14 days.

“Of course, it's better than nothing,” one Alfred St resident told *North West City News*. “If they want to do something to help us – 100 per cent.”

But he added, “an apology should be undertaken before money” and that the lockdown was very stressful.

“Our family had just done the shopping. We helped out a neighbour with eight kids. We shared our food.”

His friend, also locked up in the tower, said, “We felt abandoned, like in prison. They'd forgotten about us. A lot of people tried to get attention. It's been hard for people from the towers to take the government to court.”

He said not everyone would agree with the payout.

“Truth be told my sister takes it seriously. They want us to be quiet. It's hush money.”

He said they had already been paid \$450 by the government. “I will accept it, knowing that some people aren't as forgiving. They take it more seriously.”

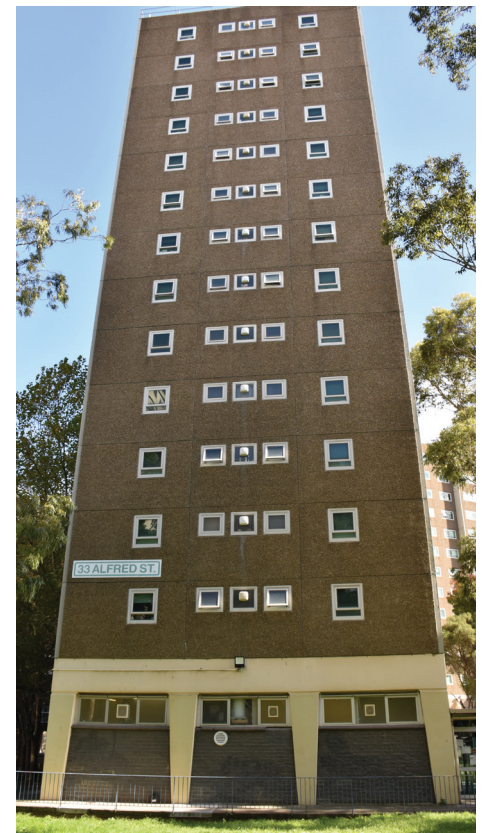
People are urged to register online by June 27. According to the lawyers, residents will not have to prove their occupation at the towers during this period because the government has access to vaccination records.

“As a group member you will not get any money if you do not register,” the letter says.

Ben Clemens of Clemens Haskin Legal told *North West City News* that the precise number of participating group members will not be known until Notices of Claim have been received and processed.

“Therefore, the amount that each will receive (subject to Court approval of settlement) is not presently known.”

He said that it is estimated that the group included around 3000 residents, of which



▲ One of several buildings where residents were locked up for an extended period during the pandemic.

approximately 1000 were children at the relevant times.

The notice documents were delivered into the mailboxes of each of the nine affected towers by May 3, 2023, he said, and are available on the Victorian government's website. “Translated versions of the notices should also be available shortly,” he said.

Mr Clemens handled the case for the towers and argued that the residents were unlawfully detained.

Upper House Liberal MP for Northern Metropolitan, Evan Mulholland, has bought into the issue and says that the government should apologise.

“Where is the apology from the state government? Any settlement should come with a full apology to residents, and a promise that this will never happen again,” he said.

“These are the most vulnerable members of our community, and they were treated like prisoners by Daniel Andrews and Labor.”

“The communities in Flemington and North Melbourne are home to many migrant families, who fled conflict overseas, only to have their most basic human rights taken from them by this Labor Government”. ●

For more information:
health.vic.gov.au/covid-19-towers

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YIRRAMBOI showcases a thriving First Nations creative culture

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
ARTS & CULTURE

For its fourth iteration, Melbourne's leading First Nations Arts and Culture Festival, *YIRRAMBOI*, consumed the city for 10 spectacular days with performances, visual art, installations, workshops, storytelling, and Black activism.

Running from May 4 to 14, the festival was all about celebrating Black love, joy, and excellence, and as many as 300 First Nations artists were involved in celebrating and sharing their stories, in various spaces around the city.

Alongside being a festival for all to come and celebrate together, *YIRRAMBOI* is also about looking to the future, and this stems from its name which means "tomorrow" in the local languages of the Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung people of the Kulin Nations.

"*YIRRAMBOI* is more than just a festival, it's a platform for voice, change, development and exchange," *YIRRAMBOI* co-lead creative Serene Stewart said.

"A vision of a future where our culture and shared history is respectfully celebrated by all."

To launch the event, a celebratory opening night was held at dedicated event hub The Uncle Jack Charles, which is located in North Melbourne's Meat Market, and served to honour the beloved late Aboriginal actor, activist, and Elder.



Following the launch, *YIRRAMBOI* co-lead creative J-Maine Beezley said they were "incredibly excited to have opened the festival with such a strong message: 'First Nations culture is ever evolving and absolutely thriving.'"

The opening weekend began with headlining event *Barring Yanabul*, meaning "we all walk the path" in Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung language, which featured more than 40 free art, music, dance, and theatre events.

As well, there was a live music line-up of First Nations performers for the *Uncle Archie*

Roach Block Party. Artists included storyteller and rapper Kobie Dee, Triple J host Nooky, RnB singer songwriter Keely, and musician and dancer Amos Roach.

North Melbourne's Arts House also got onboard for the opening weekend, with the premiere of international dance works *Kisiskâciwanis*, created by Canadian First Nations choreographers Jeanette Kotowich and Lara Kramer, and dance works by local artists Brent Watkins and Jada Narkle.

A stellar line-up continued to present itself at

the Meat Market, with all-female comedy spectacle *Funny Tiddas* by Kimmie Lovegrove offering up the laughs, and sold-out performance *A Night With an Angry Black Woman* giving platform to some of the country's leading First Nations voices.

The First Nations fashion runway show of *TOMORROW: The Experience* also showcased a diverse display of bold First Nations designs, and played with the concept of a post-apocalyptic world through sharing strong messaging and dialogue around survival and resistance. ●

Parking overhaul as drivers to pay until 10pm and on Sundays

Drivers will soon be slugged for Sunday parking, however can park free of charge for the first 15 minutes in a bid to keep the inner city moving.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Free on-street parking on Sundays has been scrapped for drivers coming into the CBD and parts of West Melbourne, as the City of Melbourne overhauls how it charges motorists.

Drivers will also be charged until 10pm, rather than 8.30pm, from Monday to Sunday, however, will have access to free on-street parking for 15 minutes "to support quick trips" and discounted "off-peak" rates.

The move, alongside an overarching Parking and Kerbside Management Plan, was expected to be endorsed by councillors at a May

16 Future Melbourne Committee meeting.

It would also see the implementation of consistent two-hour parking limits every day, 7am to 10pm, to simplify what drivers saw as confusing signage.

The council did not propose any increase to the current maximum \$7 hourly parking rate, and would implement what it said was "fairer, data-led pricing" with a new off-peak \$4 per hour rate all weekend and after 7pm on weekdays.

The sweeping changes would begin in July and only be implemented in the "CBD" — which for on-street parking purposes not only included the Hoddle Grid, but a significant parcel of Southbank and a pocket of West Melbourne adjacent to Flagstaff Gardens.

After implementing the CBD changes, the council will next review parking settings in Carlton and West Melbourne as the next-most urgent areas requiring changes.

North West City News has previously reported the frustrations of Stanley St residents, who have urged council intervention to resolve

congestion and untenable demand for spaces near their homes.

One resident was quoted in the Parking and Kerbside Management Plan saying: "We live in West Melbourne, our home is a single dwelling with no off-street parking. During business hours and the football, it is impossible for us to park near our home."

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the changes in the CBD and immediate surrounds were needed.

"Good parking management helps keep our city moving — and we want to make parking simpler for people who drive into Melbourne," she said.

"Businesses need confidence that their customers can find a park, and deliveries will arrive on time. That's why we're making up to 15 minutes of parking free, creating consistent two-hour limits and installing clearer signs."

