

# NORTH WEST CITY NEWS

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Forever Free

Puzzles & Trivia P14



Keep a safe hiss-tance  
Photo by Ajay Viswanath

Locals, fear not! These snakes are only Mark Pelley’s pets, and the professional snake catcher appeared with them last month to remind residents to be vigilant following several recent sightings along the banks of the Maribyrnong River as Melbourne enters spring. *Full story on page 7.*

## Community gets first look at Younghusband redevelopment vision as plans tweaked

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
PLANNING

Developers and architects behind the major redevelopment of the 122-year-old Younghusband Woolstores in Kensington have met face-to-face with community members, with feedback resulting in slight changes to the plans.

A series of community information sessions has been held in recent months with the latest meeting taking place on September 5, where a packed crowd was able to view internal renovations, as well as hear an update on construction activities, and to ask questions.

The iconic red-brick buildings at 2-50 Elizabeth St are

recognised as one of Melbourne’s biggest heritage sites, spanning 1.57 hectares, and are among the last remaining wool stores in Victoria.

Refurbishment works, which began in March, are breathing new life into the buildings with the project being delivered in three stages under a joint venture partnership between Built, Ivanhoe Cambridge, and Irongate.

Once complete, the site will be transformed into a “vibrant new destination village” including a mix of office and retail spaces.

Designed by architecture firm Woods Bagot, the first stage is currently under construction and encompasses 17,300 square metres of retail and commercial office space

*Continued on page 6.*

## “Nowhere to go”: disabled man forced to sleep in park after housing case “mishandled”

*A disabled man experiencing homelessness in Parkville Gardens says he’s living a life of uncertainty after his housing application was reportedly “carelessly mishandled”.*

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
HOUSING

Ashraf, 56, has been rolling out his sleeping bag in a tent every night for the past year at a park in Galada Ave despite numerous attempts to get back on his feet through housing assistance groups.

“It’s a matter of surviving. I have nowhere to go, I need to survive,” he told *North West City News*.

Ashraf, who asked for his surname to be withheld, submitted his housing application months ago in the hope to find a stable and secure place to call home.

However, despite numerous follow-ups and attempts to resolve the matter, he has been left to fend for himself in what he described as a “disaster” in the handling of his application.

He now suffers from sleep apnoea and kidney problems with the latter requiring a monthly blood test, which his doctor said was due to lack of a nutritious diet and clean drinking water.

Ashraf, who contacted this masthead in desperation, said he had registered with Housing First, a not-for-profit organisation that provides social housing to people in January this year, after staying with friends who’d had to vacate their unit.

He said he had hopes of securing accommodation at a new community housing building consisting of 151 units, which is soon to open at



41 Galada Ave, Parkville Gardens; a state government project which will be owned and managed by Housing First.

He said his preference was for a unit on a ground floor or first floor to meet his mobility needs, whether it be at Galada Ave or anywhere across Melbourne.

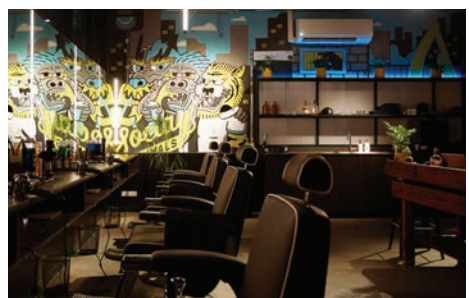
Ashraf said Housing First called him in July saying he had been successful in being offered a one-bedroom unit at Galada Ave, however one-bedroom units are only available in the building from the third level and above.

He then changed his application to a two-bedroom unit, which he was eligible to apply for and which was ultimately approved by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

*Continued on page 2.*

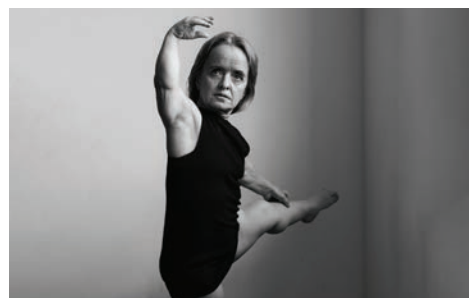
NWMPA TRADER PROFILE, PAGE 03

### A The new barber that is a cut above the rest



ARTS & CULTURE, PAGE 05

### B Lightning, dwarfism, community, Arts House



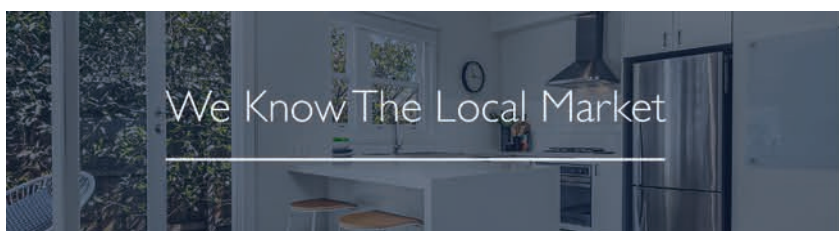
EDUCATION, PAGE 07

### C A vibrant, new mural at Kensington Primary



BUSINESS, PAGE 11

### D The “limitless potential” of disability in business



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# HYPERLOCAL NEWS

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## “Nowhere to go”: disabled man forced to sleep in park after housing case “mishandled”

*Continued from page 1.*

However, after changing his application, Ashraf said he was left frustrated, claiming that his calls to Housing First were going unanswered between July 20 and August 3. When he eventually received a call, he was reportedly told there was nothing available.

Adding to his disappointment, Ashraf discovered his medical documents proving his disability, which he had filed with his case worker at Wintringham, an organisation that provides housing and care to the elderly who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, had reportedly not been attached to his housing application from last September to early July this year.

In August, he said he received a congratulatory call from Wintringham saying he had been offered a place in Fitzroy. However, thinking his “crisis will be finally over”, he found it was on the fifth level of a high-rise building and “clearly irrelevant to my application preference”.

Wintringham has been contacted for comment.

“I have suffered a lot,” Ashraf said, adding he had lodged a report with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission about his case.

“I say as humans we make mistakes, that’s fine, but we should identify the mistakes and not repeat it.”

In the meantime, he said he had contacted Unison Community Housing in a last-ditch attempt to “find a roof over my head”.

A Housing First spokesperson said they could not discuss the specifics of Ashraf’s case because of privacy reasons, but added there was a defined Victorian Housing Register (VHR) process that “Housing First adheres to in allocating vacant properties to applicants”.

“There is a VHR waiting list, managed by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. There is no Housing First register,” the spokesperson said.

“The Department assesses eligibility of



▲ Ashraf, 56, has experienced homelessness for the past year in Parkville Gardens. Photo: Ajay Viswanath.

applicants and determines which type of property (in terms of amount of accommodation and whether disability features are required) that they are eligible for.”

The spokesperson said if a prospective resident decided their VHR approval did not meet their needs, they needed to apply for a new approval before they could be considered for the type of property they were seeking.

“If a prospective resident returns to us with a revised VHR application (for, say, more accommodation or disability considerations), we then seek to match their revised needs with our vacant homes that match those criteria and do so in a timely manner. They can’t be considered for vacancies that met the earlier criteria,” the spokesperson said.

“Moreover, vacant properties rarely remain vacant for very long. It is entirely unremarkable that a vacant property one week is no longer vacant the next.” ●



*Brendan Rees*  
JOURNALIST  
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### Isobel, 11, Kensington Junior Soccer Club

#### Why are you so passionate about playing soccer?

Because it is a great game to let off your emotions and you can feel good about yourself when you score a goal or play well. I like how everyone works together as a team to make the game work and it’s also a really exciting sport to support.

#### Which athlete do you look up to as a role model and why?

I look up to Steph Catley and Caitlin Foord because they’re really great players to watch and I think I can learn a lot from them. And they are also Gooners (Arsenal players)!

#### What do you love most about the Kensington Junior Soccer Club?

I like that it’s a welcoming club and no-one is ever left out and you can also make new relationships with people in your team from different schools. I also like that parents can get involved too, and it’s just a nice club to be part of. ●

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TRADER PROFILE

# North and West Melbourne Precinct Association

## Social Animals: the new barber that is a cut above the rest



*West Melbourne's Social Animals Barbershop is anything but your typical barber, and the story behind its founder is just as intriguing.*



WORDS BY *Jack Hayes*  
BUSINESS



Social Animals Barbershop works to a unique, subscription-based model centred around high-quality haircuts and products at affordable monthly costs, ultimately creating a tribe of like-minded people from all walks of life.

The business is the brainchild of founder and barber, Adam Bowling, who is also a musician, and a former senior executive of a nationwide cleaning company.

Turning his back on the corporate world and starting from scratch, Mr Bowling was in search for something he could truly put his fingerprints on.

Mr Bowling told *North West City News* his business model was inspired by “allogrooming”, the act “where members of the same species groom and maintain each other, building companionship and community.”

“I take pride in what I do, about anything, and that’s what we want to do,” Mr Bowling said. “It’s not just the haircut that people leave with; it’s the whole experience and what you are now involved with. Everyone is welcome here.”

“We are building something that you can be a part of. People want to be a part of something. Just like your favourite bar, you go there because you love it. They might have the same beer as other places, but you still go there.”

