

NORTH WEST CITY NEWS

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Puzzles & Trivia P14



▲ Parents are concerned about road safety following the opening of the North Melbourne Primary School's Molesworth St campus.

Calls mount for safety fix at new school campus

Growing numbers of concerned parents are voicing alarm over unsafe road conditions they say are putting lives at risk amid the opening of North Melbourne Primary's School's new campus.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Hanna Komissarova*
SAFETY & SECURITY

Parents and children are currently being forced to "race" against traffic along a busy road after the new Molesworth St campus opened on May 25 with an absence of zebra crossings and appropriate signage.

"It's an accident waiting to happen," a concerned parent, who withheld their identity, said of the Curzon St/Harker St arterial, which still retains a 60km/h speed limit.

"It's inadequate – we want the speed limit dropped to 40km/h."

The issues have prompted the school community to launch a petition for authorities to act and ensure the safety of everyone.

The petition, which has attracted more than 300 signatures, calls for clearer signage indicating a school zone, as well as electronic flashing 40km/h warning signs, and pedestrian crossings to be installed on Abbotsford St and Curzon St/Harker St.

"We need immediate action to improve safety measures and active reminders for motorists travelling through our local streets to slow down and keep our children and school community safe," the petition said.

The concerned parent said another worrying factor was that traffic travelling from Flemington Rd accelerated downhill along Curzon St/Harker St before going "around a bend where they hit the high intensity pedestrian crossing" near Haines St.

Continued on page 4.

West Melbourne residents outraged over hotel redevelopment plans

A proposal to redevelop the Miami Hotel in West Melbourne into a five-storey building over four parcels of land has angered locals who believe it will have a detrimental impact to the area's amenity.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PLANNING

The City of Melbourne endorsed plans at its June 13 Future Melbourne Committee for the Miami Hotel Group to redevelop the site associated with the existing hotel at 599, 601, 605-609 King St, and 13-25 and 27 Hawke St, totalling 2761 square metres.

The proposed development includes a mixed-use 21-metre building containing a residential hotel, food and drinks shops, dwellings, underground car parking and the partial demolition and retention of heritage buildings classified as significant.

The land at 599-601 King St is currently occupied by two double-storey brick terraces built in 1875. Both dwellings are categorised as significant under the incorporated City of Melbourne Heritage Study Heritage Places Inventory March 2022 (the Inventory).

At 605-609 King St, the land is currently vacant, but remains categorised as a contributory heritage place under the Inventory, while 13-25 Hawke St is developed with a three-storey brick building housing the existing Miami Hotel, which has remained unchanged since it began operations in 1970 under the same ownership and management of a single family.

Echelon Planning stated that "in this market context, particularly in



▲ The proposal for 599-601 King St.

the post-COVID-19 economy, it is critical that the Hotel expand and modernise its accommodation offering to remain competitive and viable".

However, controversy has surrounded the Miami Hotel Group's request to the council that it seek an amendment to the West Melbourne Structure Plan (WMSP) so that the land can be rezoned from general residential to mixed use, and therefore making it exempt from a three-storey height limit, as well as "requirements for site-specific development with appropriate conditions".

The structure plan was approved by the state government last May, and sets out guidelines for West Melbourne's urban development, with strict height controls in place to preserve the neighbourhood's character and to ensure appropriate building proportions.

Continued on page 2.

LOVE YOUR NWC LOCAL, PAGE 03

A Bobbie Peels: a new feel for an old favourite



ARTS & CULTURE, PAGE 05

B Arts House production explores autistic culture



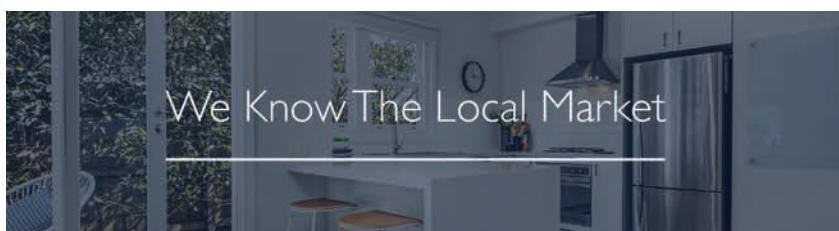
COMMUNITY, PAGE 07

C Somali Day Australia celebrations



ARCHITECTURE, PAGE 11

D Striking local buildings receive recognition



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West Melbourne residents outraged over hotel redevelopment plans

Continued from page 1.

But the decision to approve the plans has left residents fuming, as they believe the proposed development contravenes the principles of the West Melbourne Structure Plan, and that the increased height would impede the views to the iconic and historic Town Hall and undermine the “low scale nature of the area”.

“The ink is barely dry and an application to amend it – to support a development proposal that contravenes the principles of the WMSP – is already in the pipeline,” resident Bill Cook said.

“This action by the Melbourne City Council completely undermines the planning process. Why would anybody take part in any planning consultation in the future knowing the outcomes are only in place for a short time up to the next developer’s planning application that is contrary to the current planning scheme?”

Deputy Lord Mayor and planning portfolio lead Nicholas Reece said he understood the community’s concerns and their “confusion about what is going on with the site” but added “this is a very unusual application and it’s occurring in a very unusual context”.

“When the West Melbourne Structure Plan process was under way, it was a process which took many years ... however, the planning panel that reviewed the West Melbourne Structure Plan recommended that the developer instead pursue a site-specific planning scheme amendment so that wasn’t a decision of the City of Melbourne – that was a decision made by an independent planning panel”.

“In accordance with that, the planning panel formed has indicated that they thought the site could accommodate a bigger development than what was currently allowed under the existing planning controls and as such, we’ve got the developer now under direction, if you like, from the planning panel, seeking to get this site-specific planning scheme amendment.”

Cr Reece emphasised that this is “the first step in a much longer process”, with the amendment to be publicly exhibited, “which will mean it



▲ Residents have voiced their concerns with the redevelopment plans at the Miami Hotel site. Photo: Marcela Lehocka.

will go out for consultation and all submissions that will be received during this process will be formally considered later in the process”.

Overall, Cr Reece said the Hachem Architects-designed proposal was an attractive contemporary design, and “if we get this right, it could actually be a real positive for West Melbourne”.

But the North and West Melbourne Association’s chair Kevin Chamberlin expressed his dissatisfaction, saying the council’s decision was “one of the worst I’ve ever seen on a planning matter” and “sends the message to every developer, town planner, and planning lawyer and the rest of the community that planning scheme controls stand for nothing”.

“To think the council would even consider spot rezoning which had been taboo for decades is unbelievable,” he said.

“I would be very surprised if the government agrees to this request. It’s important to remember that the planning controls for this area were put in place in May last year after years of extensive consultation. Who would want to take part in any consultation in future knowing

it’s not worth a cracker?” Mr Chamberlin said.

“The council has set a really unhealthy precedent and people are becoming concerned about major sites in North Melbourne where the council may support spot rezonings, the most recent being the United Church site close by that has just been sold to a developer.”

Echelon Planning said the proposal “strikes a more sympathetic balance between the adjoining heritage streetscapes and complements the broader planning direction for West Melbourne”.

The council will seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit the amendment known as C435. ●



Brendan Rees
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WEST GATE TUNNEL PROJECT

Dynon Road closed in both directions

From mid-June to late-August



Dynon Road between Dryburgh St and the CityLink inbound exit ramp will be closed in both directions from **8pm Friday 16 June to 5am Thursday 31 August** so we can continue strengthening the Dynon Road Bridge.

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Visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au for more information, including detour routes and closure times. Please note that dates and times are subject to change.

In partnership with:



Keep in mind there are other disruptions during this time. Find a detailed list at bigbuild.vic.gov.au



Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

Love your North West City Local



A new feel for an old favourite

Since being handed the keys in early 2022, business partners Phil Gijsbers and Neil Mills (Green Acre, Rusty's, East End), the duo behind North Melbourne modern bistro, Bobbie Peels, have quietly forged a following among industry experts and locals alike.

WORDS BY Jack Hayes
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Jake Roden
BUSINESS

With those keys, and the lucky privilege to call the 114-year-old Robert Peel Hotel building home, came the responsibility to take this piece of North Melbourne history into a new age.

After a minor strip-back of the interiors in order to expose the natural beauty of the building, Gijsbers told *North West City News* that Bobbie Peels is a "new evolution of the pub



where we can meet the locals, find out what they want and grow with the community."

"We loved everything about this pub," Gijsbers said. "The site, the location, the interior of the place, the 115-year-old history of the place – old pubs like this are just gorgeous."

"We like to think of ourselves as old-school hospitality subscribers. We like to look after people and take it back to those principles. We count ourselves pretty lucky because people in the area are so bloody lovely; we have been welcomed with wide open arms. We see it as a nice organic way of running the place, meeting people one by one and joining the community."

Unlike its heritage-listed home, which only saw a few slight alterations, the menu at Bobbie Peels has undergone a considerable makeover.

With an ever-evolving menu bending to the seasons and the best possible produce the team can get their hands on any given day, locals can expect bistro classics like chardonnay coq au vin with baby onions, or seafood bouillabaisse, bread and brown butter, and charred cabbage with white bean cassoulet and leeks.



For smaller plates, you will find hand-picked Macedon mushrooms with rarebit, mussels cooked in Riesling and tarragon, or crab linguini with chilli, garlic, and herbs.

Befittingly to this menu, Gijsbers and Mills, also founders of Burnley Brewing in Richmond, have chalked up a drinks list that ranges from an affordable pint or glass of wine to 1970s cellar-aged beauties from Grampians heavyweights Best's.

"It's all made by people who care about what they do. For better or worse, we don't have some large production beers, we focus on independent producers," Gijsbers said. "Customers are much more informed these days. For us to hold our head high and tell them our wine is locally produced, our meat is hormone-free, and our seafood is all-Australian, it is a source of pride." ●

For more information:
bobbiepeels.com.au

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▲ Ilo Diaz outside his Queensberry St office.