Some have criticised the move, including Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Paul Guerra, who said that while the simplicity of two-hour parking was a positive, charging on Sunday would push away potential visitors and

negatively impact traders.

However, the Lord Mayor said this was contrary to what business owners had told the council.

"Feedback from traders was loud and clear — they want to see more active management across on-street parking, to attract more customers and increase parking turnover."

Demand for parking has changed in recent years, with a higher appetite for weekend parking compared to pre-COVID levels.

Pedestrian numbers also indicated that the number of people coming into the city on Sundays was similar to Saturdays.

Cr Capp later told 3AW: "We have thousands of people who try to pay for parking on a Sunday, so we have decided to make it consistent on Saturdays and Sundays."

"We get a lot of feedback, and the data actually shows, when something is free, you don't get the turnover and traders are wanting to see turnover on that street parking so that more customers can come."

It was expected the council would benefit from a forecast increase in parking meter revenue of around



▲ The area of proposed parking changes.

\$2.7 million in the first 12 months.

Research that informed the new plan revealed that up to 30 per cent of CBD traffic was drivers "cruising" to find a park, a situation that increased vehicle congestion, emissions and "frustration for drivers [that] can lead to unsafe driving or illegal parking".

A significant number of drivers also reported convoluted, confusing signs in the central city.

Some controls currently switched between "1P" and "2P" during the day, and the council said a move to implement across-the-board two-hour parking removed confusion. ●




Flinders Lane Gallery

Situated within the beautiful Nicholas Building, FLG is the perfect destination for anyone looking for a relaxed yet inspiring encounter with art. Showcasing the work of over 40 contemporary and Indigenous artists the gallery presents a dynamic program of exhibitions and boasts an inviting, light filled showroom featuring the latest works from our stockroom.





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AMBITIOUS WATER PROJECT TO SAVE 60 MILLION LITRES

We're drought-proofing Princes Park for future generations

It's home to the Carlton Football Club, local cricket and bowls clubs and a favourite for families, and now Princes Park is set to become home to our city's next ambitious stormwater harvesting project.

The Princes Park Stormwater Harvesting Project will see excess stormwater harvested from Moonee Ponds Creek and used to irrigate the green open spaces, significant trees and playing fields at the 38.6 hectare site in Carlton North.

Not only will it save more than 60 million litres of drinking water each year, but the system will help future-proof the community's recreational spaces and premier sporting facilities against drought.

The health of Moonee Ponds Creek will also be improved with pollution, litter and sediment removed along with the excess water.

The stormwater harvesting system, including storage tanks and treatment system, will be housed underground with a pump station located alongside existing pump infrastructure in Royal Park.

During a heavy rain event, excess water will be collected and pass through a pollutant trap where litter and large pollution is removed, and then through a chamber to remove coarse sediment.

The treated stormwater will then be transferred to underground storage tanks at McPherson Field in Royal Park.

These tanks will be able to hold five million litres of water to make the most of major rainfall events and store water for drier periods.

The water will be pumped into an underground irrigation tank in Princes Park via a UV disinfection system, removing any pathogens before the water is used to maintain the park's ovals and gardens.

As our climate changes, intense rainfall, flooding, extreme heat events and drought are becoming more common in Melbourne. This project is part of our climate and biodiversity emergency response and will enable us to adapt to the impacts of climate change and improve water quality and green spaces.

The \$7 million Princes Park Stormwater Harvesting Project is supported by the Victorian Government's Integrated Water Management Grant Program.

Design work for the project has begun following community consultation, with construction set to begin later this year and be complete by 2025.

Measures will be in place to minimise disruption to sporting clubs and park users during this time.

To learn more about this project, visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/princes-park-stormwater-harvesting-project/project-overview

BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

- More than 60 million litres of alternate water will be collected each year for Princes Park, saving precious drinking water. That's the equivalent of 24 Olympic swimming pools.
- Litter and up to 20,000 kilograms of sediment and 200 kilograms of nitrogen will be removed from Moonee Ponds Creek each year.
- Soil moisture will be replenished through more sustainable management of the natural water cycle.
- We're helping drought-proof Princes Park by ensuring it can source 80 per cent of its water needs via alternative sources.

DID YOU KNOW?

We have six stormwater harvesting systems that capture and store 230 million litres of rainwater each year which is used to keep our parks, gardens and trees lush and green.

Birrarung Marr, Royal Park, Queen Victoria and Alexandra gardens, Fitzroy Gardens, Darling Street, and Lincoln and University squares are all kept green and lush thanks to harvested stormwater.

Currently 23 per cent of our water use is from stormwater and rainwater harvesting.



Underground storage tanks like this one at Lincoln Square will collect stormwater to ensure Princes Park remains green and lush

KEEP IN TOUCH

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

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NOT TO WATER IT DOWN, BUT RAIN IS THE KEY TO OUR BIG GREEN CITY

Water is essential for improving liveability in Melbourne, keeping our green spaces healthy and cooling the city. Learn how we're creating a more sustainable water system for the city.



We are introducing permeable surfaces to our streetscapes to capture rainwater for reuse

Melbourne's four seasons in one day may dampen the spirits of some, but the truth is our much-maligned wet weather is actually the key to ensuring our city stays cooler and greener in the face of climate change.

Each year enough rain falls in our municipality to fill about 8000 Olympic swimming pools.

Of this rain, a little over half is collected on sealed surfaces, such as roofs and roads.

Which means, more than 10,000 million litres of stormwater literally washes down the drain, taking with it litter and pollution.

So at the City of Melbourne, we're doing everything we can to collect more of it, clean it and store it for irrigation.

Because by 2050, demand for water to maintain our parks and growing urban forest will double.

And while we have been fortunate to have healthy rainfall; we remember the Millenium Drought when we experienced rainfall 14 per cent below average.

This saw our world-renowned parks and gardens significantly impacted, turning to dust and trees suffering from lack of water – not just during the drought but for a decade after.

So we're prioritising water sensitive urban design, especially using stormwater runoff to support our precious trees and gardens.

Historically, cities were designed to be impermeable, and that's the thinking we're now challenging.

Bourke Street Mall, for example, is a traditional streetscape. Rain falls and runs straight off the pavement, into the drain and out into Port Phillip Bay. It's a waste. So we're trying to find more ways to capture and reuse it in a more sustainable way.

This includes introducing permeable surfaces, rather than letting it literally drain away.

We have developed six stormwater harvesting systems across the city collectively storing and supplying an average 230 million litres per year.

Our greening projects across the city are kept green with stormwater, including our raingardens and tree pits, as well as underground soil trenches that increase soil moisture for trees.

We're also encouraging partnerships with private buildings and developers, helping them intercept rainwater from rooftops to irrigate their plants.

Our city's renewal areas are low-lying and flooding is a major challenge.

So we're designing and delivering lush and cool streetscapes that carry out a flood management role.

For instance, in Fishermans Bend, the largest urban renewal project in Australia, we are part of the team implementing the largest water-sensitive urban design project.

The flood management approach will reduce flood risk by increasing permeability, retaining water in the landscape, and capturing water for later use.

These are just some of the elements of our Water Sensitive Urban Design approach.

WATER USE TARGETS

We've set a goal that by 2030, 50 per cent of all council's water use will be sourced from alternative sources - stormwater or recycled water - rather than drinking water.

We want to see 20 per cent of all water use across the municipality sourced from alternative water sources.

To learn more, visit urbanwater.melbourne.vic.gov.au

Meet Melbourne's water guru

When Mohammad Kharouf started as the City of Melbourne's water management expert, he started without a blueprint.

"No one else had ever held a job like this in the municipality," Mohammad said.

"I still remember the excitement when the interview panel said it would be up to me to shape the role."