Social Animals offers three tiers of subscription; Gorilla Tier – two cuts per month, with five per cent off in-store products and updates about events and products; Tiger Tier – three cuts per month, one beard trim, 10 per cent off in-store products and updates about events and products; and finally, Dragon Tier – four cuts per month, two beard trims, 15 per cent off in-store products and VIP invites to events.

The business was launched in late June, and for Mr Bowling and his team, it has been foot to



floor ever since.

While the subscription model is what sets Social Animals apart from other barbers, those without a subscription are still able to access their services with traditional walk-ins on offer.

Growing the “tribe” and growing the brand have both been careful considerations, with the aspiration of 11 locations across the country and two in Bali in the crosshairs from inception.

“Since launch on June 30, it has been massive. We want to disrupt the market ... kick the tyres, light the fires,” Mr Bowling said.

“The first month we smashed our targets, and this past month we are exceeding all expectations.”

“Our community is going to build this. It’s not about me, it’s about us and our tribe.”

“Our business model works in a way that we can pay our barbers a liveable wage and allow for corporate growth. If they want to grow, that’s great. We can provide you with opportunities to open your own business, whether it’s Melbourne, Sydney, or the Gold Coast, you get a piece of this pie.”

For locals looking to join the tribe



permanently, Mr Bowling is on the lookout for full-time and part-time barbers.

Social Animals Barbershop is located on Wominjeka Walk at the West End, corner of Adderley and Dudley streets. ●

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



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PERFECT



## CHAMPION CHEESE SHOP NAMED SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

**RIPE Cheese, at Queen Victoria Market, is a treasure trove for cheese connoisseurs, offering everything from prosciutto-wrapped treats from Bruny Island to gooey truffle toasties.**

Hakim Halim is the “big cheese” behind this award-winning business. But he is quick to deflect all the glory to the cheesemakers themselves.

“I am most passionate about sharing the stories and produce of all the Australian artisanal cheesemakers to everyone,” Hakim said.

“Without them, RIPE will just be like any other generic cheese shop, deli and supermarket. They have done all the hard work in creating the best dairy products, and so credit goes to all our Australian producers.”

Hakim started his life in Melbourne as an international student 13 years ago.

He worked his way through various companies and experienced many hardships, including racial discrimination, before building his successful business.

“I thought being part of the corporate rat race was what I wanted. But once I started building a business with a purpose bigger than myself, everything made sense and I found joy,” Hakim said.

“That joy has pushed and motivated me to overcome any obstacles that we face, and work tirelessly to achieve the goals that we have set for ourselves.

“It’s incredible to be recognised in the Lord Mayor’s Small Business Awards, and I’m so humbled because I never could have imagined to be in this position when I first got here.”

Over his time in business, Hakim has seen the Australian cheese industry blossom. And he’s right there at the forefront of this growth, showcasing and advocating for local cheesemakers on the world stage.

“We see ourselves as the catalyst that brings Australian produce to the world. Last year, for example, we brought our cheese masterclasses to Singapore – who knows where to next?” Hakim said.

“We want to showcase Australian cheese and its producers through more advocacy, outreach, education and government lobbying. At the same time, creating more opportunities for future cheese experts through mentorship and scholarship programs.”

### **Hakim’s top tips for doing business in Melbourne**

Are you planning to start or grow a business in Melbourne? Hakim has this advice for your onward journey.

“Melbourne has a very competitive business market with lots of different

concepts and brands, and discerning customers,” Hakim said.

“It is of the utmost importance to have a clear and genuine unique selling proposition that can be understood and appreciated for many years to come. Melburnians hate gimmicks!”

### **About the Lord Mayor’s Small Business Awards**

Independent small businesses, and the dedicated Melburnians who run them, are the soul of our city.

Each year we say thank you to those making a significant contribution to the city’s culture, prosperity and liveability through the Lord Mayor’s Small Business Awards.

Alongside the overall winner, we also recognise Melbourne’s most innovative businesses. This year, Docklands-based startup Gaia Project Australia took out the Small Business Innovation Award.

While sending lettuce to space might sound like sci-fi, the Gaia team is planning for interplanetary growth, while changing the face of local agriculture to address climate change and food security.



*Nadun Hennayaka of Gaia Project Australia*

To learn more, search for Gaia at [news.melbourne.vic.gov.au](https://news.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

### **Celebrating long-standing businesses**

As part of the Lord Mayor’s Small Business Awards, we also celebrate businesses that have reached impressive milestones of 10+, 20+ and 40+ years.

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

# Lightning, dwarfism, community at Arts House

“

*Zoë Barry was hit by lightning, thrice. Now the award-winning cellist responds with a hair-raising solo performance charged by her uncanny encounters.*

”

WORDS BY *Edmund Coleman*  
ARTS & CULTURE



▲ The Nervous Atmosphere and (right) I Am (Not) This Body.

In September 2008, lightning struck the artist's windscreen, and shortly thereafter a second strike hit the ground in front of her bonnet. Six months later, a bolt hit Barry's house while she was inside.

"Fortunately, my car and house protected me from the full force of the strikes. But I did develop strange symptoms that affected my regulatory system, brain function, spatial awareness, and state of mind," Barry said.

"These experiences changed how I exist within nature. I thought that nature had chosen me. I felt like I was leaving the human realm, as if lightning could see me, and that it would keep finding me."

An ominous mesmeric croon on the immense power and providence of nature, *The Nervous Atmosphere*, now on at Arts House, is an eerily transportive solo work created by Barry and is

described as a "haunting glimpse" into the artist's personal reaction to being hit by lightning.

*The Nervous Atmosphere* is like a hypnotic meditation. These overwhelming encounters with nature shocked me into a new relationship with the forces of nature, electricity, and the mind," the artist described.

Also showing at Arts House is Leisa Prowd's personal celebration and artistic exploration of living with achondroplasia – the most common form of dwarfism.

*I Am (Not) This Body* is a study of Prowd's experience living in a "six-foot world" as the artist reclaims agency of her body.

*I Am (Not) This Body* is a memoir and

exploration of the relationship I have with my body as someone who is not even four-foot in a six-foot world," Prowd said.

"I will be exploring themes of perception, voyeurism and consent through different mediums including film, spoken word, dance, projection and sculpture, culminating in a live performance and sensory/tactile installation."

Prowd recently returned from touring with contemporary dance companies Hodworks (Hungary) and Unusual Symptoms (Germany) and is now one of the inaugural artists of The Warehouse Residency – a project that spotlights and champions new work by D/deaf and disabled artists.

"The Warehouse Residency will allow me the time, space, collaborations and consultations needed to develop the different elements and showcase the project as a whole. I am also wanting to make this project fully immersive, inclusive and accessible," Prowd said.

*The Nervous Atmosphere* runs from September 13 to 17.

*I Am (Not) This Body* runs from October 11 to 15. •

**ARTS HOUSE**

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



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**NORTH WEST CITY NEWS**



## Honouring officers killed in the line of duty

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
COMMUNITY

Victoria Police is encouraging everyone to show their support for Blue Ribbon Day to commemorate the 175 officers who have died in the line of duty.

Blue Ribbon Day is September 29, which coincides with National Police Remembrance Day.

It is a chance for the community to say thank you to those who protect and serve the community and ensure that those who have fallen are never forgotten.

Speaking at a media launch on September 6 at the Victoria Police Centre ahead of Blue Ribbon Day, Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Shane Patton said the day was a poignant reminder of the bravery and sacrifice officers made to ensure the safety of others.

“When we stand shoulder to shoulder, we remember our colleagues who’ve fallen in the line of duty,” he said.

“We’ll come together and celebrate their lives, celebrating their commitment to policing, [and] celebrate what they did for policing but also recognise and remember them as family members, mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, children, because they’ve all got lives, and we forget that all too often.”

Mr Patton said he often told police recruits that their commitment and dedication to upholding the right was a “noble cause”.

“There’s no routine police duties. There’s no such thing. Every one of them carries very much inherent risks.”

He said as part of this year’s commemoration police across the country would visit and support colleagues and families of officers who had been killed over the past year.

“We’ll get out to colleagues who were murdered in a callous ambush in Queensland. We’ll look at a colleague who was killed in Western Australia by a vehicle intercept, and also an officer in Papua New Guinea who was shot dead.”

Blue Ribbon Day is an initiative of the Blue Ribbon Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation established in 1998 to honour the memory of police who have lost their lives and to support their families. The foundation also raises money for emergency facilities and equipment for hospitals across Victoria.

Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation chairman David Mann encouraged all members of the community to contribute to the cause by purchasing badges, blue ribbons and other merchandise including Constable T. Bear.

To donate: [remember.org.au](http://remember.org.au) ●



## Community gets first look at Younghusband redevelopment vision as plans tweaked

*Continued from page 1.*

across the heritage woolsheds, which is touted to offer some of the largest commercial office floorplates in Melbourne.

The on-site community session saw about 60 people in attendance, who watched a slideshow screened by representatives of Built, Woods Bagot, Oculus (landscape architects), and Stantec (traffic engineers).

A miniature model of the woolsheds was also on display showcasing a future look of the redevelopment, while renders of the designs were exhibited on walls.