Calls mount for safety fix at new school campus

Continued from page 1.

"This fantastic new campus is an amazing investment in our local community," the parent said, but added, "safe access to the school is problematic", with community members also contending with a high volume of construction vehicles in the area.

The City of Melbourne said it was working with the state government to install a new zebra pedestrian crossing on Abbotsford St, as well as changes to the road layout, traffic islands, speed humps, disability access and lighting.

The crossing works, which were initially promised to be delivered by January, are now scheduled to start in August, with the new crossing ready to use by September.

"In the interim, we have installed temporary speed cushions next to the tram stops to improve safety," the council said in a statement.

"All local streets in North and West Melbourne are now signed as 40 km/h at all times, and we have installed signs near the school to highlight the presence of school children."

New parking restrictions have been installed along Molesworth St to help parents picking up and dropping off children, with the council promising to "continue to monitor activity and assess whether additional measures are required".

Meanwhile, it said the state government was undertaking community consultation on a proposal to remove the tram stops on Abbotsford St to further boost safety at the zebra crossing.

School principal Sarah Nightingale supported the community's concerns, saying the current traffic conditions around Molesworth St "could definitely be improved".

"Consideration needs to be taken now that we are a two-campus school, in order to promote safe walking paths from each campus both before and after school but also during the school day," she said.

"Our youngest students attend the Molesworth St campus, and we need to ensure our school community is safe at all times. These measures

would be a huge benefit not only to the North Melbourne Primary School community but also the wider North Melbourne community."

"We would be grateful to see more pedestrian crossings installed and a school zone with decreased speed limits enforced as soon as possible."

Ms Nightingale said the school was also working with the council to install new "Kiss and Go" signage on Molesworth St to make student drop-off and pick-up less congested.

The office of state MP for Melbourne Ellen Sandell has been inundated with parents expressing their dissatisfaction.

"Parents and the school community are understandably frustrated that these works were not completed in advance of the school opening," Ms Sandell said.

"I urge the state government to take immediate action to keep children and their families safe while travelling to and from the school."

The school's council president Rohan Kimber said despite the best efforts of Ms Nightingale and her team to keep children safe, "the lack of appropriate signage and speed restrictions expose our children to unnecessary and avoidable risks".

"The efforts made by the school community to raise awareness and highlight this issue are a true reflection of the spirit of being a North Melburnian."

"I understand that there are complex issues being addressed at both local and state government levels, spanning multiple departments," he said, adding "I appreciate the progress made thus far and the efforts involved."

"However, I urge all parties involved to prioritise the safety of the students at North Melbourne Primary School."

North West City News put questions to the Department of Education about the process for road safety planning when building new schools, but it did not respond.

The Department of Transport, which operates Curzon St/Harker St, was also contacted for comment, but did not respond before deadline. ●



Report condemns police lockdown behaviour

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
COMMUNITY

Lingering impacts of the lockdown are still being sorted by Inner Melbourne Community Legal, which has a shopfront on Queensberry St opposite North Melbourne Town Hall.

Ilo Diaz is an advocacy co-ordinator for the legal service and he deals with problems first-hand.

One is the economic impact of COVID fines that is still affecting low-income families in the area.

"We have a fine clinic and offer a free service to those with social and economic barriers," Mr Diaz said, and there are still unpaid fines.

"We saw lots of COVID fines during that time [the lockdowns]. We still do. With the rise in the cost of living, people have to make tough decisions between putting food on the table and paying a COVID fine."

IMCL is calling on the state government to waive all COVID fines, which ranged from \$200 for not wearing a face mask to \$1652 for a stay-at-home order because of racial profiling.

In a finely argued report, IMCL has sifted through the COVID figures and discovered what would have remained hidden.

People of African and Middle Eastern appearance received 20 per cent of the 37,000 fines issued in 2020 even though they represent just five per cent of the state population, making them four times more likely to have been fined.

"We want all COVID fines waived because the way they were enforced was disproportionate," Mr Diaz said.

The researchers make a distinction between those who received a fine and those who were approached and fined after questioning.

The figures show that particular racialised groups were approached by police at a five per cent higher rate than white people. At some police stations up to 40 per cent of fines went to people of African and Middle Eastern appearance.

The report claims that the figures provide evidence of racial profiling and that transit police and highway squads were disproportionately fining people from African and Middle Eastern backgrounds.

In one case, protective services officers passed eight people on a train platform in West Melbourne to focus their questioning on two African teenage women to

explore whether they had committed a COVID offence.

They discovered that one of the teenagers was outside her five-kilometre radius. They arrested her and placed her in a cell as she'd previously had fines. "She felt racially profiled", the report said.

The local government area of Melbourne was the most affected, with people of non-English speaking background almost twice as likely to be fined than those in other areas.

For each increase in proportion of people who speak a language other than English the rate of fine increased by 19 per cent in the Melbourne LGA. On a state-wide basis this figure was 11 per cent.

Mr Diaz said the problem of racial profiling persists in the area. "My role in the community is helping people impacted by high levels of policing. We figure out a legal solution. Our catchment area includes the North Melbourne, Carlton, Flemington, and Kensington towers."

Mr Diaz has been helping people fill out forms for the recent \$5 million settlement by the state government over the excessive use of force during the hard lockdown when 500 police converged on the towers in July 2020.

"I spoke to one youth who has been stopped 20 times in the last three months going to and from school. An African boy. That's common," Mr Diaz said.

"Twenty times in the last three months. That's what it looks like. They don't want to speak out. All he wants to do is go to school and back without being hassled by the police."

The report *Policing COVID-19 in Victoria: Exploring the Impact of Perceived Race in the Issuing of COVID-19 Fines During 2020* was released last month. It recommends that a police ombudsman be appointed.

A Victorian Government spokesperson said public health directives played an important role in keeping Victorians safe and stopping the spread during the pandemic.

"Infringements issued for breaching public health orders do not expire," the spokesperson said.

"We have many flexible options available for those experiencing disadvantage or with special circumstances to deal with their fine, and we encourage people with outstanding fines to contact Fines Victoria."

The COVID fines concession scheme began last August and allows eligible people such as pensioners, health care card holders, asylum seekers and veterans who received a fine for breaching pandemic health orders to apply to Fines Victoria to have it reduced.

To contact Fines Victoria call (03) 9200 8111 or online at online.fines.vic.gov.au ●

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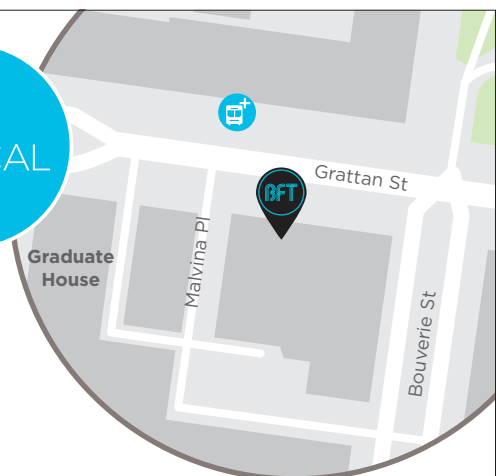
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Arts House

Sublime Stim's exploration into autistic culture creates "a safer space for generations to come"

Arts House season two launched on June 30, and starting off the program in August is Sublime Stim, which has been commissioned through the performance space's The Warehouse Residency program.

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
ARTS & CULTURE

As the lead artist and creator of *Sublime Stim*, Mishka is passionate about helping the wider community understand the "beauty of [autistic] culture" through their work on stimming.

Stimming refers to self-stimulating behaviours, such as repetitive movements and sounds, and is a practice that is used regularly by people navigating the world through their senses.

"I care deeply about de-stigmatising stimming and helping support a culture where people sensory seek freely to regulate in ways that are safe for themselves and others," Mishka said.

"I became interested in developing a work around stimming, because I think it's a beautiful part of autistic



culture that is very human and is experienced by all people in some way."

Mishka is the first autistic person in the first round of Arts House's The Warehouse Residency program, a new Arts House initiative centred around celebrating the creative works of deaf, disabled, neurodiverse and chronically ill artists.



Through sharing dialogue between care professionals, the autistic and wider communities, Mishka wants to create an environment where people feel safe and free from discrimination when using their stimming practices.

"I want people to see me flapping my arms like a bird and feel like it's poetry, or jumping up and down and wiggling my fingers and see it as part of a cultural dance," Mishka said.

"I want to create a safer space for generations to come, [and] I hope people take away irreverence for sensory seeking, and a sense of safety with expressing autistic cultural expression."

Sublime Stim will run as an explorative exercise, allowing for people to delve into their responses to expressions of neurodiversity and stimming.

"The show re-writes questionnaires used for diagnosis as a playful

invite for everyone to explore their own responses, and it explores difference as a point of value and beauty," Mishka said.

"People can expect live performances from [the] autistic and care community. There will be a live band and exhibition of more than 50 brain mapping artworks created in collaboration with the community, sensory films, projections, installations, alternative outsider questionnaires, braille books, sound cones, glowing objects, and sensory sculpture."

While Mishka hopes attendees leave inspired to self-educate on autistic culture, and with the understanding that autistic people "have a different beautiful and different way of forming connection that enriches the world", Mishka also wants people to have fun.

"I'm giving an artist talk [as well] which delves deeply into the politics

and history around autism, but the show itself is mostly light and invites the viewer to make up their own mind and relationships," Mishka said.

As for the opportunity to create and present this work, Mishka couldn't be more grateful to Arts House.

"I feel humbled by the generosity and warmth from the staff at Arts House and their efforts towards inclusivity. I'm regularly brought to tears when asked what this opportunity means to me," Mishka said.