Australia had just lived through the Millenium Drought, and Mohammad's job was to help Melbourne improve its water management and prepare for future extreme weather events.

At that time, we'd just installed a new central irrigation control system, but its programming needed some finessing.

"No one knew me, so it took some convincing to let them hand over the reins to change the programming," Mohammad said.

With so many of Melbourne's gardens heritage-listed, Mohammad was given access to control irrigation at Kings Domain - which has fewer water-sensitive plants - as a pilot.

"Before coming to Melbourne I'd been managing water and irrigation in Riyadh - the capital and largest city of Saudi Arabia - so I knew I was up to the challenge.

"But everyone was understandably a little wary - our city's water is such a precious commodity."

Fast forward three months, and Mohammad had halved water use in Kings Domain through careful and expert water management, and our plants were flourishing.

"I've been here ever since. It will be 10 years in October."

Mohammad has spent that time building a more refined central irrigation and water management system, and expanding its reach into every City of Melbourne neighbourhood.

Today, Melbourne boasts world-leading water management infrastructure that helps us understand how much water to apply and when.

"Our central system takes into account rainfall in the area and monitors moisture through soil probes hidden throughout our parks and garden beds.

"We also have access to satellite imagery that provides important information on the health of Melbourne's precious plants."

But for Mohammad, nothing beats a site visit.

"The virtual data we can collect is second-to-none, but one of my favourite parts of this job is going out and seeing the plants and gardens thriving in real-time."

Mohammad and our Parks and City Greening team are the careful caretakers of 230 hectares of irrigated space across the city.

"We really care about Melbourne's water, and use every drop sustainably to keep our city green for current and future residents, workers, students and visitors.

"I never take for granted the legacy I've been able to build here over the past decade.

"A lot of what I do is balancing water use behind-the-scenes - monitoring rain and soil sensors, adjusting for seasonal differences and carefully finessing the central control system.

"But the plants don't lie. If they're healthy, then all that hidden work is paying off."

Mohammad works closely with the Climate Change and City Resilience team to use harvested storm water to irrigate our big green city, and enhance drought resistance.

We're now home to six stormwater harvesting systems, that can hold 30 million litres of captured rainwater. Each year we harvest up to 200 million litres of rainwater for irrigation use.

"Hopefully Melbourne will never again experience a drought event like the one that created my role all those years ago," Mohammad said.

"But we are now in a better position to adapt and prepare for extreme climate conditions, and we are proud to keep building this capacity."

Check out Mohammad's work the next time you're enjoying our city's greenery.



Mohammad Kharouf inspects the city's plants and gardens to check they're receiving sufficient water.

Councillor Roshena Campbell returns after “disappointing” by-election defeat; would not have voted to back Voice

After defeat in an historic Federal by-election, City of Melbourne councillor Roshena Campbell spoke with North West City News about the result, the Voice to Parliament, and voting against the Lord Mayor.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Returning Cr Roshena Campbell plans to see out the council term after defeat in an historic Federal by-election, and has revealed she would not have joined fellow councillors in voting to support an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

Selected as the Liberal Party candidate for the April 1 by-election in Aston, a Federal seat in Melbourne’s east vacated by Alan Tudge, Cr Campbell and the party suffered a famous defeat to the Labor government.

The result marked the first time in 103 years that a sitting government had won a seat from the opposition in a by-election.

Following an unpaid leave of absence leading into the election, and after previously vying for Liberal pre-selection in the seat of Casey in November 2021, Cr Campbell said she now planned to remain as councillor until the next City of Melbourne election in late 2024.

“It was a disappointing result,” she said of the Aston loss.

“But I’m obviously delighted to come back to the City of Melbourne and continue my work here for the remainder of the council term ... so no intentions to put my hand up at the moment.



▲ Cr Roshena Campbell with Opposition Leader Peter Dutton prior to the Aston by-election (Picture: Facebook).

It was a privilege to be a candidate in that by-election but I’m conscious of the work we’ve got to achieve in Melbourne.”

During her absence, City of Melbourne councillors voted to back the “yes” campaign in the lead up to a referendum on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

The move saw it become the first capital city council to “adopt a firm position on the Voice” according to Lord Mayor Sally Capp, ahead of Australia’s first referendum since 1999 later this year.

While she did not wish to comment on the debate given she was not in the council chamber, Cr Campbell confirmed with *North West City News* that she would have voted against the motion at the March 21 Future Melbourne Committee meeting.

She did, however, say she believed council resources were better spent addressing local issues rather than national ones.

“My position has generally been when it comes to advocacy on these issues — we had the debate about changing the date of Australia Day and I opposed the council doing that — that there are significant challenges that are within our remit; making sure the city is clean, keeping rates down, supporting small business and making sure that we provide to keep the city moving,” she said.

“So, my focus is very much about those things that local government needs to do, and making sure we get that right.”

Cr Campbell was elected on the Lord Mayor’s ticket as part of “Team Capp” at the 2020 City of Melbourne election.

However, she has found herself voting along different lines to the Lord Mayor on a number of key issues this council term, namely when she voted against plans for a safe injecting facility in the CBD, changing the date of Australia Day, and perhaps most notably against the city’s rollout of protected cycling lanes.

Cr Campbell’s continued criticism of bike lanes and what she termed “anti-car measures” at Town Hall eventually saw her removed as chair of the council’s transport portfolio.

“I think one of the great things about this country, and we see it even at the local government level, is that we have a robust democracy. We have debate in the council chamber, and I think we owe it to ratepayers to have that robust debate. They want a group of councillors that are going to bring independence and scrutiny to

the decisions being made, so I’m very proud to do that.”

She did not say whether this had caused friction or impacted her relationship with the Lord Mayor.

“The Lord Mayor and I work together day in, day out to achieve things for the city but there will be times when we disagree and there’s been notable examples of that.”

Since being removed from the transport role, Cr Campbell’s sole portfolio is that as chair of City Activation, which has focused on supporting small businesses and attracting new ones.

She was determined to make Melbourne “the easiest place to do business” by reducing red tape and enticing businesses to establish their headquarters in the city.

While the city and particularly the CBD had bounced back strongly on weekends and evenings, which had seen a strong rise in foot traffic, Cr Campbell said there was work to do outside of those times.

“I think the city has shown incredible resilience post-COVID, but I know for a lot of small business owners the past few years have been an incredible struggle and the job of us as council is providing them with what they need ... I know events have played a huge part in getting the return of visitors and we’ve seen pedestrian traffic skyrocket during event periods, but we also need to make sure that we have a long-term plan to grow both the daytime and night-time economy.” ●



David Schout
JOURNALIST
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The beautiful stories beyond a building’s façade

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
HERITAGE

When looking at the heritage value of a building sometimes its façade can be the sole focus but, according to architectural and urban historian, and heritage consultant, Peter Andrew Barrett, this should not be the case.

Speaking on the topic of “heritage beyond the façade” at the Victorian Archives Centre on May 24 as part of Melbourne Design Week, Mr Barrett will be drawing on a few distinct examples around the city where the façade is just one interesting aspect of a building.

Among the sites included in the talk are the iconic National Gallery of Victoria and the authentic 1950s Pellegrini’s Espresso Bar, and the outstanding question of “what gives something value?”, will be posed.

“I have always been interested in how people respond to heritage places and how people respond differently,” Mr Barrett told *North West City News*.

“The focus [of the talk] will be about how we should look at places beyond the façade and how we often overlook other aspects that make the heritage place valuable.”

As well as delving into the various ways we can contemplate heritage in the city, through using valuable sensory methods of touch, smell, and sound, Mr Barrett will also explore the importance of preserving stories and memories associated with buildings.

One example he reflects on is how there are hundreds of photos of the State Savings Bank of Victoria’s former Elizabeth St head office, but little narrative on the photographs that can be shared about the iconic building, that can then be passed on to younger generations.