Speaking of the designs, Woods Bagot said it was “deploying a ‘light touch’ approach” to the existing architecture, retaining the rich heritage character of the brick warehouses, including decommissioned bale lifts, original Younghusband ghost signage, steel-framed windows, and a distinctive sawtooth roof.

“The more layers we peel back, the more we discover,” principal and project leader Peter Miglis said.

“Our approach has been to celebrate the building’s texture and patina, commemorating the 120 years of history embedded within the walls.”

Mr Miglis said Woods Bagot, which had been engaged on the project from 2016, maintained an open dialogue with the community “to build a sense of trust and responsibility”.

“Addressing feedback from the previous community consultation session, the project team responded with changes to the civic plaza, removing the proposed sunken courtyard and corner kiosk to improve the openness and generosity of the public ground plain,” he said of the stage three works.

“The revised submission to town planning reflects the desires of the community in a democratic civic gesture with a raised lawn and ample public meeting space that is accessible to all.”

Among those in attendance at the information session was Sheila Byard, an active member of community group, the Kensington Association.

Ms Byard said residents appreciated the opportunity to participate in a proactive



discussion, emphasising the importance of the maintaining the sheds’ historical integrity.

However, she said there were concerns about the “waves of construction workers’ vehicles, and cars are likely to be used once tenants [and their customers] come into the refurbished spaces, despite the graphics supplied about the proximity to public transport”.

There was also concern about Eastwood St and Elizabeth St being used as a “commuter rat run” and the need to be aware of “other continuing commercial and industrial uses nearby”.

Questions were also asked about the sandblasting of lead paint on internal surfaces, re-roofing, and the restoration of heritage window frames.

Built development director Jono Cottee said the redevelopment was expected to be completed in late 2024, with an opportunity for local Kensington business owners “to set up shop and take advantage of working close to home”.

“The commercial office will be complemented with an integrated village including a new town centre, café and beverage offerings and an activated retail laneway,” he said.

Irongate CEO Graeme Katz said as Younghusband was one of Melbourne’s “boldest and biggest adaptive reuse projects that needs to balance the requirements of community, commerciality and heritage carefully”.

“Getting this right is of utmost importance and has resulted in the rebalancing of the scheme, which we believe strikes the right balance and will produce a successful asset for both the community and investors for years to come,” he said.

Cushman & Wakefield and Colliers are managing retail and commercial lease enquires. ●



## Community unites in celebration of cultural diversity

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
COMMUNITY

The community has come together to celebrate diversity and culture at an inaugural event held at the North Melbourne Community Centre.

Called the “Melbourne Winter Alive Winter ‘23”, the August 25 event showcased an array of activities including lively performances, cultural food, and workshops.

The event’s organiser, Deepa Gupta, who runs the Motivation Assistance Rehabilitation and Growth (MARG) Foundation, said the day was dedicated to empowering women in the community impacted by violence by improving their mental health and wellness.

“It was a super-successful event. This is a celebration of joy and happiness by creating bonds, connections, and reducing isolation and stress,” she said.

“We at MARG believe every person has a right to equality and respect irrespective of his/her gender, tribe or where she/he is born.”

Ms Gupta said hundreds of people from different walks of life attended the event, “making it a once in a lifetime program”, which was also aimed at fostering a strong and inclusive community.

Guests and dignitaries included Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece, Melbourne’s Consulate General of India Dr Sushil Kumar, Victorian Multicultural Commission chairperson Vivienne Nguyen AM, and women’s right activist Maria Dimopolous, who works to eliminate family violence.

The event also saw a delicious range of Indian food offered to celebrate the Lohri festival, a popular winter Punjabi folk festival celebrated primarily in Northern India.

Cultural performances also featured members from the Vietnamese, Chinese, Sri Lankan, and Indian communities.

Other activities included talks on “psycho-social safety and isolation” by psychologist Dr Smruthy Nair, as well as the “importance of language in cultural connect” by the Ambassador of Poland Eva Hussain, and “upholding the Australian Indigenous voice referendum” by MARG.

Representatives of the Australian Tax Office also attended to deliver a presentation on “women empowerment through creating your own business enterprise”. ●

# Proudly representing the community in inner Melbourne



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MEMBER FOR NORTHERN METROPOLITAN REGION

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## Vibrant mural takes centre stage at Kensington Primary School

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Hanna Komissarova*  
EDUCATION

Students at Kensington Primary School are beaming with pride after unveiling a stunning mural that encapsulates their school values.

The vibrant outdoor artwork, which spans an impressive 23 metres wide, adorns the school's art room building (facing Epsom Rd) with a vibrant display of colours and imagery.

Grade 6 students created the mural with the help and inspiration of Melbourne artist and illustrator Angharad Neal Williams, as well as the school's visual arts teacher Elise Andrew.

The project was made possible thanks to the Creative Learning Partnerships Program, and a Victorian Government Initiative Grant, which was provided to the school last year.

The mural represents the school's values including respect, responsibility, resilience, learning and creativity.

In one part of the artwork, a book is being opened and a "magical flow of ideas" spills out with a person in deep thought as they look to the sky, while nearby, someone is planting a plant.

Flowers and plants like the Golden Wattle are on display showing their resilience as they survive Australia's hot climate, while unique flowers and rainbow bees are intertwined throughout the artwork.

The unveiling of the mural took place on August 25 in front of parents and teachers at an assembly, which was also marked with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Ms Andrew praised the students' efforts and artistic talent, which saw students develop skills in sketching, designing and eventually painting the mural over the course of a week.

"Through the 15 workshops, students learned how to develop concepts in a specific visual communication style, how to respond to a brief and how to visually represent the school values

as symbols," she said.

"At the end of the series of workshops, students demonstrated voice and agency through a democratic process of voting on aspects of others' work that they would like to see included in the mural."

Dr Finicina Hopgood, the parent of a participating student, said it was a "lovely way for these students to come together in their final year of primary school to create something special". Grade 6 student and creativity captain Maddie said, "I'd like to thank Elise for organising this and making it happen and of course also thank Angharad, for supporting us to design the mural and teach us many new skills through the process."

### Upgrade on track for completion

Meanwhile, a \$7.4 million revamp of Kensington Primary School is on schedule to be finished next year, delivering much-needed enhanced learning spaces and facilities.

The state government-led project will modernise the school's heritage Block A by upgrading general purpose classrooms for students and providing a new reception and administration area for staff.

A new passenger lift will also be installed to service the southern end of Block A and to improve access to some of the upper-level classrooms. A new school community hub will house a gym, canteen, music room, and a storage and staff work area. Other features include a new student toilet block, a covered walkway, and a new gathering space.

Construction of the long-awaited project began in 2019 after the community rallied behind Melbourne Greens MP Ellen Sandell who launched a petition calling for the government to fix the school following concerns of mould and collapsing floors.

A government spokesperson said the project was expected to be completed in second quarter of 2024. ●

## Snakes sighted at Maribyrnong River, residents urged to be vigilant

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
ENVIRONMENT

Residents are being warned to exercise caution along the Maribyrnong River after several snake sightings had been reported near the riverbanks.

The City of Melbourne has erected signs in Kensington to notify visitors of the possible presence of snakes in the area, which advises "for your own safety please remain on paths".

"There have been a number of snake sightings in this reserve," one sign stated at Hobsons Rd, Kensington (near Riverside Park), where there is long grass and bushland.

According to Melbourne Water, which manages the Maribyrnong River, four species of snakes are known to inhabit the area, including the deadly eastern brown snake, lowland copperhead, red-bellied black snake, and the tiger snake.



"Although these snakes are highly venomous, they are protected species in Victoria and must not be caught or killed," it said.

"Generally speaking, snakes need not be feared and are more likely to flee should they sense danger or human approach."

Professional snake catcher Mark Pelley said it was "very common" to find snakes along the Maribyrnong River and the surrounding area as

the weather warmed up.

"I believe 99 per cent of the time people will pass the snake without even realising," he said, but added if people were to encounter one, he advised to "back away calmly so as not to antagonise the snake".

"Snakes will only bite if you hurt them or if they're afraid you're going to hurt them."

Mr Pelley, whose business is called The Snake Hunter, said he had caught snakes in recent weeks including at homes in Kensington, Parkville, Collingwood, Moonee Ponds, and Flemington.

He said the venomous critters were found in garages, bedrooms, under refrigerators, and under cars, and on one occasion, in a ride-on mower.

"No one was harmed because everyone did the right thing ... they saw the snake, they watched it from a safe distance, and called me straight away."

However, he noted "biggest risk" snakes

posed was to the safety of dogs "because dogs have got an amazing nose and they're lower to the ground".

He said the best way to protect dogs was to keep them on a leash, but when they are off a lead, they must return to their owner's call so "you know your dog will come back to you no matter what".

Mr Pelley said another tip was to train dogs to avoid snakes, particularly along the Maribyrnong River, which is a skill he offers training classes in.

"That actually helps them because when the owner cannot always pay 100 per cent of their attention to the dog at all times there's going to be lapses, and it only takes a split second for a dog to be bitten and killed by a snake."

If a dog is bitten, owners must seek veterinary assistance immediately.