The *Sublime Stim* exhibition will open on Saturday, August 5, with an artist talk on Wednesday, August 9, and a performance on Saturday, August 19. ●

For more information:
artshouse.com.au

Historic North Melbourne church sold for first time in 170 years

A large property site in North Melbourne that has been home to a 170-year-old bluestone church has been sold to an offshore buyer.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PROPERTY

The sale of the 4882-square-metre block at 579-599 Queensberry St and 51-61 Curzon St includes the heritage-listed St Mark the Evangelist Uniting Church, which is known for its stunning gothic revival-style architecture and majestic 46-metre spire.

JLL's capital markets team acted on behalf of the Uniting Church in Australia in the sale of the major site, which was offered by a public expression of interest process, with a reported

price guide of about \$10 million.

Both the JLL agents and the UCA declined to comment on the price or the transaction details, after confirming the sale on June 23, but added the existing buildings on site, with the church dating back to 1879, had led to significant interest from a range of prospective buyers.

"The campaign generated 217 interested parties, and despite some of the complexities and challenges of the site from a heritage and environmental perspective, a very pleasing sale outcome and settlement arrangement for our client was achieved," JLL's Jesse Radisich said.

"This transaction demonstrates that robust demand is in the market for significant landholdings with income and upside potential, and many active purchasers are not impacted or concerned by uncertainty around interest rates."

UCA's director of property services Peter Thomas said the Uniting Church and the Mark the Evangelist congregation were pleased to "see the next stage of life for the church and

the site now about to commence under new ownership, following widespread interest from multiple parties".

"We have been well supported by JLL who executed the extensive campaign on this truly complex and unique site," Mr Thomas said.

As previously reported by *North West City News*, the Uniting Church of Australia's moderator of the synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Reverend David Fotheringham, said the congregation had "discerned that their needs for the future had changed, and that such a substantial landholding, including the associated maintenance and upkeep required, no longer met their missional goals".

The huge complex, which sits on a general residential-zoned site, has three street frontages along Curzon, Elm, and Queensberry streets totalling more than 200 metres.

The Victorian Heritage Register states: "the spire and imposing exterior of the church along with the intact manse, rear hall, parsonage and cottages results in a complex of aesthetic



significance, which is a landmark in North Melbourne".

The community will eagerly await details of what the new buyer has in store for the property, and whether that includes any proposed development plans, but they hope any new project will honour the site's heritage and contribute positively to the fabric of North Melbourne. ●

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Evan MULHOLLAND MP
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Safety fears after woman randomly attacked

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
SAFETY & SECURITY



A West Melbourne woman who was randomly attacked and pushed to a road as she was walking home on a Friday night has raised community concerns of safety in the area.

The 34-year-old victim, who asked not to be identified, was walking on King St near Eades Place Park, when a stranger approached her from behind and grabbed her sometime between 8.30pm and 9pm on June 9.

“I was holding a small clutch bag and he put his hand in a way to grab my hand,” she said, before a struggle ensued with the man knocking her to the road.

The victim managed to get to her feet before running towards a local hotel where she sought help and called police. “I landed on my head, I had a big scratch down my face, and I got a concussion,” she said.

She said the offending male was Caucasian, aged in his 30s, with a large build, tattooed arms, and a piercing under his lip.

The victim said her bag was stolen along with her wallet, which was found at Flagstaff Gardens and handed into police, but the contents were empty except for one card that was recovered.

“I ended up staying with my neighbours for a few days because I felt unsafe and uncomfortable at home.”

She said she wanted to share her experience in the hope to warn others, and as well as see a stronger police presence in the neighbourhood.

“I’ve been born and raised in West Melbourne; I didn’t think it would happen.”

Melbourne West Local Area

Commander Inspector Gary Best said detectives from the Melbourne Divisional Response Unit would thoroughly investigate any reported robberies in the area while also proactively targeting and apprehending offenders.

He noted robberies in the area remained well below pre-pandemic levels, with a 63 per cent decrease since the year ending March 2020.

But Inspector Best added, “We know the impact this type of crime can have on victims, and while the decrease is positive, we will still be doing everything we can to prevent anyone from becoming the victim of a robbery.”

“Uniform police are regularly supported by specialist units such as the Highway Patrol and Public Order Response Team to run targeted operations in the North Melbourne area with the aim of deterring and detecting crime.”

Meanwhile, residents have also reported cars being broken into in the North Melbourne area, as well as bicycles being stolen.

One said their car was broken into on Leveson St on July 6 with the remote to their garage stolen.

In response, Inspector Best said car theft and home burglaries continued to be a priority for police, with operations and regular patrols conducted in known hot spots for offending. ●

Plans for “campus” of apartment buildings on King St

WORDS BY *David Schout*
PLANNING

Plans to redevelop a King St car showroom into a “campus” of apartment buildings, including build-to-rent dwellings, have been released.

Developer PDG intends to turn a large site bound by King, Roden and Stanley streets in West Melbourne – currently the Audi Centre Melbourne service centre – into a three-building development featuring both residential and office space.

It would also include a publicly accessible landscaped through-block link connecting Stanley and Roden streets.

The proposal, lodged with the state government and publicly released in June, included plans for 287 dwellings and a 1088sqm office tenancy.

It would comprise a nine-level mixed-use building at the corner of King and Roden streets incorporating office floor space at ground level and build-to-rent apartments above, an eight-storey mixed-use building fronting Stanley St (extending to 10-storeys at the centre of the site) and a six-level residential building fronting Roden St.

Unlike most apartment buildings where units are sold to prospective buyers, “build-to-rent” refers to a residential development in which dwellings are retained by the developer and leased out.

Proponents have said the system can mitigate issues with housing supply, affordability, and the private rental sector, while being a win for prospective tenants.

PDG said that the design of “Roden & King”, by architects DKO, would create a collection of buildings that surrounded a central green space.

“The Stanley St building acts as the gateway to the development and consists of the main lobby, communal amenities, and concierge services,” the developer explained on its website.

“The Roden St building responds sensitively to the fine-grain Victorian terraces with angled structures and recessed top levels, while the King St apartments form a distinct zig-zag facade with balconies facing stunning CBD views.”

The proposal at 559-577 King St also included a 265sqm co-working area, and the overall plans represented an “exciting new project” according to PDG.

“Inside the apartments, the interior design reflects inner-city living and flexibility. Integrated workspaces



allow future occupants to work and study remotely, supplemented by a generous co-working space on the ground floor of Stanley St, where residents can collaborate or work in quiet meeting pods.”

The planning proposal, prepared by Tract consultants, stated that the development would significantly increase the employment capacity on the site.

It stated that the Audi Centre Melbourne currently had 29.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, while the new commercial and retail space would deliver 82 to 170 FTE jobs.

The proposal was set to go before the City of Melbourne before a decision was made by the planning minister. ●

NORTH WEST CITY NEWS

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The newly-opened bakery getting stomachs rumbling



Residents of Kensington can now appreciate a sweet aroma wafting through Stubbs St, thanks to the newly-opened Double Dutch Bakery.



WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
BUSINESS

The bakery is the result of a partnership between Melbourne roastery Rumble Coffee Roasters and head baker Jacob Dekker who honed his craft at the renowned establishments of Q Le Baker, Hazel, and Proserpina Bakehouse.

Since opening in early May, the community bakery and cafe has been keeping its new customers satisfied with good coffee, mouth-watering pastries and hearty sandwiches made with freshly-baked bread.

While keen on providing locals with a perfect pairing of coffee and treats, Double Dutch Bakery’s director and founder of Rumble Coffee Joe Molloy said the bakery was also focused on connecting with the community.

“Double Dutch Bakery is all about connecting with the local community and offering high-quality baked goods and coffee that bring people together,” Mr Molloy.

“We want customers to enjoy the best of



both words – specialty coffee, and artisanal baked goods. I’ve lived and worked in Kensington for ten years and saw a lack of delicious baked goods in the suburb.”

Drop into the bakery from Monday to Friday, between 6.30am and 2pm, and try the favourites of the Speculaas Spiced Bun, and the locally inspired Reuben.

Double Dutch Bakery can be found at 61 Stubbs St in Kensington. ●

For more information:
doubledutchbakery.com.au

North West City Local

Local creative couple share the limelight once again



North Melbourne couple Amir Rahimzadeh and Sharon Heywood were brought together by their love of theatre, and now they are once again set to hit the stage side-by-side.



WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*

Meeting while performing together in Manchester 10 years ago, the now-married couple is set to appear in Australian playwright David Williamson's *The Perfectionist* at The National Theatre in St Kilda.

Directed by Jacqueline Stewart and presented by Cast Productions, *The Perfectionist* will be performed at the National Theatre from September 7 to 9, and September 21 to 23, with a 1pm matinee performance on both Saturdays.

"We have done a lot of work together through creating, producing and writing, but it is actually quite nice to be in someone else's play so they can focus on the production and we can just be the actors," Amir said.

For their first time back performing together, without any further responsibilities, Amir and Sharon will be playing the parents of one of the lead characters, Stewart.

In the comedy and drama play, which will be set in 2023 rather than 1981, a tug-of-war between Stewart and his wife Barbara evolves as Barbara no longer wants to put her career aside.

"*The Perfectionist* gives a snippet into the lives of this family and just like any good text, when you start to analyse it and get into it [you realise] it gives so much," Amir said.

"My character is a very old school father and husband, who believes in the separation of the patriarch and matriarch in the family, so it brings up all these old-school ways of thinking, and I can't believe people thought that way."

"He is also very domineering and not a very nice man, and while I don't really like him, I enjoy playing him."



Similarly, Sharon also enjoys playing her character, although both actors are quick to point out that they are grateful that art doesn't imitate life when it comes to comparing their characters' relationship to their own.

Although it doesn't mean they can't have a little extra fun playing with their characters' banter and frustrations.

"There is a lot going on with these characters and a lot to dig your teeth into," Sharon said.