“Stories add to the memory of a place, and there are so many people around that can remember these important buildings, and they would mean more to us if we knew the stories



that went with them,” Mr Barrett said.

“Stories add to a sense of place, and we owe it to future generations to write down our memories of the buildings, to help people who are looking at the photos in years to come get a deeper understanding of them.”

Mr Barrett’s talk will be split into three parts, and will explore looking beyond the exterior, the ways to experience a building’s heritage using sensory and other tools, and the importance of sharing the stories that ultimately give the buildings their value.

Heritage beyond the façade is presented by the Public Record Office Victoria and, with spots already filled prior to the Melbourne Design Week’s launch date of May 18, it goes to show the importance of a number of topics on the program. ●

For more information:
designweek.melbourne



Community celebrates Eid Fitr festival in North Melbourne

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COMMUNITY

Hundreds of people have come together to celebrate a community-led Eid Fitr festival in North Melbourne with a range of food, music, and entertainment.

Also called the “Festival of Breaking the Fast”, Eid Fitr is an Islamic festival that marks the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting when Muslims fast from dawn to dusk each day.

The April 29 event saw 500 people of all faiths and backgrounds gather at the Alfred St public housing estate to enjoy activities including music, jumping castles, face painting, barbecue, and food stalls.

“The festival celebration was amazing, communities from North Melbourne, Flemington and surrounding areas came together and

celebrated together through celebrating, sharing stories and conversation, food, play, Eid music,” president of the Melbourne Somali Community Inc. Awil Hussein said, whose group organised the day.

“The weather was fantastic, and our community, families and children had a joyful and great Eid atmosphere celebration to remember.”

Mr Hussein thanked all volunteers, attendees, and everyone who made the day possible.

Supporters of the event included the City of Melbourne, North Melbourne Housing office, Drummond Street, the Australian Muslim Social Services Agency, Horn Travel, Habib Family Day Services North Melbourne Language and Learning (NMLL), The Venny, and The Huddle.

Mr Hussein said feedback was welcomed “so we can make it bigger and better next year’s Eid festival”. ●

HISTORY



Delving into the history of West Melbourne

The Hotham History Project is currently putting together a volume of chapters on the history of West Melbourne.

WORDS BY *Felicity Jack*
HOTHAM HISTORY PROJECT

A boat trip on the passenger vessel the *Blackbird* on April 15 took project members and friends on a journey that explored the past history of the area and the new developments that are transforming the western end of the city.

It brought into focus the old West Melbourne Swamp and its subsequent development as Coode Island, now the storage area for petrochemicals; the former industrial area of Fishermans Bend; the development of the Port of Melbourne's several docks that have risen and waned according to the type and number of ships using its facilities; and the housing and high-rise developments, both office and apartments, that make up the current Docklands area of Melbourne.

Our tour took place 220 years after Charles Grimes embarked on an expedition to explore the Maribyrnong River in 1803. This was the domain of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. The name "Maribyrnong" is believed to have derived from the phrase meaning "I can hear a ringtail possum".

The assistant surveyor of New South Wales had been tasked with the exploration of Port Phillip Bay. On February 3, 1803, he sailed up what was originally named the Saltwater River: this was to differentiate it from the Freshwater River, later called the Yarra. Grimes travelled up the Yarra on the following day as far as Dight's Falls. Grimes's report was not enthusiastic about the prospect of settling Port Phillip and

it wasn't until 1835 that John Batman arrived to start what was to become a thriving settlement.

Our river trip began its journey down the Maribyrnong, passing under the Westgate Bridge before turning into the Yarra River, under the Bolte Bridge and taking in Melbourne's Docklands.

The journey was a lesson in the industrial and social history of the area, in particular the history of transport. Punts used to take pedestrians and vehicles across the river, and one, the Westgate punt, continues to operate for cycles and pedestrians.

The construction of the Westgate Tunnel and its associated infrastructure is currently in progress and there was plenty of evidence of this. We could see some of the large container vessels that are used to import and export goods, and we were amused to know that Melbourne holds the world record for the highest number of empty containers.

Owner of the *Blackbird*, Peter Sommerville, is a keen supporter of Melbourne and in particular of its western suburbs. He pointed out that Melbourne had two bridges that have higher clearances than the Sydney Harbour Bridge (49 metres) – the Westgate (58 metres) and the E J Whitten Bridge (54 metres) named after the Footscray footballer Ted Whitten.

The Bolte Bridge is named after Victoria's 38th and longest-serving Premier, Sir Henry Bolte. It was under his premiership that the last person was hanged in Victoria, and Sommerville likened the uprights to the gallows. He also referred to the two uprights on the bridge as Jeff Kennett's two finger salute to Melbourne.

The *Blackbird* has its own history, having been built in Lakes Entrance in 1926. Sommerville bought it in 1979 and he has been running tours of the river since the early 1980s. ●



BUSINESS

CommVision: Increasing communication in residential buildings and communities

If you live in the City of Melbourne, it's more than likely that you're one of the 80 per cent who live in a high-rise apartment. But how well are you currently notified of critical issues and important updates affecting your immediate community?



WORDS BY *Sean Car*

While mailbox drops and printed notices in the foyer are among the most common methods in which strata communities are kept up to speed by their owners' corporation (OC) and building managers, these measures lack immediacy and are too often prone to be missed, as well as not being environmentally friendly.

In today's ever-evolving technological landscape, these measures have become increasingly antiquated in the face of fast and permanent communications solutions.

Despite many other developed countries around the world adopting this sort of sustainable technology in high-rise settings for many years, Australia has yet to fully embrace these simple, efficient, and cost-effective solutions, particularly in residential buildings. That is, perhaps, until now...

Having dedicated much of his career to the body corporate sector in Australia and overseas, Alex L. Smith founded CommVision in 2014 with a simple mission in mind; to utilise today's technology in ensuring residents are kept fully informed (in real time) of everything that's going on in their building, and local community.

How? Through the provision of digital signage, media screens (digital noticeboards) installed in lifts, lobbies mailrooms, or any other common area.

Through a centralised, fully integrated operating system, an OC and/or building manager is able to remotely share updates concerning everything from meetings, cleaning and maintenance to police, local council, news and weather instantaneously throughout the building.

With lift screens starting from as little as \$59 per month (with advertising) and \$123 per month (without advertising), Mr Smith told *North West City News* OCs now had the opportunity to evolve and make the transition to technology without breaking the bank.

"The technology was created to increase awareness and communication in residential and mixed-use developments to ensure that residents in these buildings are being provided up-to-date information at all times by those that are managing the site," Mr Smith said.

"The Australian market is very behind with

technology. We haven't adapted as quickly as other countries in terms of where we use this technology which ultimately makes us more efficient in our overall day-to-day operations."

Having originally become involved with the technology while working on large-scale developments in Dubai, Mr Smith has since trialled and tested software from a range of the world's leading signage companies.

The company partnered with Canada's fastest growing indoor OOH media network, UB Media, which has enabled CommVision to increase its offering to provide touch screen ability in lifts, together with a bespoke management portal which enables managers to curate professional notices and schedule them in advance.

With some OCs resistant to advertising material in the buildings, CommVision has importantly split the content being published on the screens, which prevents important building notices from being overlaid with advertisements. It also offers two separate price structures (with and without advertising) which include the operating system, technical/customer support, insurances and warranty.

While the business model is focused strongly on community and not solely on advertising like its competition, Mr Smith said that being first to market had enabled the company to curate the best service offering available in the market, to suit the building and benefit its residents.

"I think the big ticket here is that committee members need to be open minded when it comes to advertising – it's a word that people are scared of, but we should be calling it promotions; promoting local and national businesses, as ultimately it's supporting and helping the community they live in," he said.