The council said its officers did not interfere with snakes along the river as they are protected species and in their natural habitat. ●



**Flora**  
Indian Restaurant & Cafe

**Flora Indian Restaurant & Cafe**

The Flinders Street northern footpath is currently closed to way-through foot traffic at the Metro Tunnel site entrance between Swanston and Degraves streets until mid-September.

Flora will still be open to meet all your Indian food cravings. Immerse yourself in the sensory delight of Indian food with a range of fresh curries, breads and snacks.

**238 Flinders Street, Melbourne**  
**03 9663 1212**  
[www.floraindian.com.au](http://www.floraindian.com.au)  
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## DOING BUSINESS IN MELBOURNE

Whether you run a bespoke bakery, are looking to scale-up your startup or even have grand plans to open your first flagship store, Melbourne is the best place to do business.

Home to 13,829 businesses, 527,738 jobs and with an annual economic output of \$212.3 billion, Melbourne tops the list as the nation's best city to start and run a business.

With our diverse economy, liveability, and rich talent pool, our city is fertile ground for startups, small to medium enterprises and global headquarters.

And at the City of Melbourne we recognise our business owners are the heart and soul of the city and the engine room of our economy.

Through initiatives such as Invest Melbourne and our Business Concierge, we're making it easier to do business by cutting red tape and attracting new investment to drive innovation and create jobs.

Find out more about how we can support you and your business, visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/business](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/business)



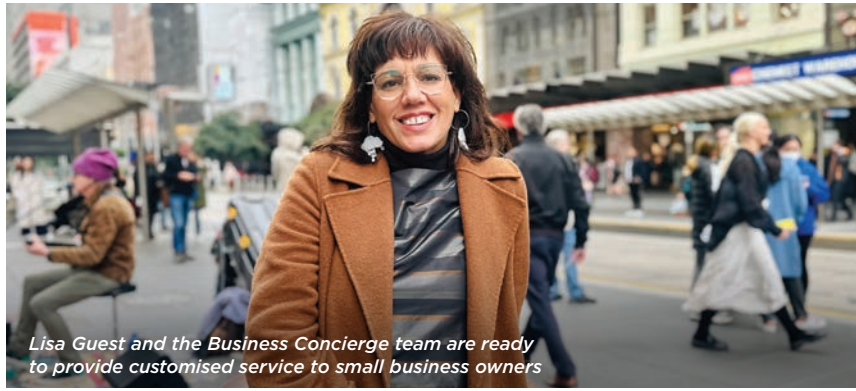
### SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS

Start or expand your business in Melbourne with our Small Business Grants. Grants of up to \$30,000 are available to small businesses wanting to build on our city's reputation for innovation and creativity. Applications close 25 September. Visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/smallbusinessgrants](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/smallbusinessgrants)

### BUSINESS EVENT SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Got a bright idea for a conference, expo, workshop or networking event within the City of Melbourne? Apply for a grant of up to \$10,000 to bring your idea to life. Applications close 25 September. Visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/businessevents](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/businessevents)

# Making magic happen for city businesses



Lisa Guest and the Business Concierge team are ready to provide customised service to small business owners

## Meet the business concierge who's working behind the scenes to bring dreams to life for city businesses.

Every time Lisa Guest takes a call from someone with a question about running a business in the city, she looks for the magic in the moment.

"Behind every question, I know there's something delicate and important in our hands," Lisa said. She's a case manager with our Business Concierge Service.

"No matter how big or small the idea, here's a person who believes in their dream, and we get to help those ideas come to fruition."

Lisa and her colleagues are tasked with helping businesses connect the dots as they open, run and flourish in the municipality.

"Often when I'm speaking with a prospective business, I remind myself that it's more than a question about opening a cafe. Behind every idea, there's often a family. Maybe it's the family's life savings," she said.

Since January 2022, the Business Concierge team has provided free advice and mentoring to more than

15,500 city businesses – reducing the time it takes for a business to start up in the city and supporting them as they embrace Melbourne's new rhythm.

### Woman of the world

Born to "hippy parents" in Argentina in a time of political unrest, Lisa was six when her family moved to Brazil. She grew up there and studied journalism.

Restless, she packed a bag and headed for Australia to learn English, surf and travel. She stayed in Perth for 23 years, meeting her husband and raising two children.

When her kids moved to Melbourne to study and broaden their horizons, she soon followed, and landed with City of Melbourne as a public health officer.

That's how she began to fall in love with the city, and got to know its small businesses by roaming the laneways to offer support throughout the pandemic.

Now she keeps her imagination and networks firing as part of our Business Concierge Service which offers a one-stop shop for business support.

Case managers help businesses navigate government processes and find the right services. They also share

trends, identify site locations and investment opportunities.

"We work with cafes and retailers, but also pop-ups and activations," Lisa said.

"We support startups, social enterprises – many are migrant women and that is very humbling.

"I have the chance to make a meaningful impact by supporting fellow migrants as they navigate the hurdles of starting a new life."

She calls opportunities like these "pinch-me moments".

"I'm not just in Melbourne, I'm in the thick of it. One day I'm on the phone with a business, hearing a big idea and it could be the next big thing," Lisa said.

"The next day I'm volunteering on the busking panel to decide who can perform in the Bourke Street Mall, hearing a keyboard player whose music just flows and transports you."

The Business Concierge Service will ramp up its work to support new and existing city businesses over the coming year, with a \$500,000 investment in the Budget 2023-24.

Got a big idea for a business? Unclear about a permit? For one-on-one advice, call our dedicated Business Concierge Service on 9658 9658 (press 1 for business), or submit your query online at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/business](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/business)

### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2022-23, the Business Concierge helped establish 51 businesses, resulting in 605 expedited jobs, \$28 million in capital expenditure and an estimated \$55 million in gross local product brought into the economy earlier than would have otherwise been the case.

## FRESH IDEAS FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD TRADE WITH NEW FUNDING



Melbourne Chinatown Business Association President Christina Zhao

### Iconic local retail and hospitality businesses across Melbourne are getting a boost thanks to new funding through the City of Melbourne's Business Precinct Program.

The Business Precinct Program provides annual financial support to recognised precinct trader associations representing important consumer-relevant areas of the municipality.

We are supporting 10 precinct associations with more than \$850,000 in funding for 2023-24.

The funding is designed to support traders as they attract visitors to beloved retail and hospitality venues across 10 busy precincts in the municipality.

The funded precincts are: Carlton Inc., City Precinct, Collins Street Precinct Group, Docklands Chamber of Commerce, Greek

Precinct Association, Kensington Business Association, Melbourne Chinatown Business Association, Melbourne City North Business Association, North & West Melbourne Precinct Association and the Yarra River Business Association.

Associations funded under the Business Precinct Program undertake activities to boost the trader area on behalf of their members. They also build a robust membership with local street traders to strengthen community.

Precinct associations also create opportunities for local businesses to get to know one another and exchange information, run networking events and community festivals, and build regular communications with members.

Find out more about our Business Precinct Associations at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/precincts](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/precincts)

## ECONOMY SNAPSHOT SHOWS CONFIDENCE AND GROWTH

More Melbourne businesses are revamping their premises, with new data revealing permit approvals for upgrades have nearly doubled in the past year.

Our latest Melbourne Economy Snapshot shows more than 50 businesses applied to upgrade their premises in May – up almost 90 per cent on the 27 applications at the same time last year, and trending towards pre-pandemic levels.

The snapshot also shows reinvigorated confidence in Melbourne's tourism sector, with more than 10,000 additional hotel rooms becoming available in the past four years.

Activity in the city has steadily increased throughout 2023, with the snapshot revealing the colder winter months have not deterred visitation, with a 24 per cent increase in night-time activity across the city during key June events.

The Melbourne Economy Snapshot aims to equip city traders with data and insights to better inform business decisions. Subscribe to our Business in Melbourne e-newsletter to receive the quarterly snapshot at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/business](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/business)



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# EXPERTS TRANSFORMING MELBOURNE'S BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

Melbourne as a leading tech city. It facilitates connections for new tech companies in the industry verticals, where Melbourne is a recognised leader.

**Scott Tanner**

*Expertise in banking and financial services, real estate, digital transformation, and corporate governance*



Our vision is to attract the headquarters of great businesses and future industries. We want to tackle and solve new global challenges and create new opportunities in a loop of learning, innovation and leadership.

Invest Melbourne can identify gaps and reinforce our strengths in attracting and retaining global industry leaders. We help industry and individuals create an exciting and dynamic environment where industry and individuals can achieve their full potential.

**Rachel Watson**

*Expertise in renewable energy generation*



Melbourne is already a key hub for energy companies in Australia, and renewable energy companies in particular.

Invest Melbourne is uniquely placed to foster business activity in the renewable energy sector, which will further enhance Melbourne's reputation as a green city of the future.

**Dr Julie Wells**

*Expertise in the tertiary education, policy and partnership development*



Melbourne is rich in educational, sporting, scientific and cultural institutions. I'd like to see that wealth leveraged and enjoyed by everyone.

My vision is for Melbourne to be a global hub for inclusive innovation – artistic, social, scientific – where everyone can participate and benefit.