While both performers are actively acting onscreen and offscreen, together and separately, this wasn't always the case.

As someone who always dreamed of being an actor, Sharon was told from a young age to look elsewhere, which led her to becoming a chef. While Amir, who always dreamed of being a dentist, only took up acting as a hobby to do outside of work.

Eventually, the yearning to perform and chase their dreams led Amir to sell his UK practice to become an actor, and Sharon to drop down to casual as a chef to pursue her craft more seriously.

"You never lose your love for creativity," Sharon said, while Amir added that he was "a much happier person for it and [doesn't] look back".

As for living in North Melbourne, they both love their suburb.

"It is very vibrant and has a real bohemian feel to it, and creatively there is so much going on, from culture to food, and live entertainment," they said.

"There is a lot on our doorstep, and we love the Comedy Lounge. We love North Melbourne." ●

For more information:
nationaltheatre.org.au

Multicultural unity celebrated at Somali Day Australia Festival

A vibrant display of cultural diversity was on show at the annual Somali Day Australia Festival at the North Melbourne Community Centre on Saturday, July 1.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COMMUNITY

The festival, organised by the Somali Community Inc., which commemorated Somali Independence Day, saw a "remarkable turnout as families from the surrounding areas flocked to celebrate the rich Somali culture and heritage," Farah Warsame, president of Somali Community Inc., said.

Somali Independence Day is observed on July 1, marking the anniversary of Somalia's independence from colonial rule in 1960.

Mr Warsame said festivalgoers were treated to an immersive experience, with the event fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Somali heritage and traditions.

The event included cultural entertainment, cultural artefacts, cultural food, rides, performances, sports activities, and more, "creating a lively and joyous atmosphere".

"One of the highlights was the Aqal Somali, a traditional nomadic dwelling, and many other artefacts which captivated the attendees' interest," Mr Warsame said.

He expressed his delight at the overwhelming response to the festival, as well as his gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of the event.

"We are thrilled to see such tremendous support from the community and our supporters. The Somali Day Australia Festival serves as a platform to celebrate our rich heritage and strengthen bonds with other communities," Mr Warsame said. "It is heart-warming to witness families enjoying the festival and embracing our culture. We are grateful for the opportunity to share our traditions with the broader Australian community."

"We would like to thank the City of Melbourne, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, The Huddle, Victoria Police, Fire Rescue Victoria, and the dedicated volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this event possible. Your support has been invaluable in promoting understanding and celebrating the richness of Somali culture." ●



Senator Linda White



YOUR VOICE IN THE AUSTRALIAN SENATE

As a Labor Senator, my office is available to assist you with any Federal Government issues.

📍 Level 1, 62 Lygon Street, Carlton South VIC 3053 📞 (03) 9639 2798 ✉️ senator.white@aph.gov.au

👤 Senator Linda White 🐦 @lindawhiteaus



Authorised by Senator Linda White, ALP, Carlton.

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Your City of Melbourne community update

FIVE DEADLY FIRST NATIONS BUSINESSES TO DISCOVER IN NARRM

Taste the flavours of the Torres Strait, fall in love with changemaking Aboriginal art and browse designer fashion that supports children in remote communities.

Whether you're dining out, buying a gift or contracting services for your workplace, we can all play a role in helping First Nations businesses thrive.

At the City of Melbourne, our Aboriginal Procurement Strategy guides us in promoting economic participation and development among Aboriginal people to close the gap of disadvantage.

Here are five beloved dining and retail businesses you can explore around the City of Melbourne.

BIG ESSO BY MABU MABU

Federation Square, Melbourne

Settle in with pepperberry and saltbush fried crocodile and damper with golden syrup butter at Big Esso by Mabu Mabu, an all-day bar and kitchen in central Melbourne. Stay a while to enjoy chargrilled seafood alongside bebies and beats from Indigenous creators, or browse small-batch pantry supplies online.

THE TORCH

146 Elgin Street, Carlton

Browse stunning artwork by First Nations creatives who've taken part in the powerful Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community program run by The Torch. Each year, this Melbourne Award-winning program supports around 600 First Nations people who have been impacted by incarceration in Victoria. This creates new pathways for participants' lives beyond the prison system.



NGALI

24 Aurora Lane, Docklands

Shop for silk dresses, scarves, clothes and tops that share the stories of Country through stunning artwork. These street and runway-ready First Nations designs are a sustainable and meaningful alternative to fast fashion. Proceeds from your purchases will support literacy and IT programs for children in remote communities.

PAWA CAFÉ & BAR

Southbank Promenade, Melbourne

Grab a lilly pilly croissant, kangaroo meat pie or pre-show cheese board at Hamer Hall, overlooking the Yarra River - Birrarung. Pawa collaborates with a network of Indigenous native food growers, farmers, foragers, artisans and makers. Pawa means 'to cook' in the language of the Gunditjmara people.

THE KOORIE HERITAGE TRUST

Federation Square, Melbourne

Browse authentic Victorian Aboriginal artwork and artefacts at the Koorie Heritage Trust in the heart of Melbourne. This curated collection includes paintings, carvings, didgeridoos and clapsticks. By deepening people's understanding of Indigenous arts, the Trust aims to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people.

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

Big skies: Bebe Backhouse looks to Aboriginal Melbourne



A lifetime's worth of creative thinking infuses Bebe Backhouse as he works to shift power back to Aboriginal communities in Melbourne.

Even as a child growing up in a tiny town on a remote peninsula in the Kimberley, a powerful force called Bebe Backhouse to Narrm.

"My dad loves to tell a story from when I was five or six years old: I said that one day I was going to live in Melbourne," Bebe said.

He loved the soft soil, ancient gorges and magnificent mountains found in the country of his mother's ancestors, the Bardi Jawi people. And yet his father's big-city lineage also spoke to him.

"I was not made for small-town life, I can tell you that!" Bebe said. He now leads the important policy and strategy work of City of Melbourne's Aboriginal Melbourne branch.

Talent and transformation

From a very young age, Bebe kept his eyes on the horizon: pushing himself to "search the world for intricate purpose".

An interest in music gave him a way to frame the world differently. From the age of nine, an older nun taught him classical piano and the art of performance: whenever he faces a challenge, he summons the Sister's advice and takes three deep breaths before walking to meet his future.

In turn, Bebe taught music to local Aboriginal kids. This work won him a West Australian Youth Award.

"Being a pianist was the experience of a lifetime. I travelled, I saw, I grew; the first man I ever loved fell in love with me as I played," Bebe said.

Coming home with purpose

It felt weirdly like a homecoming when Bebe arrived in Melbourne to study at the Victorian College of the Arts.

"I was returning to where I was from. But it was a conflict for me as my Aboriginal heritage wasn't from here. Was I battling imposter syndrome? What I did know was that I belonged here."

Unsettled, he took flight to work and travel overseas, before Narrm called him home again more than 10 years ago.

Loaded with purpose, he's been here ever since, building a reputation as a creative producer and director of festivals, public art and theatre projects.

And yet, his relationship with the arts began to shift.

"I always thought I'd be working in the creative industry, continuing with arts. But there's more to Aboriginal people and culture than just our art."

"I knew that the work I wanted to do for my people, for Aboriginal communities ... being here in Narrm would allow me to make the change I desired to see."

He took a leap. Sharpened his executive thinking in pediatric public health, and began to transform influential organisations from the inside.

"Especially workplaces that work with vulnerable communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

Enter City of Melbourne.

"When this role came up, I realised it included reconciliation, health, wellbeing, homelessness, employment, rough sleeping. All these factors that affect Aboriginal people."

He could see that Aboriginal Melbourne was already leading important and exciting work regarding our relationships with our Traditional Owners.

Now, he looks forward "to seeing how this evolves, what this could mean from their perspectives, and how we can work towards being an Aboriginal city."

Shifting power back to communities

Bebe encourages us to ask the big questions in a systematic way.

"Right now, we're focusing on how we have worked with Aboriginal communities. Asking what worked and what the challenges are. What can we reinvent and how can we shift the power back into the community?"

Along the way, initiatives such as National Reconciliation Week are crucial.

"There are significant gaps in the quality of life between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. National Reconciliation Week presents an important opportunity for City of Melbourne to shine a spotlight on what some of these issues are.

"And gives a voice to the community on how we can move forward productively and effectively."

Honesty is required to observe relationships and history. Bebe is also convinced it requires the on-the-ground experience of being with Aboriginal people.

"Aboriginal communities are starting to remember that they've always had the power. That's where my mind is focusing with my work at the City of Melbourne."

Looking to the future takes courage. It takes creativity.

"That requires trust. It requires transparency. Historically that's what's been missing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities."

Read more of Bebe's story in the anthology *Growing up Aboriginal in Australia*, and his new book, *more than these bones*.

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Your City of Melbourne community update

VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

Australians will soon vote in a referendum about the Voice to Parliament.

The Voice would be an independent and permanent advisory body. It would give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples an ongoing say in decisions made about them.

We're helping Melburnians understand what the referendum is all about, to make it easier for people to get the facts.

Now is the time to look out for each other as we listen and learn.

melbourne.vic.gov.au/voice

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Victorian Archives Centre collects memories that are worth holding on to

Public moments of joy and connection are being highlighted in Victorian Archives Centre (VAC) Gallery's upcoming exhibition on July 28.

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
HISTORY

Running until the end of the year, VAC's *Collective City* exhibition offers a refreshing look into major events in history that were captured and kept within the Public Record Office Victoria's (PROV) archives.

"These images were predominantly taken over the 20th century by Victorian government photographers to document everything from waitress uniforms in the railway refreshment rooms through to major events in our history," organiser and lead curator of *Collective City*, Natasha Cantwell said.

"But when we view them with contemporary eyes, we see so much more than was originally intended. By examining what and how the photographers chose to document, we can learn a lot about our history."

"Each of the archival images chosen for the show tells a different story about Melbourne."