"If a building doesn't want advertising, we can facilitate that. But the focus should be more about providing a seamless communication platform that increases awareness in buildings at an affordable price, while at the same time promoting its local community." ●

For more information:
commvision.com.au

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North West City Local

The local North Melbourne record store “doing it their way”

Record Store Day (RSD) took place on April 22, but according to North Melbourne’s Heartland Records owner, Paul Cook, it just isn’t what it used to be.

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*

The difficulty of being involved in RSD is partly due to major labels reportedly taking the day away from what it originally was intended for, and has seen many local stores no longer willing to participate.

But despite its many complicated layers, Mr Cook said that while he doesn’t participate, he uses the day to focus on reflecting on what the celebration was originally created for.

“Record Store is meant to be about

people supporting local record stores, and while it is still a good day, it is not the same,” Mr Cook said.

“Heartland Records is in a good location though, and there is a great sense of community. People here are great too, and they support us on all the other 364 days.”

Mr Cook has had the business in North Melbourne for nearly 10 years, after moving it from its previous location in West Melbourne, where it was situated for 20 years.

As someone who fell into the industry due to his love for music, which stems back to when he

purchased his first record at the age of 10, Mr Cook said that despite the changing industry he had learnt to never give up.

“When I first opened it wasn’t the best time as CDs were getting really popular, which wasn’t really a passion of mine, and it was quite difficult to import vinyl records, which were no longer manufactured in Australia on a big scale as the popularity of CDs grew,” he said.

“But, I don’t give up, and despite it starting out pretty tough, records have started to pick up and have become popular in the past 10 years.”

This surge in popularity has seen Heartland Records continue to make its name in the Melbourne record store scene, despite the rising cost of records.

Much of this is due to Mr Cook’s drive to showcase the importance of going into your local bricks-and-mortar record store, and experiencing music the way it used to be.

As well as having an impressive collection of records, the store sells a decent amount of second-hand CDs, a smaller number of DVDs, and some cleaning products and turntables.

Mr Cook can also assist visitors

with cleaning records and flattening warped records.

As for the future, Mr Cook is simply focused on sharing the magic of vinyl with fellow enthusiasts, adding, “even if I wasn’t doing this, I would still be buying records”.

Heartland Records is located at 420/422 Victoria St, North Melbourne. ●



For more information:
heartlandrecords.com.au

ENVIRONMENT

Refusing

Refusing becomes an important step in rejuvenating our planet and caring for others and, therefore, ourselves as we are all connected. Refusing can be an act of love and care for the wellbeing of people, creatures and ecosystems.



The refusing I am raising is not about going to live in the mountains as a recluse refusing to participate in society.

The refusing I am talking about is to say that you will not do or accept something.

Refusing is first to understand what we are refusing – it’s possibly harder to refuse when we live in comfort, to see or more likely to look into things fully and determine what we are actually “agreeing” to or allowing to happen.

We live in a world where we can play online games and create our own worlds while the real world outside is shrinking under concrete, asphalt, mining, clearing of forests, damming of rivers.

We are sold a narrative that escaping into our Netflix series, online games, social media will help us feel better and by keeping us busy in a “pretend” world facilitates a denial about what is really going on with the people who are being abused to create our garments, smartphones, laptops, while the land and remaining indigenous peoples who hold ancient wisdom, is being destroyed to make way for our electric cars, and industrialised food.

Has all this technology really created a better life, and if so, for whom?

Tyson Yunkaporta in his book *Sand Talk* explains how we have “outsourced our violence” so we can sit here in our safe houses in Melbourne not having to witness how young children in Africa have to mine minerals for us to have the latest smartphone or laptop.

Globalisation has allowed us to be removed from the actual cost of these things. Imagine if it was our own kids or our neighbour’s children – would we be so complicit?

The relationship between fear and the ability to refuse

is clear when we consider that historically, some can more easily afford to refuse than others. Some people can personally afford the consequences.

When Rosa Parks refused bus driver James F Blake’s order to vacate a row of four seats in the “coloured” section in favour of a white passenger, once the “white” section was filled, she and her family were nearly ruined by her arrest, and she was unable to find full employment for a decade after the boycott. She lost weight and needed to be hospitalised for ulcers and experienced “acute financial hardships”.

There are many “systemic abuses” to be refused at the moment.

Refusing is personal – each individual will decide the things they will refuse.

By refusing to refuse, what are you accepting?

“If you put your money in the things you distrust, or are destroying the world, you’re going to have a very pessimistic outlook on the fate of the earth. If you put money into what you love, and is around you, your community will thrive” – Michael Shuman. ●



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CRITIC

Having a dig at the Royals

When an artist is present at an exhibition, the vibe can change quite dramatically for the better.



WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*

Clinton Naina is not the kind to sit quietly in a corner while people peer at his work.

In *His Colony*, on at GallerySmith in North Melbourne, he is out to change the world.

“I’m observing in the colony that what we like to do is travel overseas to the motherland,” Naina said.

“I notice how much influence the Crown still has today. It’s part of the dominant culture.”

After the blitzkrieg of the coronation, who can argue with that?

Naina is being provocative among his swathes of fabric – cotton and velvet – to which he has applied White King bleach: “I’m the Blak Queen. Who are you?”

A conceptual artist begins with an idea and, as a part Jamaican, British and Australian Merium Mir man, he has a lot of heritage to complicate things.

He is connected to the Pitt family, and an ancestor of his married a slave, a lineage that has become part of his practice.

He uses bleach as a metaphor for the whitening out process of colonisation as it “removes difficult stains” and “provides a superior clean”.

The patches on the fabric are where the bleach has been applied, the surfaces working subliminally as do the swaying fabrics.

They are hung for the pleasure of the camera and for moving gracefully in between.

Cushions featuring the Union Jack and leafy curtains complete the Naina style which also includes works on paper.

“It’s my colony,” he said, and it’s quite a domestic affair, where he can be found slaving over colour and pattern. Works on velvet glow darkly while others run across the floor in a wild dance.

GallerySmith is quite a dark warehouse space, and more could have been done with the lighting.

His Colony is an amusing, irreverent show that sparks off the wit of the artist. King Charles would probably approve.

His Colony, Clinton Naina, GallerySmith, until June 10. ●



Rhonda Dredge
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Stop Margaret Kelly being evicted by Homes Victoria

Margaret has been issued with an eviction notice to leave her home in the Barak Beacon public housing estate in Port Melbourne.

A petition tabled in state parliament to stop the demolition and instead retain, refurbish, and build more public housing on the estate has been ignored by Housing Minister Colin Brooks. Instead, Homes Victoria is pressing on with a plan to get rid of public housing and replace it with community housing, so-called affordable housing for essential workers like paramedics, teachers, firefighters, etc, with their rents set at only a 10 per cent discount to market rents, and full market rent housing.

Residents from Barak Beacon who were afraid of the consequences of saying no to relocation have moved to alternate accommodation. They have joined the hundreds of other tenants from other demolished public housing estates taking up public housing that should have gone to those on the waiting list or are living in

high cost leased private dwellings. This cost to Homes Victoria is no doubt contributing to their financial woes. A Supreme Court affidavit from Homes Victoria's predecessor the Department of Housing and Human Services stated the cost for relocated Abbotsford St North Melbourne residents was \$16,800/day three years ago.

There will be a rally in support of Margaret on the steps of Parliament House on Spring St 11.30am Thursday, May 11, to be followed by a march to Minister Brooks' office in Melbourne's CBD. The campaign can be followed on the Save Barak Beacon Facebook page:



State budget woes – is Homes Victoria insolvent?

The May Victorian Budget is going to be a disaster for many communities and services in Victoria.

Homes Victoria has advised their minister in advance that they alone need hundreds of

millions in extra recurrent funding to stay solvent.

Many public housing tenants have seen the news on Homes Victoria's financial woes and are wondering what on earth they do with the rents they pay. They find it impossible to believe that the management of public housing is currently costing more than all the rental income that Homes Victoria receives.