Invest Melbourne has a great part to play as a facilitator, enabler and partner with industry, business and government to grow investment and jobs right here.

Read more about the Invest Melbourne Advisory Board, and find out how Invest Melbourne is cementing the city's reputation as a global investment destination at [news.melbourne.vic.gov.au/economy](https://news.melbourne.vic.gov.au/economy)

Ever wondered who's behind the magic of turning Melbourne business ideas into reality? Meet the Invest Melbourne Advisory Board – the team that's dreaming up ways to help entrepreneurs start, grow and go global.

Invest Melbourne helps unlock business potential for many innovative and successful companies seeking to invest here in Melbourne. Are you among them? Harness this prosperity, connect with the right people at the right time, and achieve business success.

**Amanda Coombs, chair**

*Expertise in financial services and innovation*



We draw on our experience in finance, technology, innovation, energy, life sciences, logistics, property and education. The aim is to develop a pipeline of opportunities that will create jobs and ensure Melbourne is an easy place to do business.

We want Melburnians to be proud of their city and enjoy working and living here. There's great momentum for reimagining what Melbourne can be for businesses that are looking to land or expand in the city.

**Andrew Carter**

*Expertise in med tech, pharmaceuticals and commercialisation*



Invest Melbourne is a bold facilitator of ideas that prioritise long-term wellbeing over profit. Our vision is for a city that seamlessly blends work, leisure and life experiences. A place where getting together with colleagues, family and friends is desirable and easy.

Melbourne is a city that prioritises people and offers a mix of safe spaces. We acknowledge our past and improve our natural assets, and promote commuting options that are environmentally sustainable.

**David Chen**

*Expertise in shipping, technology and general business leadership*



My goal is to foster a business environment that champions sustainable supply chain solutions and puts Melbourne at the forefront of global logistic innovations.

Melbourne is a city where culture, technology, and sustainable logistics coalesce, ensuring efficient, eco-friendly business operations.

**Amy Foo**

*Expertise in technology and digital innovation*



I'm passionate about the tech industry, and seeing more cultural diversity and women in tech. By facilitating the right investment frameworks and policies, Invest Melbourne is creating sustainable economic growth.

As a global leader, we attract business, innovation and talent, and foster a vibrant city culture. That leads to good business and job opportunities for Melburnians.

**Ian McCall**

*Expertise in information and communications technology, digital innovation*



Melbourne is already a leading city in the globally connected technology community, home to a vibrant startup community, headquarters to home-grown technology giants and hosting a strong representation of global-leading tech companies.

Given the increasingly central role of technology in every sector of the economy, Invest Melbourne plans to amplify global recognition of

## Investment in business is paying off for the city

Invest Melbourne, the City of Melbourne's investment body, is eclipsing its job creation and economic targets, further cementing our reputation as a world-leading destination to start and grow a business.

In 2022–23, the number of jobs created and capital expenditure

generated were 220 and 215 per cent above our targets respectively.

Invest Melbourne supported a pipeline of some 70 major projects which are set to create more than 1,650 jobs and contribute \$430 million in capital expenditure to the city.

Invest Melbourne's support is forecast to generate a \$500 million

estimated increase in gross local product (GLP) for the city through new jobs, the establishment of new businesses and headquarters, and capital expenditure.

Sixty per cent of the projects supported by Invest Melbourne were in the hospitality and retail sectors, with our Business Concierge service

providing assistance to manage permits and licensing applications, as well as general business advice.




Invest Melbourne is working across more than 140 projects – which could create or fast-track an estimated 8,000 new full-time jobs across the city and generate around \$1.3 billion in capital expenditure.

### KEEP IN TOUCH

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

[news.melbourne.vic.gov.au](https://news.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

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▲ Redevelopment works at the Lort Smith have reached a milestone.

## Lort Smith opens new facilities with “fear-free” waiting room pods

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
ANIMAL WELFARE

North Melbourne’s Lort Smith Animal Hospital is celebrating a milestone as the first stage of its long-anticipated redevelopment project reaches completion.

The not-for-profit hospital can now boast state-of-art facilities that will enhance the level of care and support it offers to its furry patients. Upgrades for the veterinary clinic include new “fear-free” waiting room pods for pets and their carers before appointments to help reduce anxiety, spacious surgery rooms with new equipment, and more natural light.

Among the first four-legged patients set to visit the new high-tech hospital is “Lucky” the chihuahua who will receive routine dental surgery from veterinarian Dr Harry (not to be confused with TV celebrity veterinarian Dr Harry Cooper).

“Lucky is booked in for a morning procedure in the new suite and will be back on his paws with his family in no time,” Dr Harry said.

“Our clinical team are keen to start using the new space and equipment.”

Dr Harry noted the dental team members were “particularly excited” as they had been operating in a “cramped, dark room” during the building works, but “now they can work in a bright and open surgery space with three operating stations within a fear free environment”.

The Lort Smith began redevelopment works 18 months ago with the full redevelopment on track to open in early 2024 when it announces a “full opening of their new and improved, fear-free hospital”.

The works also include new and improved spaces for emergencies, surgeries, dental, and consultations, as well as updated facilities to support the wellbeing and operations of staff.

A convenient and accessible new carpark directly out the front of the hospital entrance is open for hospital and clinic customers.

The Lort Smith receives no ongoing government funding and relies heavily on generous donations from the public. ●



▲ The site at 8 Radcliffe St, West Melbourne.

Photo: Ajay Viswanath.

## Container deposit site proposed for West Melbourne

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
SUSTAINABILITY

The City of Melbourne will consider a planning application that proposes to create a recycling centre within an industrial area of West Melbourne.

The proposed facility would be used as a transfer station at 8 Radcliffe St as part of Victoria’s container deposit scheme (CDS), which is set to be rolled out in November as the state government seeks to reform the waste and recycling sector.

The scheme will reward Victorians with a 10-cent refund for every eligible can, carton and bottle they return, with the service mooted for the West Melbourne site providing the public with “a convenient option to access the scheme by returning us eligible drink containers in exchange for cash or donation”.

If approved, the transfer station will serve as hub for collecting and temporarily storing recyclables before they are transported to recovery centres operated by the applicant.

The applicant, whose identity was redacted in the planning application, is an Indigenous-owned operator of CDS facilities across New South Wales, Queensland, and Northern Territory.

According to the plans, the 2550-square-metre site at Radcliffe St is understood to have been previously used for storage and warehousing associated with VicTrack. ●

“The site is in the established industrial area in the City of Melbourne and is considered to be appropriate for the light industrial nature of the proposal,” the plans stated.

As there is an existing building, the plans said no significant buildings or works would be required.

Operation of the facility would be 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday, and transfer of collected containers from the site would “typically occur no more than once per day outside of customer hours whenever possible,” the proposal stated.

Two staff would be on site, which could rise to four staff during busy periods.

The plans stated recyclables would be processed inside the existing facility via “efficient machine operation”, with noise impacts to the surrounding area being “negligible” and any potential dust or odour emission “practically non-existent”.

“The proposal will help meet the goals of key strategic policy documents at state and regional level: Recycling Victoria: A new economy and the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan 2016 by contributing to the CDS, helping to divert material from landfill, and contributing to the consolidation and recyclable material which can provide broader economic value.”

The CDS coordinator is VicReturn with Visy, Return-It, Cleanaway awarded the contracts as network operators for the central, east, and west regions respectively. ●

## Promised housing in Parkville Gardens remains unbuilt, six years after government pledge

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
HOUSING

A parcel of land in Parkville Gardens set aside for affordable and social housing by state government remains untouched and undeveloped six years after the project’s announcement.

In 2018, the state government announced its Inclusionary Housing Pilot (IHP), which was set to deliver up to 100 new social housing dwellings across six sites, including Parkville, as “surplus government land suitable for development”, a key part of its Homes for Victorians Strategy.

The site at 101 Manningham St, opposite Manningham Reserve, is understood to have been initially earmarked for the proposed East West Link under the former Coalition government, which was abandoned under the Andrews Labor government in 2014.

Under the Inclusionary IHP, the six sites have been sold and are under contract with two developers, with the Manningham St site being contracted to the not-for-profit Barnett Foundation. The other sites are in Boronia, Broadmeadows, and Wodonga.

Up to 250 apartments are proposed by Barnett but the project is “pending government approval”, according to the foundation’s website.

It also stated the project was “currently on hold due to its size, complexity and unforeseen circumstances”.

“The Barnett Foundation is currently working with government departments to sort through some issues and if the process is able to restart, we do not expect this to occur until 2023. We will endeavour to keep you informed of its status.”

The Barnett Foundation has been contacted for comment about the issues it is facing.

The government did not respond directly to a series of questions by *North West City News*. Instead, a government spokesperson said, “We know we have to make use of land we already have.”

“Our Inclusionary Housing Pilot is on track to deliver 100 new social homes across six rezoned sites in growing Melbourne suburbs.”

“We know there’s no more important an issue anywhere in the state right now than housing – that’s why we’re making sure there is a mix of social, affordable and market housing in established suburbs close to transport, jobs and essential services.”