While the archival images were taken on behalf of the government, Ms Cantwell said it was also important to include contemporary photographers to keep conversations going.

These photographs were taken by journalists, social documentarians, and street photographers, with Ms Cantwell describing them as the subjects of "people with an eye for critical examination".

"They show us the Melbourne of today, but the interesting difference is not just a 'then and now' comparison, but the intent behind the images," she told *North West City News*.

"For example, the 1950s saw us come together to celebrate the Summer Olympics, but a lack of accessibility features in public spaces also kept us apart. Both these stories are included in the exhibition."

Visitors to this exhibition will not only be able to glimpse into the past, but they'll also be able to piece together how far we have come since.

An example of where this stands out is in the 1950s *Dietitians and Royal Melbourne Hospital* photograph, found in the PROV archives, which is part of a series called *Dietetics as a career*.

"Whether intentional or not, the composition draws your eye to the man on crutches making his way along the road up to the hospital. This is a time well before accessibility parking (it was not until 1981 that municipalities across Victoria started introducing the Disabled Person's Parking Scheme) and the fact he is on the road also suggests that the hospital lacked a footpath with the features required for accessibility, such as kerb cuts or ramps," Ms Cantwell said. "Australia's Disability Rights Movement began the following decade, but it was only when the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 came into effect that architects and planners actually began designing public spaces with people of all abilities in mind."

The *Collective City* exhibition is held at the Victorian Archives Centre at 99 Shiel St, North Melbourne, with opening night on July 27, from 5pm to 6.30pm. ●

For more information:
prov.vic.gov.au

Less than 1km of bike lanes delivered in last year as rollout languishes

New council figures showed its rollout of protected bike lanes was falling well short of promises.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
TRANSPORT

The City of Melbourne delivered just 700 metres of new protected bike lanes in the past 12 months, as its "fast-tracked" program struggled to keep up with lofty projections.

Despite proposing 11km of new lanes across the municipality in the 2022-23 financial year, small projects on Princes Bridge in Southbank (300 metres) and Albert St in East Melbourne (400 metres) were the only lanes completed.

The council had committed to delivering physically separated lanes in the last 12 months on key corridors including Arden St, Macaulay Rd, Grattan St and Royal Parade. However these projects were "carried forward" to this financial year, with the council's list of delayed cycling infrastructure growing by the month.

In February 2020, after declaring a "Climate and Biodiversity Emergency", the council said it would deliver 44km of protected lanes in four years rather than the 10 years it had initially planned for.

And while the ambitious goal appeared on track when the council delivered 11.7km of lanes in 2020-21 – aided by quiet city streets during COVID-19 lockdowns – the rollout has languished considerably since.

In 2021-22 it delivered just 4.9kms of new lanes and, with less than 1km delivered during the past 12 months, was yet to reach the half-way stage of its much-publicised goal, which has been used as proof of its commitment to cyclists and the environment.

The results, revealed in the council's latest budget papers after Greens councillor Rohan Leppert pushed for further details surrounding bike lane funding, showed it was not delivering on its pledge.

"The proof of the pudding is there in the last three pages – unfortunately we've only managed to build 700 metres of separated physical cycling infrastructure this financial year," he said on June 27.

The council did not comment as to why only 700 metres of lanes had been completed in the last 12 months, or whether its bike lanes goals would be revised, in questions put forward by *North West City News*.

It is understood unspent funds allocated to bike lanes in 2022-23 would be carried over,

meaning the allocation to install protected lanes would rise to more than \$7 million in 2023-24, rather than \$4 million designated in the latest budget.

In June 2022 councillors controversially voted to pause the installation of bike lanes within the Hoddle Grid for the entire 2022-23 financial year.

The move drew a significant public response, particularly from the cycling community who believed the council was wavering on its bike lane message.

But the council denied these claims, and said the "pause" would allow it to focus on delivering protected lanes to the area immediately north of the CBD, including on Arden St, Macaulay Rd, Grattan St and Royal Parade.

However, these key projects are yet to commence, and the council has indicated it was being hampered by the state government.

"We planned to progress the delivery of these three bike lane projects in 2022-23, however, the Department of Transport and Planning has not yet provided approval," it noted in its latest budget response.

The Department did not respond to questions as to why those projects were yet to be approved.

Cycling advocacy groups were reluctant to criticise the council for the bike lane delays, and said blame also needed to be apportioned to the state government.

Spokesperson for Bike Melbourne Nicholas Dow said the "important point" was that the council funding for delayed projects was carried over and not lost.

While the council was set to fall well short of their 44km goal by mid-2024, it was not something the group was concerned about.

"It was ambitious, but we don't complain about ambition. The more the better," Mr Dow said.

"Of course, we're disappointed things haven't gone faster. But the council is doing their best to get those projects out the door as soon as they can."

Bicycle Network CEO Alison McCormack was also willing to cut the council some slack.

"The City of Melbourne has a big job in front of it to deliver on the promise of its ambitious plans for transport in central Melbourne, and it can't afford to dally," she said.

"We accept that infrastructure projects have recently faced challenges from shortages of materials and professional staff that have pushed schedules out of shape."

"But looking ahead we are optimistic that Lord Mayor Sally Capp and her team are committed and capable of getting these vital projects up to speed and delivering on their promises." ●

The future of music is looking bright thanks to 21st Century Music Tuition

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
ARTS & CULTURE

Local Kensington musician and tutor of 21st Century Music Tuition Brennan Smith hosted his very first student showcase concert on June 17, in an effort to help students with their stage confidence.

Having a concert for students to work towards was deemed very important to Mr Smith, as he knew the benefits that performing had for himself as a growing musician.

"I think back to my formative years as a musician when I was just getting used to performing and there were honestly so many positive aspects," he told *North West City News*.

"Performing not only gave me confidence on stage but also confidence in general, and it really brought about a social part of me that I didn't

know about. I really wanted to give that opportunity to the kids because a lot of them haven't been in front of an audience before."

The concert was held at Kensington Town Hall in the Supper Room and allowed students to perform to their families and friends with two songs they had been working on during their lessons.

As well as understanding and learning their individual pieces in the weeks leading up to the concert, Mr Smith also made sure to teach the eight students about having a good stage presence, and he led by example by also performing a couple of pieces himself.

As a passionate and skilled musician, Mr Smith specialises in guitar, keyboard, bass guitar, drums, ukulele and music theory.

Due to the success of the first concert, which Mr Smith said, "went very well and I was very happy with the turnout", he is hoping to follow up with a November concert and continue with two concerts a year.

Any aspiring musicians can also reach out directly to Mr Smith if they too want to learn how to learn a particular instrument or hone a chosen craft. ●

For more information:
21stcenturymusic.net.au





▲ ANMF House in North Melbourne.



▲ 38 Albermarle St, Kensington.

Striking buildings take out prestigious architecture awards

Australia's first build-to-rent housing development in Kensington, and an Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) accommodation building in North Melbourne have taken out top Victorian architecture awards.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
ARCHITECTURE

The designed development in Kensington, which integrates an industrial heritage wool store turned cassette factory building at 38 Albermarle St, won recognition in the Residential Architecture (Multiple Housing) category in the 2023 Victorian Architecture Awards.

Delivered by Assemble Futures, the building is Australia's first medium-density built-to-rent, allowing residents to rent new apartments for up to five years, with the option to buy at their lease's end. According to the awards panel, the seven-storey building designed by Fieldwork, "demonstrates a robust and clever response to resilient community living".

"Positioned above an industrial heritage wool store, the deep-set balconies with light-toned precast concrete serve as a recessive backdrop to the intricate detail of the heritage



facade below," the panel noted. "At ground level, residents share an expansive communal space including a multipurpose workshop, loan library and a zero-waste hospitality venue that creates an intermediary between the residents and the broader community."

Other shared facilities include a laundrette, secure parcel drop-off space, lending library,

dog wash station and multipurpose "scout hall" — each fostering incidental moments of neighbourly interaction.

The ANMF Home also won a Victorian Architecture Award in the sustainable architecture category.

The Bayley Ward-designed building at 240 Victoria St, which provide eligible members affordable rental accommodation, is situated above the renovated Central Club Hotel, and built to the "passive house" standard of sustainable building design, which includes the principals of airtightness, thermal insulation, mechanical ventilation heat recovery.

"Enthusiastically leading the way, the architects of ANMF House took the client on a journey to invest in a holistic approach to sustainability through economic whole-of-life considerations," the awards panel noted. ●

Sayed's vision comes to fruition: MAA TV

There were almost 60,000 Afghans living in Australia at the time of the June 2021 census.

WORDS BY *Felicity Jack*
COMMUNITY



There has been a considerable increase in numbers since then, with many being granted asylum after the withdrawal of foreign forces in August 2021 and the takeover of government by the Taliban. A significant number live in Melbourne, particularly in the south-eastern suburbs.

Leaving one's homeland, whether through choice or through necessity, is inevitably a difficult, often traumatic experience. Family and friends are left behind, but also one's identity as a citizen of one's country of birth. Leaving one's home means leaving your everyday routines and having to adapt to a completely new culture.

This is what Sayed Jawed Maqsoodi experienced on having to leave Kabul in 2019. He flew to Melbourne for the fourth time, this time as an asylum seeker, leaving his wife and two sons behind but bringing with him a deep love and commitment to his country and to his fellow countrymen in all parts of the world. He now lives and works in West Melbourne where, after almost 1000 days, he has been joined by his family.

Sayed's vision was to build a television station that could be a binding force for Afghans living throughout the world. Having had his own TV program in Afghanistan, he had the knowledge and skills to bring this about.

So, MAATV (meaning "Our TV" in Dari) was born. While its aim is to connect people living all over the world with their wider community and cultural heritage, inevitably the focus at this time is primarily Melbourne. Mostly, it is an inspirational TV channel.