Professor David Hayworth pointed out in 2021 that public housing is the most cost effective way for governments to provide affordable housing for very low to low income households:



He also made it clear that private investor housing is subsidised through the taxation system but still punishes renters with high rents.

Professor Hayworth is also the chair of the state's review of public, community and affordable housing regulation which has not seen the

light of day in a final report. An interim report issued during the December holiday period in 2021 is all we have seen:



Please show your support for public housing in the lead up to state budget. Demand an end to demolitions and a rebuilding of public housing on demolished estates. ●

This column has been written with the assistance of the Save Public Housing Collective.



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METRO TUNNEL



Final tracks laid through the Metro Tunnel

“*Test trains will soon be running through the Metro Tunnel after the final tracks were laid through the new tunnels for this city-shaping project.*”

Enormous progress is also being made at Arden Station, where work is continuing on installing architectural features.

Crews put down the final lengths of Australian-made steel rail on the tracks only recently, finishing nine months of work along the twin nine-kilometre tunnels and stations.

It's a major milestone for the project as teams prepare to run the first test train in the second half of 2023, kicking off a meticulous testing period to ensure the Metro Tunnel is safe and ready for passengers in 2025 – a year ahead of schedule.

Before the track could be laid, crews had to install 4000 high-performance concrete panels to create an even base for the rail and ensure it was properly aligned.

The panels were cast in 300 different shapes to match the curvature and elevation of the

tunnels as they wind from Kensington to South Yarra, up to nearly 40 metres underground. The 236 lengths of steel rail are extremely strong, but flexible enough to curve along the tunnels where needed.

The lengths of rail – each measuring 165 metres – were installed by clipping them to the concrete panels and welding them together to form a continuous line.

This track design being used on the Metro Tunnel is similar to the City Loop tracks but more advanced and is being used on major rail projects across the world. It requires less maintenance than conventional tracks and is therefore ideal for tunnels.

The testing phase will make sure the Metro Tunnel's complex systems are working together with the new bigger, better trains, alongside the wider network's existing signalling system – an incredibly complex process.

Meanwhile, work will continue to fit out the five new underground stations with lifts, escalators, security systems, CCTV, passenger information displays and emergency phones.

At Arden progress is being made on landscaping out the front of the station. Tree pits and garden beds will all be planted for future growth to improve the urban canopy, provide shade, and capture stormwater.

Once complete, the Metro Tunnel Project will create capacity for more than half-a-million extra passengers each week during peak times and save passengers in the suburbs up to 50 minutes a day on a return trip. ●

STATE MP (UPPER HOUSE)

Our public housing residents deserve an apology

Melburnians watched on in shock when in July 2020, 500 police officers were dispatched to barricade the nine Flemington and North Melbourne housing commission towers as part of Victoria's COVID response.

WORDS BY *Evan Mulholland*
LIBERAL MEMBER FOR NORTHERN METROPOLITAN

Some of Victoria's most vulnerable people were subject to unprecedented police force, locking them in their homes for more than five days. These small and often overcrowded units are home to many migrant families, who fled conflict overseas, only to have their most basic human rights taken from them by this Labor Government.

So, it is no surprise that here we are, almost three years later, where the Premier Daniel Andrews is looking to settle a class action lawsuit brought by residents, for \$5 million.

Where is the apology from the state government? Any settlement should come with a full apology to residents, and a promise that this will never happen again.

I agree that politicians during the outbreak of the pandemic only had a short space of time and were forced to make really tough calls during critical times.

But when those calls are wrong, leadership is about owning those mistakes. The announcement of this settlement is clearly an acknowledgement they made the wrong call, and thousands of vulnerable Victorians paid the price for that mistake.

They felt abandoned by their government. They were treated like prisoners by their Premier, and felt a response designed to protect them had instead inflicted harm and humiliation.



The decent thing to do would be apologise, but residents are not being given that closure by this government.

Residents have long highlighted how they were “singled out” in the public housing blocks, being locked down when other large apartment buildings across the city stayed open.

Why it was that elderly residents who require visits from carers several times a day had no warning, distressing families that could not even attend themselves to ensure their own parents and grandparents were receiving the meals and medical care they needed?

They felt that public health advice in the eastern suburbs should match advice in the towers. If living conditions in public housing are so much riskier than elsewhere then we need to ask why.

“No other community has been treated this way, and those of us in the surrounding streets feel the strain of the blatant inequality.”

These were the words of Yaqub Hashi, a resident of one of the North Melbourne towers, who said at the time the cumulative effect of that week had made him feel as though he was living in a two-tiered city, that “it's giving us the feeling that because you live in public housing, it's easier to shut you up – it's not fair”.

It wasn't fair, and Labor should show the leadership to admit that.

Evan Mulholland is the Liberal Member for Northern Metropolitan Region and Shadow Cabinet Secretary. ●

PARKVILLE GARDENS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Improving safety in Royal Park

Bright splashes of autumn colour are once again a cheerful sight in Parkville Gardens, reminding us of how attractive the neighbourhood is all year round.



The winter months will be relatively quiet both for the trees and the Parkville Gardens Residents' Association (PGRA). If, as we hope, our City of Melbourne Community Event grant application is successful, our next major event will be in September. More on that further down the track.

Hot on the heels of PGRA's much appreciated Easter egg hunt on April 2, social housing providers Housing First and development partners Frasers Property and Citta hosted a Parkville Easter Family Fair on April 15. Despite grey skies, gusty winds and the threat of rain, there was a great turn-out of adults and children. All the attractions were popular.

Kids had a great time with art activities, face painting, the petting zoo and another Easter egg hunt, and no-one complained about the tasty Caribbean street food. It was great to see people enjoying themselves and meeting up with each other.

Right now, the City of Melbourne is conducting a community consultation about safety in Royal Park. In accord with the council's policy of ensuring the municipality is welcoming, safe and inclusive for everyone, their current focus is on Royal Park.

This dovetails with the two-year process of reviewing the 1997 Royal Park Master Plan. Here's what they say about the safety audit ...

"This auditing process aims to capture

experiences of safety from a range of users in Royal Park. This includes actual and perceived inter-personal safety, cultural and gender safety, conflicting uses (e.g., walking and cycling on shared infrastructure) and our community's experiences of safety-related infrastructure, such as lighting and road crossings."

It has identified 10 hotspots, the nearest one to Parkville Gardens being the Trin Warren Tamboore Car Park off Oak St, Parkville.

The audit will be conducted in 30 one-and-a-half-hour sessions on site between May 16 and 30.

To find out more about how you can take part and have your say, go to **participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au** and put Royal Park Community Safety Audit in the search slot.

It looks like the finishing touches are being applied to Housing First's new apartment tower at 51 Galada Ave. If all goes according to plan, residents will be accommodated there in September. They will be most welcome. ●



Tom Knowles
TOM KNOWLES IS THE PRESIDENT OF PARKVILLE GARDENS ASSOCIATION.
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STATE MP (LOWER HOUSE)

Melbourne's creatives need your help to save the Nicholas Building

The Nicholas Building is one of my favourite places in the city. When you walk into the building off busy Swanston St, the cathedral arches make it feel like you've stepped into another time.



Exploring the floors above feels a bit like a maze, with every door opening to something new and exciting.

You'll find jewellers, tailors, art galleries, textile artists, craft workshops, designer clothing stores, photographers, and even a virtual reality art studio. In the hallways and elevators, artists, and creatives chat, ideate, and collaborate.

There truly is nowhere else quite like it.

For more than 40 years this Art Deco building has offered affordable studios and community to Melbourne's creatives. It's currently home to more than 200 artists, creatives, and small businesses. The tenants I've spoken to don't underestimate how special this place is. One tenant described it as feeling "more like home than my home."