The government also said the pilot had informed how government, councils, communities, and developers “can work together to boost housing choice, while complementing our nation-leading \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build which is delivering 12,000 social and affordable homes across the state”. ●

Authorised by L. White, Australian Labor Party, 62 Lygon St Carlton VIC 3053

# Say Yes to an Indigenous Voice to Parliament

**Senator Linda White**  
SENATOR FOR VICTORIA

**Labor**

Voting in the referendum is compulsory. Not voting may result in a fine.

### Sourdough Crackers

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# Celebrating the “limitless potential of people living with disability”

*Brett Duncan’s journey into business ownership is a tale of perseverance and talent.*

WORDS BY *Jack Hayes*  
BUSINESS

Brett was born profoundly deaf.

In 1989, at the age of two, Brett was the 100<sup>th</sup> patient and the youngest person to ever receive the cochlear implant.

At age five, he started primary school with only two words in his vocabulary – “no” and “Mum”.

To say that life hasn’t been easy for Brett would be an understatement.

At age 16, he began work experience at Bakers Delight, which quickly turned into paid work.

Over the years he gained the skills and accreditation as a qualified baker, but the toll of early mornings and a poor work-life balance was too great.

“I lost my passion,” he said. “But luckily, I was able to find work at Crown Melbourne as a steward in the kitchens.”

“While I was there, I was working in the pastry kitchen. I watched the chefs creating these desserts and pastries. From then onwards, I decided that is what I want to become.”

In 2021, Brett became a qualified pastry chef setting him on the trajectory to launch GingerSnap in partnership with co-founder, social enterprise CEO and sister, Jess Colgan.

Based out of West Melbourne’s West End,



“It was started as a side business working out of Mum’s kitchen,” Jess said. “Then this weekend opportunity was sent to me, and I put in an expression of interest. The team were super



GingerSnap is a social enterprise celebrating the limitless potential of people with disability, by providing employment pathways, economic empowerment, and a safe and inclusive workplace through the creation of plant-based desserts and pastries.

keen on us and what we do, and here we are.”

“We are using food and the joy of desserts to break down the stigma of people living with disability and what they can achieve. We want to elevate people with disabilities into leadership positions and creating employment for people with disability.”

“Our products speak for themselves. You can buy from us just if you think our product is excellent, or you can buy from us if you are interested in supporting the mission we want to fulfill.”

GingerSnap operates predominantly direct to consumers and wholesalers like cafes and catering businesses through their website.

You can find three ranges of desserts on offer, from their bespoke high-tea range that includes a salted caramel and chocolate mousse tart, a mousse swirl gained by using the spin from the top of their dad’s record player, to their tart and bakery ranges.

“It’s very exciting to start cooking and working in this space,” Brett said. “I was a bit apprehensive at first because I don’t know much about the whole business side of things, but Jess said I can focus on the products and she will focus on the business aspects like accounting, and I thought, why not.”

“I always think that I can’t do things because of my deafness, but I have started to feel more confident in this business.” ●

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



## New keep clear markings coming to Adderley St

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*  
TRANSPORT

New keep clear markings will be installed at two intersections in West Melbourne to help ease traffic congestion, which had been exacerbated by the closure of Dynon Rd.

The City of Melbourne confirmed it would install the markings along Adderley St within the next two months to assist residents enter and exit Stanley and Rosslyn streets.

According to one local resident, turning right from Stanley St into Adderley St had become “impossible, as there are no keep clear zones and cars simply block the road at the intersection”.

“Adderley St is being used as a rat run for vehicles wanting to avoid Dudley St, however it is creating the same problem on Adderley St,” the resident said.

The resident said traffic along Spencer St was also prone to coming to a “standstill” from about 4pm to 7.30pm each day, which was the same for Adderley St, due to traffic being reduced to one lane towards Dudley St.

It’s understood the Department of Transport is investigating the concern on Spencer St.

Dynon Rd was closed in both directions between CityLink and Dryburgh St for 11 weeks before reopening on August 31 after it was widened as part of the West Gate Tunnel Project, causing detours and delays for motorists. ●

## The Voice: “our chance to change the path that we are on”

WORDS BY *Jack Hayes*  
COMMUNITY

For Sheena Watt, Victorian Upper House MP for the North Metropolitan Region, enshrining constitutional recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through a Voice to Parliament is “not just about being recognised, it’s about being heard.”

As Victoria’s only Aboriginal Member of Parliament, Ms Watt knows the responsibility she shoulders; it is something she has lived with her entire life.

“I came to Parliament having worked in Aboriginal affairs for 20 years and I knew there were really good ideas out there,” Ms Watt told *North West City News*. “I know there are passionate people wanting to make a change in the lives of Aboriginal people, I know they are anxious for change, and I know they know there is a better path ahead.”

“When you’re only three per cent of the population, it is really hard to be heard by everyone else on what it is important to you and what changes need to happen to affect positive change in your life and your community’s lives.”

Still with a date yet to be set, sometime in October is all that is known, in the nation’s first referendum since 1999, Australians are being called upon to answer “Yes” or “No”.

The question: “A proposed law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?”

The path to this referendum comes from the largest consensus of First Nations peoples on a proposal for substantive recognition in Australian history, culminating in 2017’s Uluru Statement from the Heart.

“What the leaders in Uluru wanted is for Aboriginal leaders to be listened to on the issues that affect us each and every day, and that the Voice can never be taken away,” Ms Watt said.

“A voice to parliament is about future proofing Aboriginal affairs against that change. It’s about whoever it is that sits in Canberra must listen to the voice of First Nations people.”



“Ever since the Apology we have had the *Closing the Gap Report*, and in the hope that by shining a light on infant mortality, educational attainment, or life expectancy, we would be able to improve things.”

“But the improvements are just too slow, and the equality we seek is too far off. I know that we need something bigger and bolder to change the path that we are on.”

According to the *Closing The Gap Report* 2020, only two of the report’s proposed targets are currently on track. Targets still not on track include the gap between child mortality rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children widening from 2008 to 2018; little to no change in employment rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and this country’s First Peoples still live an average of eight years less than non-Indigenous Australians.

Ms Watt has seen how damaging that gap can be to herself and her people firsthand.

She has lived with the racism of low expectations from people who were meant to inspire and guide her.

Now, she says, it’s her time to dismantle that notion and inspire a new generation of Australians. ●

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



## West Gate Tunnel reaches another major milestone

WORDS BY *Edmund Coleman*  
BUILDING

The final piece of the West Gate Tunnel’s new elevated freeway will soon be stitched into place using a 1400-tonne crane.

The crane is 40 metres high with a 116-metre-long gantry and has been hoisting 100-tonne pieces of concrete roadway and connecting them above Footscray Rd.

The news was announced a week after Dynon Rd reopened for drivers after an “around the clock construction blitz”.

According to the state government, crews have worked more than 30,000 hours to strengthen and widen the Dynon Rd bridge during the past 11 weeks.

The government reports that the workers have replaced multiple old steel beams and barriers from the bridge, as well as poured concrete to finish the new deck.

Member for Footscray Katie Hall thanked residents for their patience.

“We thank the public for their patience during the closure of Dynon Rd while we carried out these critical works as quickly and safely as possible,” Ms Hall said.

Premier Daniel Andrews again stressed the necessity of the project.

“From Footscray to Melton, Melbourne’s west is booming. And as our suburbs grow, we’re keeping pace by building the roads Victorians need to get them home sooner and safer,” the Premier said.

Work will now begin on a new bridge over Dudley St, extending Wurundjeri Way to Dynon Rd and functioning as a city bypass that the government predicts will take 2500 cars and trucks off local streets each day. ●

# North West City Local

## From West Bali to West Melbourne

*It was in Bali in the 1970s, after a chance stopover on her way to India, that Dr Mary Ida Bagus met her husband, Agus.*

WORDS BY Edmund Coleman

Agus moved to Australia in the early 1980s and the couple have lived in West Melbourne since. “[Agus] came from West Bali, so we like West places,” joked Dr Ida Bagus.

Dr Ida Bagus, who earned her PhD in anthropology with a focus on Indonesian cultural studies, is also the matriarch of Warung Agus [Agus’s restaurant], where three generations of the Ida Bagus family serve traditional Balinese cuisine.

The pride in Dr Ida Bagus’s voice was obvious when she described to *North West City News* that the three generations were all educated in

West and North Melbourne, with her youngest grandchild currently finishing studies at the University of Melbourne.

“Her locally zoned university, that’s what [my granddaughter] said,” laughed Dr Ida Bagus. “Yep, still living in the area. Still loving it.”

When asked what she found most special about West Melbourne, Dr Ida Bagus replied, “community”.

“It’s like being in a small country town, really. It’s great because everyone kind of knows each other on the street, you know, and the kids play sports and do all sorts of things. You always know your neighbours.”

That same community has frequented Warung Agus for 34 years of patronage that has seen the restaurant brave both pandemic and a serious fire in 2022, with “generations” of regular clientele.

“The restaurant’s just nice and personable,” Dr Ida Bagus said. “If you want to have a chat, you can have a chat. If you want to talk politics, you can talk politics. If you want to talk about your holiday in Bali, do that. If you want to talk about dogs, do that.”



▲ Dr Mary Ida Bagus (second from right) with staff at Warung Agus.