Its content is wide, focusing on social and

cultural events, entertainment and information. It avoids sensitive political, religious, or social issues that could offend. Most of the content is in Dari and Pashto but there are some short programs in English language that focus on aspects of everyday life in Australia as well as some ideas to promote motivation and success.

It's been a massive, time-consuming project, over four years. The channel's launch, on April 29, 2023, was a joyous occasion, with a huge number of Afghans attending, as well as members of parliament and local government officers.

Sayed works on a voluntary basis, gaining his income from graphic design work and contract filming. He is a good networker and relies on the support of a large network of friends and business people who support him as volunteers. The program has no paid advertising, but advertisements are shown in exchange for services that are donated.

The TV station is a work in progress: Sayed hopes to find a funding source that can enable it to employ paid staff and extend its content.

MAATV has a slot on C31 on the first Sunday of every month at 9.30pm. It can also be accessed on social media. It has a growing number of followers on Facebook — currently nearly 3000 — and it is also available on several other platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Tik-Tok. In future it will also be broadcast over satellite.

In line with Sayed's commitment to Melbourne's Afghan community and culture, his wife Laila works for the organisation *Free to Feed*, hosting an *Afghan Experience* that combines Afghan cuisine with information about Afghan culture. ●

CRITIC

Self-deprecating singer does solo book signing

A book launch is a beautiful moment when a wordsmith gets to sign his latest edition for a fan who has just listened to him perform.

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
ARTS & CULTURE



When you are a post-punk rocker known for your gravelly voice and ironic lyrics, the performance sings.

Dave Graney has published a book of song lyrics with some chords so they can be performed by others.

This makes a change from the grander memoirs by Australian rock legends that seek to rewrite history every decade.

Graney is leaving it to others to define the Melbourne music scene while he focuses on songwriting.

"I'm a great songwriter of my type of song," he said at the launch. "Other songwriters go for a classic kind of thing. They're competing for an ideal."

Graney told an audience of about 50, squeezed into a small gallery, that jazz people don't write as easily as rock people.

"Rock people write a song out of nothing," he said of his founding days in the '90s with the band the Coral Snakes.

Graney's ironic lyrics offer a meta commentary on the industry which musos appreciate, focusing as they often do on heroism and swagger.

He sings of one character called Lieutenant Colonel Cavalry: "I work without a net. I move without a map." ●

An album released last year called *In a Misty* contains a track with "I got that old swagger" as the chorus line.

"People see me walking down the street. They may know my stride. I've got that old swagger."

Graney has a bit of the bush lad about him, having grown up near Mount Gambier in a "blue collar" family. "My dad painted houses and my mum raised six kids. We had no car or telephone."

He found the Melbourne music scene quite intimidating. "I went to Melbourne, and they were all well-schooled. They were used to gathering in rooms and ordering people about. My background was very polite like Elvis's."

When Graney began performing in the post-punk scene, he said the zeitgeist was to write songs about your environment.

"It was a tiny scene within another scene. They were interested in imported things from the UK. I watched a lot of TV, so I wrote about that."

Graney's jokey lyrics and laidback style have endeared him with a younger audience who records his songs on tiktok and appreciate his "E-flat bits".

Fan Lizz Heyes said the salon at One Star in Victoria St worked well as a way of exploring the skills of a songwriter.

"I like the solo feel," she said. "He reads the audience well. He's very playful."

"*There He Goes With His Eye Out*" Lyrics 1980 — 2023, Dave Graney ●

PARKVILLE GARDENS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



On sunny winter days Parkville Gardens presents a pretty picture

“
Nature strips, gardens and parks are aglow with bright green grass. The winter solstice has come and gone, so sunlight hours are slowly increasing, though the coldest weeks of the season still lie ahead of us.

”
It's our good fortune not to be by the bay and obliged to skinny dip on solstice day. There's good news to report this month. Both our applications for grants from the City of Melbourne have been successful this time round. Thanks, City of Melbourne, from the Parkville Gardens Residents' Association! Now we can get cracking with our plans for community events in the next 12 months. We aim to organise events that are open to all residents, bring people together in a safe and friendly way, and encourage everyone to share concerns and opportunities for the neighbourhood. We especially want to engage with residents who for whatever reason may not feel confident about connecting with the community. All are welcome! There'll be more detail in next month's edition, but we hope to stage our first event in September when the funding comes through.

We had such fun last year at our dinner and trivia night that we'd like to build on that success. That will be for the grown-ups. Kids can look forward to Halloween. Last year's celebration was terrific, and we hope to make this year's bigger and better than ever. Thirdly, we're planning a community festival in November. That will make it a September-October-November trifecta. We'll keep you posted. In the meantime, there are ongoing challenges to deal with. One of them is traffic. Parkville Gardens was designed to be a quiet neighbourhood. The original centrepiece of the development remains the heritage building that was the Royal Park Psychiatric Hospital until the 1990s. The circular road that surrounds it, Cade Way, is named after Dr John Cade, the Australian psychiatrist who pioneered the use of lithium to manage mood disorders. A key section of it, only one lane wide, is used as a short cut by commuting drivers getting from Oak St to Brunswick Rd and City Link. There have been disturbing instances of through drivers refusing to give way to local residents. It's ironic that a street named after Dr Cade should give rise to road rage. It's time for an overall review of traffic management in the precinct. There's work to be done. ●



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

ENVIRONMENT



Touching the Earth

When last did you put your feet on the earth?

Nowadays, people go for days and weeks without making skin contact with the earth. In cities most of the earth has been covered with material of some sort and our shoes increasingly have rubber or synthetic soles making it even less possible for us to make this vital connection. The act of connecting our skin to the earth has been given names such as earthing and grounding. It's as easy as taking your shoes and socks off and walking outside barefoot. Most recently, Clinton Ober, an electrical engineer, who wrote *Earthing – the most important health discovery*, has further studied earthing. Earthing describes how by reconnecting to the Earth, abnormal physiology, inflammation, pain, fatigue, stress and poor sleep symptoms are rapidly relieved and even eliminated. According to Clinton Ober, “The Earth's surface has a virtually limitless supply of mobile electrons that gives the ground we walk on (as well as lakes and oceans) a natural negative electric charge. When you touch your body to the ground, it dissipates static electricity and extraneous environmental electrical charges that are on you. At the same time, you receive a charge of energy in the form of electrons and your body synchronises with the natural frequencies of the Earth”. Ober's work builds on Adolf Just's work in the late 1800s, who wrote the Book, *Return to Nature* and Mattheo Tavera, a visionary French agronomist, who described the importance of “electric nutrition” from the ground for plants, animals and humans more than 50 years ago.

Plus, the knowledge of many First Nations people around the world. Our ancestors made contact with the earth daily. People walked barefoot or used animal hides (leather) for footwear or bedding – which allowed for transference of the earth's energy into the body. To find out more, there is a documentary made in 2019 called *The Earthing Movie: The Remarkable Science of Grounding*. The Earth needs our touch too. Below is an excerpt from *The Ringing Cedars of Russia* books by Vladimir Megre who quotes Anastasia ... “Even though the Earth is very large, it is very, very sensitive. Think of how big you are by comparison with a tiny mosquito. And yet, when a mosquito lands on you, you feel it through your skin. And the Earth also feels – everything. When people pave it over with concrete and asphalt, when they cut down trees and burn the forests growing on it, when they pick and poke at its innards and sprinkle it with powder called fertiliser, it feels the hurt. And yet it still loves people, as a mother loves her children.” “The Earth needs our help. Tenderness and a loving attitude give it strength. The Earth may be large, but it is most sensitive. And it feels the tender caress of even a single hand. Oh, how it feels and anticipates this touch.” ●



Jacqui van Heerden
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METRO TUNNEL

Metro Tunnel paves the way for sustainable infrastructure with Australia-first trial

The Metro Tunnel Project is taking sustainability in the construction industry to the next level, with an Australia-first low-carbon concrete research project.

The project has partnered with the University of Melbourne for the innovative research, trialling the use of crushed recycled glass as a replacement for sand in structural concrete mix. Using crushed recycled glass, or ‘glass sand’, lowers the environmental impacts of concrete production, by reducing reliance on virgin sand – a raw material that is mostly mined or taken from rivers - and diverting waste glass from landfill. For the trial, glass sand was used to replace 25 per cent of the virgin sand used in the concrete mix for building suspended work platforms at

State Library Station's La Trobe Street construction site. Metro Tunnel Project sustainability lead, Mick Lo Monaco, said the initiative was potentially a first for Australia, if not the world. “It's the first time, as far as we're aware, that [glass sand concrete mix] has been used in a higher strength building application,” Mr Lo Monaco said. Concrete mixes using glass sand in Australia have previously been limited to low-strength applications such as footpaths, he added. Mr Lo Monaco said while the trial glass sand concrete mix was being used for temporary structures on the project, the next opportunity is to trial the mix in permanent minor structural elements for streetscaping around the new Metro Tunnel stations. “We need to move to low carbon concrete - that's key to reaching net zero emissions. This is one way to remove [raw materials] from our concrete and use a waste product that would otherwise need to go to landfill.”



Mr Lo Monaco said the initiative also had the potential to create a market for waste glass in Victoria. “Victoria has a surplus of waste glass that is traditionally exported overseas because we don't have a reliable market for it locally. [This initiative] is basically opening up a huge market for that glass,” he said. Based on the trial's success, future trials are now being considered with the potential to increase the glass sand component from 25 per cent to up to 80 per cent. Meanwhile, the team is making great progress on construction of the Metro Tunnel's stations and tunnels to get them ready to start testing trains underground in the second half of this year. ●

For more information:
bigbuild.vic.gov.au

KENSINGTON ASSOCIATION

The Kensington Association – “taking stock”

“

From time to time any organisation needs to undertake some kind of appraisal of its operations, even to the extent of reflecting on the reason for its existence.