But right now, this community is under threat. The Nicholas Building is up for sale and could fall into the hands of property developers. If it's turned into apartments, or into a commercial building with astronomical rents, it would push out hundreds of artists and creatives, and we would lose this unique part of Melbourne's cultural history forever. The Nicholas Building tenants and the local

council have presented a number of ideas to the state government for how they could help save the building and its community. I've also called on the Labor Government in Parliament to step in and save this building. But our pleas have gone unanswered.

We're not giving up. But we need your help.

If you'd like to see this unique heritage building retained as a creative hub, please head to **savethenicholasbuilding.com** and add your name to the open letter calling on the Victorian Labor Government to step in and #SaveTheNicholasBuilding.

We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to save this iconic heritage building from being turned into apartments or a soulless commercial space.

For more on this, or to discuss anything else, please get in touch at **office@ellensandell.com**. ●



Ellen Sandell
STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE
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MELBOURNE ZOO

Wombat family warmly welcomes roly-poly joey

An adorably chubby Southern hairy-nosed wombat joey is waddling about at Melbourne Zoo after emerging from its mum's pouch.



The female joey named Alkira – meaning "bright and sunny" in Woi Wurrung language – is napping, suckling and exploring close by to first-time mum, Whitney.

Melbourne Zoo native mammals keeper Erin Myers said the wombat joey was the first to be born at Melbourne Zoo since 2015, which was a major conservation win for the Australian-native threatened species.

"Like all wombat joeys, Alkira was born as a tiny pink jellybean and has been growing and suckling in mum's pouch for the past nine months," Ms Myers said.

"She has just come out of the pouch – which is uniquely backwards-facing to keep dirt out while mum burrows – so now zoo visitors can see her wandering around the burrow."

Alkira joins five other Southern hairy-nosed wombats who live, eat and sleep together at Melbourne Zoo in a social burrow network that is unique to their species. This includes new father, Kipp, who arrived from South Australia's Monarto Zoo in 2020 as part of a breeding program.

Ms Myers said the furry joey would continue to grow and stick close by to mum until she was fully weaned at 12 to 16 months of age, so visitors have plenty of time to see her while she is still small.

"Alkira is such a beautiful joey and we're excited for visitors to see her grow and become more independent and confident," Ms Myers

said. "In the next few months, she will begin to dig and forage on her own which will be wonderful to see."

Southern hairy-nosed wombats are listed as "near threatened" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). They are native to South Australia and the southern parts of Western Australia but are in decline due to habitat destruction and car strikes.

Zoos Victoria is part of a regional breeding program for the Southern hairy-nosed wombat to ensure a long-term future for this precious Australian-native species.

Melbourne Zoo visitors are reminded that all tickets must be pre-booked online at **zoo.org.au** ●

Connecting through creating

In our busy world, opportunities for younger and older people to connect and learn from one another are few and far between. Yet research has shown that intergenerational connections benefit everyone.

Relationships between older and younger people provide a sense of connection to the past and to the future. Getting to know older adults helps children form a better sense of who they are, where they have come from and how they fit into this world. At the same time, intergenerational relationships offer older people the opportunity to share in the joy and enthusiasm of childhood and see things through younger eyes.

In an effort to build inter-generational connections, Kensington Neighbourhood House will be organising a series of art-making workshops during the second half of this year. Our project – “From The HeART” – aims to bring older and younger community members together to create a fantastic public art installation.

The developers of the Kensington Recreation Centre have promised a section of hoarding to use as our “canvas” and local community artist – Jennifer Tran – will be facilitating the project.

Without giving too much away, Jen’s idea is all about connection and collaboration. Participants will be reflecting on their past, present and future selves while drawing, painting and creating something amazing! Art enables people to share their



experiences, thoughts, feelings and imaginations. It is a way for people to express their sense of identity and it enriches lives by providing a means to see and experience the world through the eyes of others.

We hope that “From The HeART” will provide a creative focus for participants to process the impacts of the past few years and explore feelings of belonging. We’re also hoping to increase opportunities for inter-generational and cross-cultural communication. Not to mention provide a whole lot of colour, creativity and fun! We are currently collecting participants. If you, or a small person you know, would like to take part in this project, please email Rebecca.s@kenhouse.org.au.

Thanks to the City of Melbourne for funding this project with a 2023 Connected Communities Grant. ●



Rebecca Smith
MANAGER KENSINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE
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Reconciliation ... a process

Reconciliation Week is coming up from May 27 to June 3, also NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) Week, from July 2 ... then later, probably sometime in October, we will be voting on the constitutional change to establish the Voice to Parliament.



also problematic. I have no reason whatsoever to question the sincerity of her perspective, but a “perspective” is not a “truth”.

The theme for Reconciliation Week is “Be a Voice for Generations”. This is a kind of rallying cry I guess, challenging everyone to use their voices to “reconcile” differences and strengthen relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of everyone.

In the March edition of *North West City News* (NWCN) I concluded the Kensington Association column with these questions: do you know or understand enough? Who have you been listening to? If you need to vote, how will you vote? Although my questions were general, they are especially pertinent in relation to the Voice to Parliament question.

The *ABC News* on the morning of May 11 featured an article about those advocating a “NO” vote in relation to the Voice question. I was disappointed to read that leading NO campaigner, Senator (Jacinta) Nampijinpa Price (the new Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs), was quoted as saying ... [she wanted] “Australians to know the truth about the divisive Voice”. I take issue strongly with her use of the word “divisive”.

The use of “diverse”, “different” or even “divide” (same sense but different feeling) would lower the temperature of this important discussion; the use of “divisive” does exactly the opposite. Divisiveness occurs primarily through the way a discussion takes place, not from the different perspectives among those who are discussing. Jacinta’s use of the word “truth” is

More recently the City of Melbourne and the National Reconciliation Week, as organisations, have strongly come out in favour of the YES campaign. This has prompted some discussion about the appropriateness of expressing organisational (as opposed to individual) support for either side of the campaign. What about schools, churches, community groups, the AFL? If the balance of opinion within a group supports one side or other of the campaign, given we live within a democratic system, expressing that support seems consistent to me. This is not to discount or disregard different individual perspectives, it simply means that more of their colleagues think differently.

At the June 5 meeting of the Kensington Association I will invite all members to attend, and I will move a motion to support the YES campaign. During Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week the Kensington Reconciliation Action Group (KRAG) will be hosting a film, discussions, and activities designed to inform and assist members of the community to reflect on the issues around the Voice campaign as we move closer to the time to vote. ●



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NORTH WEST CITY NEWS

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NORTH & WEST MELBOURNE PRECINCT ASSOCIATION

North Melbourne’s own slice of Italy

Melbourne is arguably the home of Italian cuisine in Australia, and in the heart of North Melbourne, you’ll find Sosta Cucina – a warm and welcoming Italian restaurant offering fine food, wine, and amazing service.



WORDS BY *Joyce Watts*

“Sosta’ is an Italian word meaning ‘to pause, to stop’. So, at my restaurant, I want people to take a break from their everyday life to enjoy the regional and seasonal Italian cuisine from our kitchen, our cucina,” owner Maurice Santucci smiled. “There’s also a nice coincidence that the restaurant overlooks the number 57 tram stop!”

For more than 15 years, Maurice and his team have been serving up the finest Italian food and wines from their elegant Errol St restaurant. The interior decor is simple and understated, punctuated by a wall of black and white family photos.

“My background is Italian, and I’ve always enjoyed food, so it all just comes naturally. My parents come from the north of Italy; my father hailed from La Spezia, while my mother migrated from Treviso,” Maurice said.

“I grew up learning cooking from my mum. The recipes we use are a mix of family recipes and those I have learnt over the years - I started cooking commercially when I was fifteen years old. Our produce is mostly sourced from nearby Queen Victoria Market.”