Dr Ida Bagus also quipped in jest about businesses located in West Melbourne masquerading as “North Melbourne” destinations. “It’s like, if you want to be in North Melbourne, move over to North Melbourne. Be out and proud that you’re in the West,” she joked.

“[Postcode] 3003 people are very 3003.”

However, Dr Ida Bagus also lauded the “tight-knit” local business community, telling *North West City News* that the “incredible” community of traders and business owners were always looking out for each other.

When Dr Ida Bagus and her husband first opened Warung Agus she remembers people

asking, “well why God, why would you open a restaurant in the middle of nowhere?” And it’s like, ‘how is it the middle of nowhere? It’s next to the market, it’s next to the city.’”

Of the gentrification and recently constructed apartment buildings Dr Ida Bagus noted that “it’s made [the area] very busy, but it’s such a great area because it’s so walkable. You walk to the city, you walk to Carlton. You can walk anywhere.”

“Public transport is great when it’s working, but it’s very well serviced in that way. The 57-party tram’s always a bit of fun, but that’s our tram and we love it.” ●

### ENVIRONMENT

## Why compost at home?

*Composting is one of the most powerful actions an individual can take to reduce food waste, address climate change, and build healthy soil.*

Composting at home is an easy way to participate in regenerating urban soil, air, and water. By turning household food scraps and garden cuttings into compost, waste is transformed into compost that adds value, protects the environment and supports resilient communities.

### Nature’s way

Composting (the process) uses nature’s way of recycling biological material back into nutrients that is used by nature again, and again. Food turns into compost (the end product) through the work of microorganisms like bacteria, fungi and protozoa. Humans have learnt how to use this process to manage organic waste and create a valuable resource.

While putting organic waste into a compost system is wonderful, it’s half of the benefit. The

second important part of this equation is using the composted matter by applying it to soil at home or in community.

### Compost’s valuable contribution

The greatest contribution composting and compost makes, apart from managing organic waste and keeping it out of landfill, is the value it has in assisting soil maintain fertility naturally.

Soil fertility is critical for our life on earth – many civilisations have failed by not paying attention to caring for their soil.

Healthy soil meets the range of its functions in the ecosystem it occupies, such as disease protection, nutrient immobilisation, nutrient availability, decomposition of toxins, root health, root depth, water retention, aerobic conditions in soil, and improved soil structure.

Nutrients in soils are constantly used by plants, soil life and for larger cycles of earth’s nutrient exchanges. These need to be replaced for the soil to continue to support life.

Critically, fertile soils sequester carbon

By applying compost to urban soils we add the valuable nutrients for growing food; nitrogen, phosphorous; and potassium. In addition,

compost improves soil structure so that it can store nutrients and water better. This is important in an urban environment where the majority of soil is covered reducing soils ability to capture and store rainwater. Compost adds organic matter to the soil, which works to reduce erosion and provides a natural fertiliser.

### Why you are important

Composting in city and urban environments is well known, much is written about how to compost in the city with no space or with space and the various techniques there are to do it successfully. Councils have moved to provide services to facilitate managing the organic waste with the introduction of a collection service of organic waste.

If you have one-square-metre of space you can take responsibility for your own organic waste that does not come with the high carbon footprint of transportation and fossil fuel driven remote processing of your organic waste.

Neighbourhood composting bays are an option if you don’t have space at home.

Imagine if everyone who could, composted and applied the compost to soil – hundreds and thousands of carbon farmers. ●

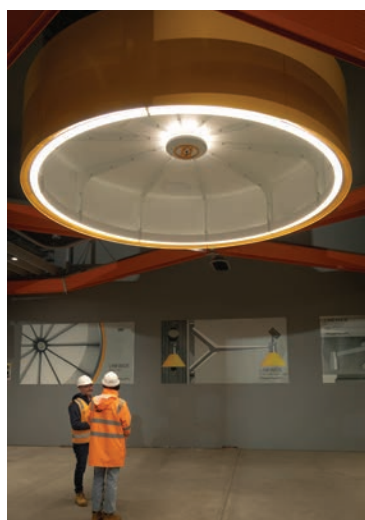


Jacqui van Heerden  
CO-CONVENER OF TRANSITION TOWN KENSINGTON  
JACQUIVANHEERDEN@GMAIL.COM

### METRO TUNNEL

## Factory in Melbourne’s west gives glimpse into Arden Station

*Stunning architectural features are being installed at Arden Station after being prototyped and tested at a mock station in Melbourne’s west.*



The warehouse, a former flower market in Footscray, houses elements from each of the underground stations – offering an insight into how the finished stations will look when they open a year ahead of schedule in 2025.

For three years teams of architects,

designers and engineers have prototyped and tested everything from ticket gates to floor finishes inside the warehouse, ensuring everything has been designed and crafted to the highest standards.

Some of the proven design elements have already been installed at Arden Station, including light fittings, ceiling systems and Victorian-first platform screen doors.

The warehouse includes a mock station concourse, ticket gates, seating, customer help points and signage light fittings.

Several of the elements being tested have been made in Melbourne, including light fittings, wall cladding, architectural brackets, and ceiling

fixtures, as part of a \$45 million investment in local manufacturing.

Construction at Arden Station is continuing at pace, with the stairs and ramps that will lead to the station’s main entrance on Laurens St finished.

Thirteen massive yellow drum lights and “cockatoo” lights, which have been custom-designed for the Metro Tunnel, have also been fitted throughout the station.

Landscaping has started and escalators and lifts to the station concourse are now in place and being tested.

Finishing touches, including ceiling baffles to conceal cabling and absorb noise, are being installed.

Train testing is continuing inside

the Metro Tunnel, with trains reaching full speed just weeks after the first test trains entered the twin tunnels.

Since the first 1.7km journey at low speed in late July, test trains are now running at 80km/h – the speed they will travel at between all five stations when the tunnel opens in 2025.

The Metro Tunnel is the first major metropolitan rail investment since the City Loop opened in 1981 and will give Victorians more connections, more choices, and faster journeys. ●

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

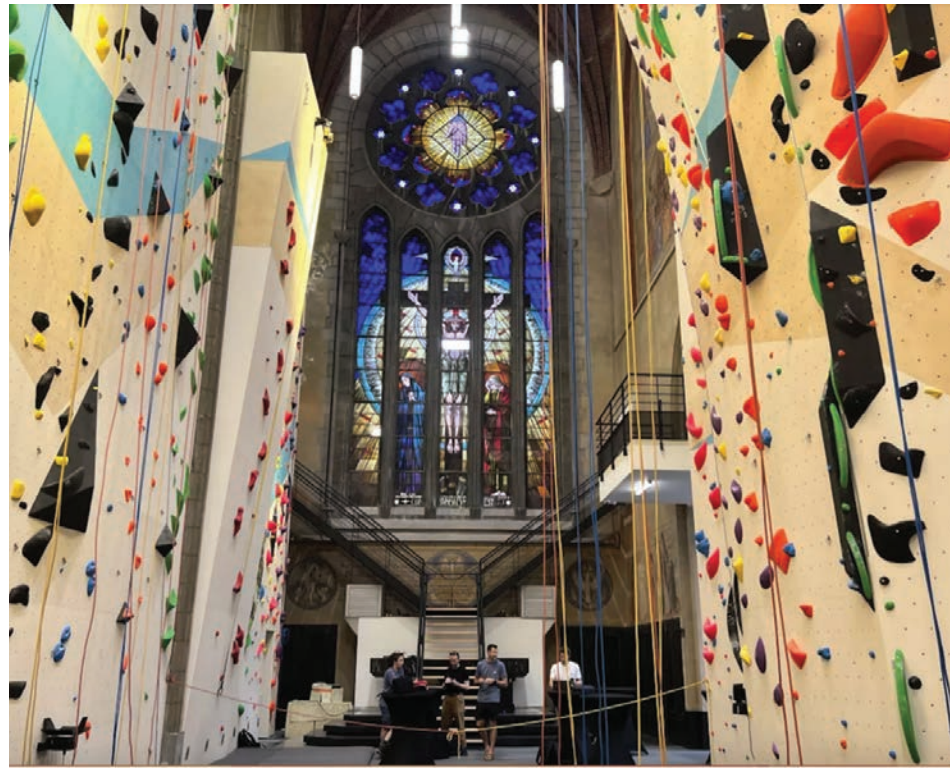
# Community cohesion

*Will the continued demise of church congregations make any difference to the general wellbeing and cohesion of our community?*

I'm reflecting on this question following on from the August Kensington Association column when I wrote that "the most recent census confirms there is steady wilting of all branches of mainstream commitment to organised religion". I then reflected on the fate of church buildings and church sponsored social services.



*By the way, look at this "repurposing" of a church in Belgium! Climbing the rocky road to heaven.*



Now it is left to church-affiliated schools to fly the flag for the faithful. They are quite successful for two main reasons:

- Parents believe (rightly or wrongly) that church schools provide something extra in terms of discipline or 'values based' education; or
- Because of some sense of "tradition". Parents might be atheist (or agnostic) and never attend church, but they might have attended a church school themselves. So, sending their children to a church school

feels somehow "safer" ... anyway it might please Grandma and Grandpa.