”

As current chairperson of the Kensington Association (KA) coming to the end of my term “in office”, I reflect on the demise of our sister organisation, the Flemington Association. I’m also reflecting (more personally than organisationally) on the operation and purpose of the KA.

I know the City of Melbourne (CoM) “needs” us (and other such associations) because we are an important (but not the only) conduit between the elected council and the community.



**Kensington
Association.**

The CoM needs to consult – and to be seen to consult – with the community. Given that, I ask, how effectively does KA “represent” the community of Kensington?

Interestingly, connections and communication with the CoM have been significantly enhanced (following COVID) by the funding of “neighbourhood partners” (currently Melanie Del Monaco for Kensington), and the establishment of the online Kensington Portal.

Melanie is employed by the CoM, and her task is to support the development of community-led initiatives and help build stronger connections between local community and CoM, ensuring information flows in both directions.

Given those “enhancements”, I ask, has the role of KA shifted? We know there is a difference between “online” or “digital” communication channels and “in person” communication; this also applies to communication between KA and the community.

There’s a big question relevant to KA and to other community organisations, and that is: to what extent is it reasonable (sensible, strategic) for governments to rely on volunteers to keep communities vibrant and connected?

The answer is, of course, they can’t go too far, so the question becomes, where do they “draw the line” between paying someone to do a job and expecting (relying on) volunteers?

The most recent edition of *Flem-Ken News* (FKN) highlighted the contribution of volunteers following National Volunteer Week in May.

Clearly volunteers are widely admired and recognised, and occasionally there are real community heroes who battle on with minimal recognition and keep their organisation or service ticking over. But I’m not one of those, and the Flemington Association (FA) couldn’t find one.

Given the FA demise an obvious question is, did (or has) Moonee Valley become too complacent about the capacity and resilience of their volunteer community? Was there a level of support that was lacking?

The KA is not “on its last legs”, but we are questioning what we do well, what we can do better, where we need support, and what are our skill deficits?

Here are some more specific questions we are asking ...

Do we need to change our constitution? How often should we have “general meetings” as opposed to “executive meetings”? Should meetings be online or in person? Given most of our active members are “older”, how can we involve “younger” people? How can we improve connection with CoM and with the Kensington community? How can we better support renters as opposed to property-owners? How can we be proactive as opposed to reactive?

We are not dependent on any one person, but we are dependent on the quality of our community connections, which ultimately correlates with the level of community involvement. How fortunate we are to have *North West City News*, together with the *FKN*, to help with those connections!

Over the next two months prior to our AGM on September 4, we will be more closely confronting these questions, and welcome any community input. ●



Simon Harvey

CHAIRPERSON

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ORG.AU

KENSINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

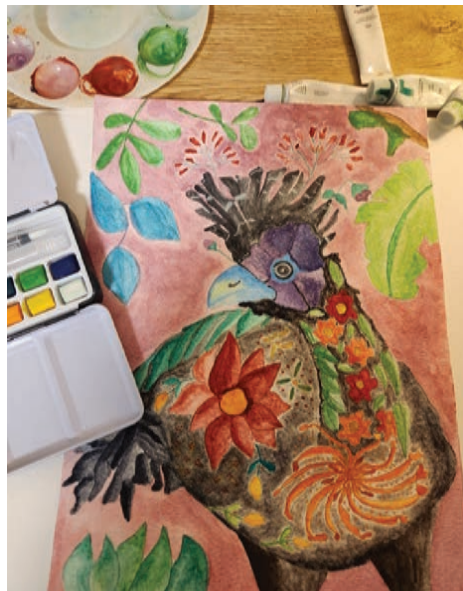
Make the most of winter and learn something new!

Winter can be a tough season in inner-city Melbourne. The days are short, the weather is grey, and in our high-density neighbourhoods it may feel like the walls are closing in.

Hibernation is always an option, but generally not practical. It’s far better for our mental and emotional health to stay connected with people and keep our minds active.

Winter can actually be a great time to learn a new skill or take up a creative pursuit. If you can do that in the company of others, it’s even better.

Here at Kensington Neighbourhood House we know that people need people. We also know that sometimes the best way to connect



with others is while you are working side by side, creating, cooking and chatting. Having a shared activity takes the pressure off needing to “meet people” or make awkward small talk. And you get to go home having learned a new skill or found your new favourite hobby.

From July to September, there are some fantastic options to choose from at our house. If art is your thing, you might like to learn how to make your own resin jewellery; or create a unique lino-cut printing canvas. A watercolour workshop is also on offer, exploring the vibrant colours and unique plants and animals of Latin America.

If food is more to your liking, come and join sourdough guru, Michael, for “More Than A Loaf of Bread”, a workshop using sourdough to make grissini, pita bread and English muffins. Trust me, it’s a delicious way to spend a few hours!

Want to boost your immunity over winter? Local Kensington naturopath, Bronwyn, will

be hosting a series of four evening sessions on home-made medicinal herbal remedies. You’ll go home each evening with new knowledge and your own elixirs, like an alcohol-free hot toddy and sore throat balls.

You’ll find many more art, food, environmental and wellbeing programs at kensington-neighbourhoodhouse.com

All workshops are facilitated by highly skilled, experienced and friendly practitioners in a warm and welcoming environment. So crawl out from under your doona and come and join us! ●



Rebecca Smith

MANAGER KENSINGTON
NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

INFO@KENHOUSE.ORG.AU

MELBOURNE ZOO

Rare honeyeaters are a sweet sight at Melbourne Zoo

A flock of Regent honeyeaters has migrated into a newly renovated habitat at Melbourne Zoo, marking the first time the critically endangered bird has been visible to visitors in almost a decade.

The bright yellow and black honeyeaters have made quick work of exploring their new digs, springing between branches of eucalyptus, banksia and grevillea, and bathing in their own flowing stream.

Melbourne Zoo birds keeper Ben Oliver said

flowering native plants were crucial for setting the scene.

“Regent honeyeaters are really active birds, and their zoo habitat is designed to include lots of foraging opportunities,” Mr Oliver said. “This is to replicate natural behaviours that we would see from them in their open-forest and woodland habitats.”

“We’re really excited for our members and visitors to see this beautiful species for the first time since 2016, and hope that they fall in love with them just like we have.”

Once abundant across the east coast of Australia, from Brisbane to Adelaide, fewer than 250 Regent honeyeaters remain in the wild primarily due to habitat destruction. Without sustained conservation intervention, the species will likely become extinct within 15 years.

Regent honeyeaters are a nomadic species,



which relies on a primarily nectarivorous diet. Historically, they would fulfil an important pollination role for the many flowering native plants within Box Ironbark ecosystems, migrating through their range to take advantage of an abundance of pollen and nectar throughout the year.

In 2007, Zoos Victoria began breeding the critically endangered species at Melbourne Zoo and has since contributed 57 individuals to the Regent honeyeater conservation breeding program led by Taronga Conservation Society Australia and BirdLife Australia.

Mr Oliver said Zoos Victoria and its partners were committed to breeding strong and healthy Regent honeyeaters to give them the best chance of success when we release them into the wild.

The Regent honeyeater is one of 27 priority local threatened species that Zoos Victoria is committed from saving from extinction.

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

Zoos Victoria Members no longer need to book but are required to scan their membership card for entry. ●

Quiz



1. What was the record amount allocated for the City of Melbourne draft budget 2023-24?
2. What common 'nut' is actually a legume?
3. What is the newly refurbished pub (pictured) in North Melbourne that has just re-launched under new management?
4. What is the name of the new North Melbourne primary school campus that has just opened?
5. What kind of fruit is used to flavour Earl Grey and Lady Grey tea?
6. Starting with R, which street in West Melbourne is being proposed by the council to feature new green space?
7. In what year was Gmail first released (in beta): 1998, 2001 or 2004?
8. Actress Maggie Smith played which character in the Harry Potter movie franchise?
9. In the equation $E=mc^2$, what does the 'm' stand for?
10. Which Renaissance artist painted the fresco *Assumption of the Virgin* in 1530?
11. What year does the Kensington Railway Station date back to?
12. What's the name of the statue that stands at the Jeffcott St median strip in West Melbourne?

QUIZ SOLUTIONS

1. \$850.7 million 2. Peanut 3. The Courthouse Hotel 4. Moleworth Street campus 5. Bergamot orange 6. Roden Street 7. 2004 8. Professor Minerva McGonagall 9. Mass 10. Correggio 11. 1860 12. City Living

5x5

No. 026

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

C		M		Y
	P		R	
O		L		R
	N		A	
S		E		S

SOLUTIONS

COMFY, OPERA, OILIER, KNEAD, SEEK

PUZZLES AND PAGINATION
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PAGEMASTERS.COM

Jul, 2023

Sudoku

No. 025

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

EASY

5	1							7
3	4				7	5		1
	9				1		4	8
			1					6
		1	8		4	9		
	2				5			
9	5		7					1
7		3	2					5 9
	8							3 2

HARD

8	6	4						
	9							2
		1		8	7			4
				2				6
		6	4		5	3		
	8			3				
7			3	5		2		
	4							1
						4	5	3

SOLUTIONS

EASY

2	3	7	9	5	6	4	1	8	1
6	4	5	2	1	8	7	3	6	9
9	1	6	5	2	7	4	3	8	1
7	8	1	6	3	9	5	4	2	8
5	2	2	4	9	7	8	3	6	9
4	7	5	1	9	2	2	3	6	4
8	6	7	5	3	1	6	4	8	2
3	4	8	6	2	7	5	9	1	8
5	1	6	4	8	9	2	7	3	6

HARD

3	5	4	8	1	7	8	6	2	2	9
7	7	1	2	2	9	6	3	6	3	8
9	6	4	2	6	5	3	4	8	2	8
6	4	2	7	2	8	1	1	8	7	1
2	2	4	9	4	1	5	3	8	2	2
4	3	5	8	2	2	9	7	6	1	4
2	5	1	6	7	8	7	9	3	3	4
3	7	5	4	1	6	2	8	3	2	8
8	6	4	2	9	3	1	7	5	1	3

Wordfind

Theme: Australian Rules Football

The leftover letters will spell out a secret message.