When you visit Sosta Cucina, you must not miss Maurice’s favourite antipasti, the lightly fried local calamari, or the selection of hand-made pasta. Customer favourites include the spaghetti al granchio, a fragrant spanner crab spaghettini and the signature hand-cut pappardelle with slow-cooked lamb ragu.

You might also find modern Italian-inspired dishes such as the vodka-cured salmon with blood oranges, thinly sliced pickled beetroot, goats cheese and finger limes, a seasonal special.

“It’s a dish that is not straight-down-the-line traditional Italian; it’s very inspired by Italian ingredients and techniques. It’s a modern interpretation of gravlax, but with Italian elements.” ●

What's On: May 2023

Community Calendar



EVERY THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 10AM - 3PM

KENSINGTON MARKET

For a market that highlights the produce and artwork of its wonderful inner-city makers community, be sure to come down as you'd be sure to find something you love.

Kensington Town Hall
30-34 Bellair St



EVERY MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY, 10:30AM - 3PM

SONGBIRDS

Songs, rhymes and stories will engage your budding bookworm's mind and introduce them to the fun and rhythm of language. For babies and toddlers to 18 months old; no bookings necessary.

North Melbourne Library
66 Errol St

EVERY TUESDAY, 10:30AM - 11:15AM

PRESCHOOL STORYTIME

Share the wonder of books with your preschooler at storytime, with stories, songs, rhymes, and activities.

North Melbourne Library
66 Errol Street



TUESDAY, MAY 23, 10AM TO 12PM

PREPARING FOR YOUR FUTURE

During the free session attendees will be supported to think about trusted decision makers, finances, medical preferences and living arrangements, and life ahead.

(03) 9658 7028 or healthyageing@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Kensington Neighbourhood Centre

Preparing For Your Future





EVERY THURSDAY, 10:30AM - 11AM

STOMPERS

Come along for an energetic 30 minutes of stories, songs, rhymes, music, and most of all, fun. Ages 18 months to 3 years.

North Melbourne Library
66 Errol Street



SECOND MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH (UNLESS PH), 1:45PM - 3:45PM

ORGAN CLUB

Fun and entertaining musical afternoon, with music to suit all tastes. Afternoon tea to follow. \$8 incl afternoon tea. Contact: 9307 8207.

Kensington Neighbourhood House
Upcoming Dates: June 19 and July 10

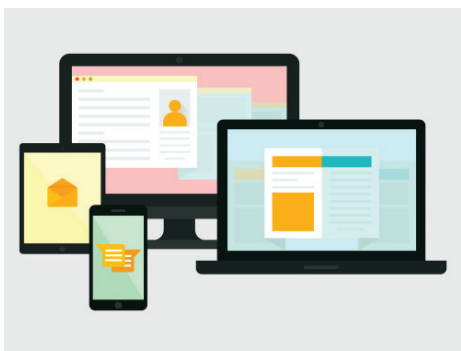
EVERY MONDAY, JUNE TO NOVEMBER

CONNECT CAFE: TECH I.T HELP

If 55+, learn new skills on your mobile, tablet device or laptop through the topic workshop (10am to 12pm) or an individual one-hour session (9am to 12pm) - alternating weeks. Light morning tea provided.

Book: (03) 9328 1665

Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre



SATURDAY, JUNE 3. 3PM TO 4PM

FINDING FANNY FINCH

Based on the research of historian Kacey Sinclair, the performance seeks to understand the life and legacy of an extraordinary woman.

For more info scan QR:



Victorian Archives Centre



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Council puts heat on government to protect Royal Park amid sky rail plans

The City of Melbourne has released a Position Paper addressing its concerns surrounding the proposed level crossing project at Park St, which has the potential to impact the heritage-listed Royal Park.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PLANNING



The bold 33-page report, released in May, makes several requirements for the state government to commit to, including to “investigate all construction site options within the rail corridor” before requesting to use land at Royal Park to build a sky rail.

“Any occupation of ovals for construction purposes is unacceptable,” it said, while also imploring that before project works begin, consultation with the public “must be undertaken,” including with Royal Park sporting groups, community groups, residents, and other key stakeholders.

The report follows the state government announcing plans in September last year to remove eight level crossings along the Upfield rail line between Park St, Parkville, and Albion St, Brunswick by 2027. Plans have yet to be unveiled and how or if the project would impact Royal Park.

Parkville is on the municipal boundary between Merri-bek City Council and the City of Melbourne.

As reported by *North West City News*, the proposed Park St level crossing removal has

been met with concern in the community, with many residents saying that the design must respect Royal Park’s landscape and environment settings, heritage status and visual amenity.

As a key stakeholder, the City of Melbourne has outlined several key issues regarding the project, which, at the time of publishing, were considered at the council’s Future Melbourne Committee meeting on May 16.

Councillors were expected to endorse the Position Paper, and to ask Lord Mayor Sally Capp to write to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and the Minister for Planning “advising council’s position and seek their response to the issues as set out in the Position Paper”.

The council’s Position Paper outlined in significant detail the importance of Royal Park and called for the state government to provide a detailed botanical field survey that “meets the satisfaction” of the City of Melbourne, which must be undertaken before any project works begin in the railway cutting within Royal Park among other measures.

“Reduce the footprint of the Upfield railway line within Royal Park and ensure infrastructure associated with the rail operations is not

located within parkland,” the paper said.

However, while the paper acknowledged that a proposed “rail-over-road solution for the removal of the level crossing at Park St will provide a new opportunity to reduce fragmentation of Royal Park by providing a connection beneath the new viaduct (a bridge with arches),” it said “every effort must be made to retain and protect all trees within Royal Park from any construction activity that may impact their health and/or longevity”.

“Royal Park and the rail line cutting are both significant for Melbourne’s biodiversity,” the report outlined.

“The park is home to extensive areas of native and indigenous vegetation including open woodland with trees, grassland, and wetland habitats. Important and/or rare species of flora and fauna may exist there; the project must investigate before works begin.”

The City of Melbourne said it would also not support any proposed long-term closure of Park St.

The Parkville Gardens Residents’ Association said it had acknowledged the Position Paper and would be discussing the matter at a forthcoming meeting before commenting.

The Parkville Association’s president Rob Moore has maintained that while the removal of level crossings was welcomed, the visual impact of a sky rail at Park St would be a “major concern”, as would its impact on the flora and fauna in nearby parkland.

Melbourne Greens MP Ellen Sandell has thrown her support behind residents and the potential impact of a rail bridge on the local area, which she said was “so close to our beautiful Royal Park”.

Ms Sandell also pledged to seek answers and details from the Minister for Transport Infrastructure to make sure resident concerns were considered, and that community consultation conducted. ●



West Gate tunnelling works now complete

WORDS BY *Blake Lee*
BUILDING

Motorists are one step closer to having their travel time slashed from Melbourne’s west, as a major breakthrough was reached on the West Gate Tunnel Project in May.

Tunnel boring has now been completed on the two twin tunnels designed to make travel more efficient and safer for road users, providing a much-needed alternative to the West Gate Bridge.

Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM), Bella, operated 24/7 during the past 15 months to excavate the four-kilometre-long outbound tunnel.

The TBM excavated enough soil to fill the MCG and will now be dismantled piece by piece and recycled or returned to the manufacturer, with the 450-tonne cutterhead buried onsite.

The largest tunnel breakthrough in the Southern Hemisphere occurred after TBM Vida completed her journey in February.

“This is a significant breakthrough ... in just a few years’ time, thousands of Victorians will travel through this tunnel each day, transforming Melbourne’s west,” Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Jacinta Allan said. ●

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Max is a shining example of everything Haileybury stands for. Courteous, hard working and throwing himself into all facets of school life — you’ll find Max striving in Science class, running cross country, battling his peers in debating and chess, as well as playing the lead in the School’s production of the *Lion King Jr.* With dreams of working in the Science field, we’re sure Max’ll be a roaring success.