Community cohesion equates with the level of connection between people within the community, consequently if one avenue for connection disappears, cohesion must necessarily diminish – unless something evolves to replace it.

A careful analysis of this can become quite complex and philosophical ... perhaps too heavy and out of place in this *North West City News* column, so let's keep it simple with a few

questions.

Where do adults come together to share? The pub?

What does your family do on Sunday mornings? Sleep in? Watch TV? Play sport?

When you "share" with adult friends, what do you share? Footy talk? Family issues? Work problems? Politics?

Is the fate of your footy team a kind of "religion" for you? How much time do we (adults and young people) spend on our "devices"? Do you belong to any "clubs"? Are you active in any "organisations" outside your work?

In asking these questions, in essence I'm asking (in our post-religious-practise-lives), where, when and why do we connect with one another; or perhaps more simply, what is important, what gives us meaning in our lives?

A few years ago, I attended something called "The Weekly Service". This was a group of mainly Gen Ys who were disillusioned with mainstream religion but wanted to meet, mingle, and share. Storytelling was a big part of it, also discussion (prompted by the stories), together with some music, and shared food. I thought it was great, but it didn't last – maybe volunteer fatigue?

All this broadens the scope of my original question but doesn't answer it. What is lost (if anything) in our post-religious lives? Are our communities becoming less cohesive, and if so, is there something we can do to stem the loss? Reader feedback is welcome ... ●



*Simon Harvey*  
KENSINGTON ASSOCIATION  
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## PARKVILLE GARDENS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

### Plenty coming up in Parkville Gardens

*We've got a spring in our step here in Parkville Gardens.*

*We're gearing up for some great get-togethers.*

First up is the annual general meeting (AGM) of the Parkville Gardens Residents' Association (PGRA). All local residents are welcome.

It's a once-a-year opportunity to meet with the PGRA team and fellow residents, hear about our endeavours, and have your say about the neighbourhood.

If you're not a member yet, join up on the night and get the right to vote! You could even put your hand up to become a member of the committee – new blood is always welcome.

Come to the Reggio Calabria Club on Thursday, September 21 in time for a 6.30pm start. We aim to be well finished by 7.30pm so we can enjoy a moderately priced meal in the bistro. Come along!

Next up is our Quiz Night and Community Dinner. This will be fabulous fun – don't miss it.

It will be a great night out with neighbours and friends. The cost is minimal, thanks to our Community Events Grant from the City of Melbourne – just \$20 for friends and non-members, and even less for members, only \$15! It's a small price to pay for a lot of fun.

We'd love to see some tables of international students joining in the conviviality and the competition. It kicks off with dinner at 7pm on Thursday, October 5 at the Reggio Calabria Club.

Just one thing to note ... this is for the grown-ups. See you there!

There's more to come later in October. PGRA has been granted funding by the Victorian Education Department for a children's event on the morning of Sunday, October 29. It will be another "Amazing (not really a) Race" event that was such a success last year. Details to follow in next month's column ...

In the meantime, the first residents are about to move in to Housing First's accommodation tower at the south end of Galada Ave.

Filling the whole building is expected to take a few months. All up there'll be some 300 new people living in the neighbourhood.

Housing First will team up with the City of Melbourne to introduce them to the area. They're planning a Family Fair for the community on Saturday, October 28.

Right now, Frasers Property is conducting a Neighbourhood Survey of people living in Parkside Parkville – that's all the buildings along Cade Way and Galada Ave that back on to CityLink.

Residents who participate will go into the draw for a \$500 Prezee Gift Voucher, and for each participant Frasers will donate \$10 to the Australian Red Cross. We hope the survey will produce a wealth of information.

Note those dates: 6.30pm Thursday, September 21 for the AGM, and 7pm Thursday, October 5 for the Quiz Night and Dinner.

We look forward to your company. ●



*Tom Knowles*  
PRESIDENT  
PRESIDENT@PGRA.ORG.AU

## STATE MP

### Struggling to afford food and rent

*"I can't buy fruits, vegetables or even toilet paper."*

"My rent has risen \$400 a month."

"I haven't seen a dentist for years and have constant pain in my mouth."

"I have spent all of my savings on food and rent and now I'm facing homelessness."

These are just some of the stories that came out of a recent cost-of-living survey, from residents in Melbourne's inner city. The cost-of-living continues to soar, and Melburnians are really struggling just to make ends meet.

People shouldn't have to choose between buying food or going to the dentist and keeping a roof over their head. That's why the Greens and I are pushing the Labor Government to tackle the cost-of-living crisis.

Unfortunately, the Victorian Labor Government isn't taking the urgent actions needed to address this crisis and in some ways they're even making things worse.

The state government's budget had absolutely nothing in it for renters or public and affordable housing, and they increased the price of public transport fares to \$10 a day!

One of the biggest strains for people is soaring rent prices. A recent report showed 82 per cent of renters are experiencing rental stress. So, we've been fighting hard for a cap on the amount that rents can be increased each year. Rent caps already exist in the ACT and other countries like Spain, where they've been able to keep inflation low because of these targeted policy measures.

But at the National Cabinet recently, the Labor Government locked in unlimited rent increases, and refused to set a cap on rents or



take any other meaningful action to reduce the pressure for renters.

We need urgent action to address the problems people are facing. I don't want to see more Victorians forced into homelessness. I'll keep fighting for a society where everyone can afford the things, they need to live a good life.

Right now, we're running a survey to hear from people in our community on how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting them, and their thoughts on the sort of change that will make a real difference for everyday Victorians.

If you'd like to share your thoughts, please head to: [vicgreensmps.typeform.com/costof-living](https://vicgreensmps.typeform.com/costof-living) ●



*Ellen Sandell*  
STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE  
OFFICE@ELLENSANDELL.COM



# What's On: September 2023

## Community Calendar



THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

### KENSINGTON MARKET

Kensington Market, held monthly at the Kensington Town Hall, highlights the talent and craftsmanship of a wonderful group of inner-city makers. Now entering its eighth year, the market is well supported and is a popular monthly meeting spot.  
**Kensington Town Hall, 30-34 Bellair St Kensington**



OCTOBER 21 1PM - 7PM

### QUEENSBERRY CUP

The Queensberry Cup reflects north and west Melbourne's rich automotive history and culturally diverse neighbourhood.

Errol and Queensberry St North Melbourne  
[queensberrycup.org.au](http://queensberrycup.org.au)

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



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](mailto:healthyageing@melbourne.vic.gov.au) - **Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre (Mon)** 9328 1665, **Kensington Neighbourhood Centre (Fri)** 9376 9743



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**

SUN OCT 1, 1.05PM

### AFLW Round 5 - North Melbourne Tasmanian Kangaroos v GWS Giants

Enjoy a day out at the footy, including fun, family-friendly entertainment and food trucks. Tickets available at [ticketmaster.com.au](http://ticketmaster.com.au)  
 Free entry for children, \$10 for adults  
 Arden Street Oval, North Melbourne



SUN OCT 14, 1.05PM

### AFLW Round 7 - North Melbourne Tasmanian Kangaroos v Port Adelaide

Celebrate AFLW Indigenous Round at Arden Street Oval. Tickets available at [ticketmaster.com.au](http://ticketmaster.com.au). Free entry for children, \$10 for adults  
 Arden Street Oval, North Melbourne

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

**THE GYM MELBOURNE**  
 KICK - START YOUR FITNESS GOALS AND GET THE RESULTS YOU DESERVE!  
 Royal Children's Hospital  
 48 Flemington Road, Parkville, Vic 3052  
 P: 03 9347 7229  
 E: [info@thegymmelbourne.com.au](mailto:info@thegymmelbourne.com.au)

**ELLEN SANDELL**  
 STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE  
 (03) 9328 4637 office@ellensandell.com 146 Peel Street North Melbourne VIC 3051

## Precinct

**NORTH + WEST MELBOURNE PRECINCT ASSOCIATION**

## School

[www.haileybury.vic.edu.au](http://www.haileybury.vic.edu.au)  
  
**HAILEYBURY**  
 KESBOROUGH BRIGHTON REDBANK CITY BEIJING

## Politician

**ADAM BANDT**  
 FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MELBOURNE  
 142 Johnston Street, Fitzroy  
 (03) 9417 0772  
[adam.bandt.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:adam.bandt.mp@aph.gov.au)

**Senator Linda White**  
 YOUR VOICE IN THE AUSTRALIAN SENATE  
 Level 1, 62 Lygon Street, Carlton South VIC 3053 (03) 9639 2798  
 Senator Linda White @lindawhiteaus senatorwhite@aph.gov.au

## Real Estate

**Biggin & Scott KENSINGTON**  
 For a clear path to success  
 Kylie 0417 960 492  
 Trevor 0456 377 780

[www.sccmelb.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sccmelb.catholic.edu.au)  
 273 Victoria St, West Melbourne  
**9321 9200**  
  
**SIMONDS CATHOLIC COLLEGE**



# I'm voting

# Yes

**Sheena Watt**  
Labor MP for Northern Metropolitan

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 [Sheena-Watt](#)

 [SheenaWattMP](#)

 [SheenaWattMP](#)

 [SheenaWattMP](#)