S	B	O	U	N	C	E	S	S	W	H
R	O	S	E	U	L	B	E	R	O	A
E	K	O	G	O	U	G	L	E	L	N
K	C	L	R	O	R	O	G	B	N	D
C	A	G	I	A	D	A	A	M	W	B
O	R	A	O	O	G	L	E	O	O	A
D	R	V	M	E	N	N	L	B	R	L
M	A	G	P	I	E	S	A	U	B	L
L	B	E	L	K	C	A	T	K	B	S
P	I	H	S	R	E	I	M	E	R	P
E	R	I	P	M	U	P	O	W	E	R

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| BARRACK | HANDBALLS |
| BLUES | KANGAROOS |
| BOMBERS | LIONS |
| BOUNCE | MAGPIES |
| BROWNLOW | OVAL |
| BULLDOGS | POWER |
| DOCKERS | PREMIERSHIP |
| EAGLES | TACKLE |
| GOAL | UMPIRE |

Secret message: Our game

Crossword

No. 025

ACROSS

- 1 Occurred (8)
- 5 Season (6)
- 9 Greek letter (3)
- 10 With excessive effort (11)
- 12 Away (3)
- 13 Walker (10)
- 15 Mohammedanism (5)
- 16 Fell apart (8)
- 18 Becoming prominent (8)
- 20 Introduction (colloq) (5)
- 23 Sorting (10)
- 24 Neighbour of Canada (1,1,1)
- 25 English era, 1558-1603 (11)
- 27 'The Greatest' boxer (3)
- 28 Common Irish surname (1'5)
- 29 Pulling (8)

1		2		3		4		5	6	7	8
9			10			11					
12			13								
											14
15						16					
						17					
18	19							20	21		
								22			
	23									24	
25								26	27		
28						29					

DOWN

- 1 Entranced (10)
- 2 Agonising (7)
- 3 Long fish (3)
- 4 Personify (6)
- 6 Coding (11)
- 7 Set up (7)
- 8 Merry (3)
- 11 Holiday destination (6)
- 13 Variety of fruit (11)
- 14 Championing (10)
- 17 Not mature (6)
- 19 Before (7)
- 21 Tidal wave (7)
- 22 Wilt (6)
- 25 Self (3)
- 26 Harass; berate (3)

SOLUTION

G	N	I	G	D	V	H	G	N	E	I	R	G	O
N	W	V	E	L	E	E	G						
I	V	N	V	H	I	Z	I	L	E				
I	N	I	G	N	T								
V	S	O	N	I	S	I	N	V	D	H	O		
C	S	N	M	R									
O	R	I	N	I	O	N	I	G	R	E	W	E	
A													
D	E	L	E										
V	T	W	A	O	N	T							
N	V	I	L	S	O	E	D	E					
I	G	O											
A	T	S	O	L	O	V	E	L	I	H	D		
V	N	R											
G	N	I	R	D	S	E	D	E	D	V	A	H	

Codeword

No. 025

21	10	17	14	13	1	3		19	17	6	8	1
	22			19		11		17		13		17
	24			19		22		20		17		2
4	8	1	8	17	3	24	1	12	17	22		8
	15		18				H		22			8
	17	13	3	24	H	13	24	12	2	12	17	22
	1		2			24				H		18
17												
	D	16	13	22	24	12	24	12	8	10	3	
D												
12		7	13	10	D	17	20	12	3	12	22	9
13		17		23		20			D		24	
10		10		8		20		13			13	
5	13	22	8	22		11	13	17	1	22	13	D

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
	D
13	26
	H

SOLUTIONS

K	W	V	A	B	M	L	O	N	P	L	J	D	H
9	2	1	11	18	10	12	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
13	1	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
13	1	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11

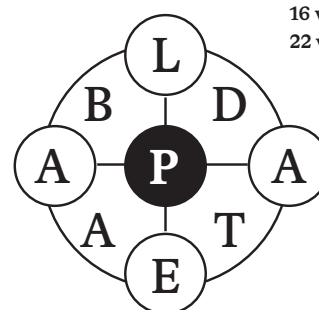
9-Letter

No. 025

Today's Focus:

- 11 words: Good
- 16 words: Very good
- 22 words: Excellent

Using the nine letters in the grid, how many words of four letters or more can you list? The centre letter must be included and each letter may only be used once. No colloquial or foreign words. No capitalised nouns, apostrophes or plural words ending in "s".



SOLUTIONS

Reference:

Collins Concise English Dictionary

ADAPT, ADAPTABLE, ADEPT, APEL, APED, BALDPAPE, LEAP, LEAPT, PALATE, PALE, PALED, PATE, PEAL, PEAR, PELT, PETAL, PLAR, PLATE, PLEAT, PLEA, PLEAP, TAPE, TAPED

What's On: July 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



THE CENTRE

A not-for-profit offering programs and activities that respond to the needs of the North & West Melbourne community, providing an accessible and inclusive agenda which fosters belonging and community spirit.

58 Errol St, North Melbourne
centre.org.au



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

OPEN MONDAY TO SUNDAY, 6AM - 11PM

PARKVILLE TENNIS CLUB

A small friendly tennis club located just outside the CBD on Royal Parade. Individual, student, concession and family memberships are available.

151 Royal Parade, Parkville 3052
tennis.com.au/parkvilletc



AUGUST TO NOVEMBER

CONNECT CAFE: TECH I.T HELP

If 55+, learn new skills on your mobile or computer through the tech topic workshop (10am to 12pm) or an individual one-hour session (9am to 12pm) - alternating weeks. Light morning tea provided. Book: healthyageing@melbourne.vic.gov.au - **Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre (Mon)** 9328 1665, **Kensington Neighbourhood Centre (Fri)** 9376 9743

EVERY THURSDAY, UNTIL NOV 30

CHATTY CAFE

From 1pm to 3pm, enjoy having a chat, doing puzzles, arts and craft, reading newspapers, playing games, or receiving tech help. Afternoon tea provided.

Book: (03) 9376 9743

Kensington Neighbourhood Centre

Business Directory

Health & Fitness

Precinct

Politician

Real Estate

School

Shopping

The universal language of dance



Irene and Yong Chang dance every Wednesday

As he takes his partner for a spin on the dance floor, Feng Yong Chang imagines he is still young and dancing in a Shanghai ballroom.

"It's not just physical. It's also spiritual. It activates something in me. I find something inside me is awake," Yong Chang said.

Around him, older people dance in pairs. A little bit of rumba. Some cha-cha-cha. A waltz or two. The foxtrot. A tango.

"How old I am doesn't matter. It's how I am old that matters," Yong Chang said. "You see the difference?"

Now in his 80s, he immigrated to Australia from Shanghai 30 years ago.

About 50 older people meet every Wednesday in North Melbourne at the Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre.

Most come to dance. Others to play cards or mahjong. To speak in Mandarin, Cantonese, and to keep old hometown dialects alive in their minds.

They're all part of the North Melbourne Chinese Association, founded in 2006.

Secretary Irene Yin has volunteered since 2014. Each week, she prepares snacks for all. Today it's hot dogs with dried pork, Chinese style, and enough coffee to keep the dancefloor pumping into the afternoon.

She points to a man on the dance floor who is smiling as he holds his partner close.

"That man rides his bicycle to the train station, puts it on the train, and then rides here from North Melbourne train station. Every week. He's 89 years old," Irene said.

Irene and Yong Chang both speak a Shanghai dialect. They became firm friends after meeting through this group nearly 20 years ago.

Only the pandemic could keep them from the dance floor. It was two-and-a-half years before they could samba again.

"The first time I saw him after we came back, I thought: he looks older. He stayed at home too long. No exercise, no connection. Gradually, slowly, he can dance again and be active," Irene said.

"I'm much better now," Yong Chang said.

"It's good to come here every week and see my friends. To make sure everyone is alright. Then I'm alright too."

Yong Chang also comes to the neighbourhood centre on a Tuesday for one-on-one tech support as he learns his way around a mobile phone and computer.

"There are so many things I have to learn to move forward together with the changing world," Yong Chang said.

"This neighbourhood centre plays a very important part in our life. It connects us to the living world."

Yong Chang's wife comes with him each week on a Wednesday - although for now she's sidelined with a knee injury. She sits in a cluster of friends, watching the dancers.

Someone claps in time with the music. Another swishes open a fan and waves it to cool herself. A cheer goes up.

"Everyone feels happy. We turn not older with the years, but newer every day," Yong Chang said.

"Our life is a renewable one. We're like a battery, we want to be recharged. We come here for that."

Find out more about what's on at Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre at melbourne.vic.gov.au/neighbourhoodcentres

IN BRIEF

READ ALL ABOUT IT

Be the first to know what's happening in your local neighbourhood and across the City of Melbourne. Subscribe for regular updates, direct to your inbox. Visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/subscribe to sign up.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PORTALS

Say hello to your friendly neighbourhood partner and share ideas to make your community the best it can be. From historic Carlton to the glistening harbour at Docklands, each City of Melbourne neighbourhood needs different services and support. Reach out to your neighbourhood partner at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/neighbourhoods

BOOST COVID PROTECTION

With the arrival of winter and waned immunity in the community, together we can take steps to protect ourselves and each other from COVID by getting a 2023 booster dose from a doctor or pharmacist. You can also collect free rapid antigen tests. Visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/freecovidtests for details.

REPORT IT ONLINE

From graffiti to abandoned vehicles, you can report issues online around the clock. Get in touch from your smartphone when it suits you and we'll get on the case. Find out more at melbourne.vic.gov.au/contactus

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.

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

QR code to book community sessions