



West Melbourne local Niall Maguire takes championing the cause of the Swift Parrot to a whole new level as he and others fight to save several native trees that the birds call home on Roden St. Photo: Hanna Komissarova.

Residents call for council to hit “pause” on greening Roden St

“In a last-ditch effort to have the City of Melbourne reconsider its Roden St greening initiative, which will see several native trees replaced, a group of local residents is calling on the council to conduct further ecological studies.”

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



Under the current proposal, work on the Greening Roden Street Project will create an additional 1000 sqms of green space by planting 43 new trees and replacing 16 damaged or deteriorating trees.

However, resident Niall Maguire believes that removing 13 Bottlebrush trees is “unnecessary” and does not respect their cultural significance. Within a week of launching a petition urging the City of Melbourne to reconsider its approach to greening the street, Mr Maguire has gathered more than 100 signatures, but works are still set to commence in the coming weeks. When developing the Roden Street Greening proposal, the City of Melbourne engaged Tree Dimensions as an independent arborist in September 2022 to conduct an arboricultural assessment of all public trees. The arborist found that many of the Bottlebrush trees have a short useful life expectancy due to their health, structural condition, and damage from sawfly larvae, concluding that removing and replacing them would improve the streetscape. However, Mr Maguire told *North West City News* that he was concerned an environmental impact statement (EIS) was not conducted and that the project should be paused to ensure the local ecosystem was not irreversibly damaged. “The proposed planting of new trees means we will get ‘small saplings’ in reality. Small saplings take time to mature,” he said. “A few new saplings were planted on

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Further support for retrofitting public housing towers as “ground lease model” confirmed

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Kensington residents concerned over sudden removal of bus stops

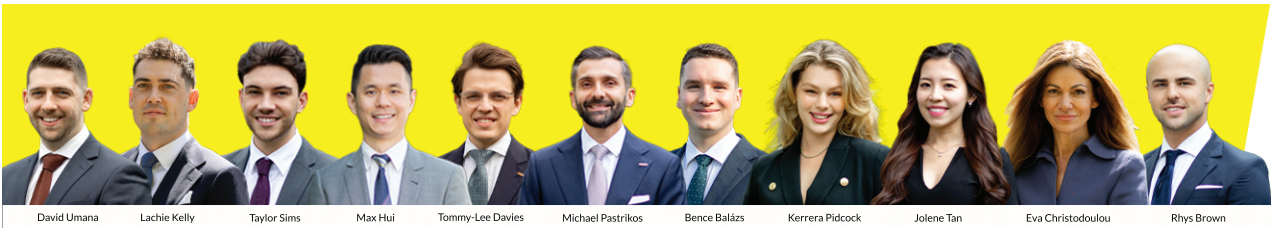
CITY NEWS



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Austro Bakery reopens in North Melbourne after summer break

North Melbourne’s beloved Austro Bakery has reopened its doors after a two-month summer hiatus, welcoming back customers with its signature pastries, cakes, and focaccia.



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Residents call for council to hit “pause” on greening Roden St

Continued from page 1.

Roden St a few years ago by the council, but they are not growing at all, and some have already died.”

Mr Maguire believes that the studies that have been conducted do not go far enough in determining the impact that the changes will have on endangered wildlife such as the Swift Parrot, suggesting that an ornithologist should be brought in to conduct further research.

Another key concern for the local activist is the planting of 10 new Chinaberry trees, a deciduous species that produces a potent insecticide containing a neurotoxin that can be harmful to dogs if ingested.

Grassroots non-profit organisation Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) has also raised concerns about the proposal, citing the trees’ significant heritage and environmental value.

“The Bottlebrush, specifically the red weeping variety known as *Callistemon*, is a culturally significant tree that holds profound importance in the traditions of First Nations peoples,” an ANTaR spokesperson said.

“The *Callistemon* plays a vital role in supporting rich biodiversity within Australian ecosystems. As a key component of local ecosystems, this tree provides essential nourishment to native birds and insects, including bees, which are drawn to the sweet, delicious nectar of its flowers.”

The City of Melbourne has confirmed that as part of its tree removal process, measures will be taken to minimise impacts on local fauna.

“If habitat structures such as hollows are found, an ecologist will assess the site



West Melbourne resident Niall Maguire is among many locals fighting to save the trees. Photo: Hanna Komissarova.

and determine how to proceed,” a City of Melbourne spokesperson said.

This means that in cases where fauna is present, tree works may be postponed to avoid disturbing animals, and alternative habitat structures such as nesting boxes may be installed nearby.

Community engagement for the project took place in 2023, with the proposal receiving support from more than 90 per cent of respondents. The project is expected to be completed by July 2025. ●

Council consults on latest parking changes in West Melbourne



West Melbourne locals have until 5pm on April 3 to have their say on the City of Melbourne’s latest suite of proposed changes as part its West Melbourne Parking Review.

Having engaged with the West Melbourne community in March and April 2024, the council says feedback received has been combined with an expert parking report by Urban Transit Solutions to develop a set of proposed changes, which include:

- Updating paid parking bays to 7am to 7pm, Monday to Sunday.
- Extending all one and two-hour metered parking bays to three-hour parking to “support a greater mix of stays”.
- Simplifying all loading zone times to 30 minutes from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Sunday.
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North & West Melbourne Precinct Association

Austro Bakery reopens in North Melbourne after summer break

“North Melbourne’s beloved Austro Bakery has reopened its doors after a two-month summer hiatus, welcoming back customers with its signature pastries, cakes, and focaccia.”

WORDS BY
GEORGIE ATKINS



Now operating just two days a week for retail, the bakery continues to focus on quality products, offering a unique selection of baked goods to its loyal clientele. Owner and trained chef, Sally Roxen, previously ran Austro Bakery’s flagship store in South Melbourne for six years, making the move to North Melbourne as part of a shift in the business’ focus. “We were quite close to the South Melbourne Market, which was just getting busier and busier. But I didn’t feel it was still our vibe,” Sally said. The decision to relocate was also influenced by the need for a larger kitchen to accommodate the bakery’s growing

wholesale operations. “The kitchen at our South Melbourne site wasn’t big enough to cope with our wholesale, so the move was a bit of a shift and refinement of the business operation – coupled with North Melbourne being a very attractive place,” Sally told *North West City News*. The North Melbourne location, previously occupied by Beatrix Bakes, came to the owner’s attention by chance. “When that (Beatrix Bakes) closed down, we recruited one of the bakers, and she mentioned that this was going to be vacant – it was a great opportunity.”

Austro Bakery specialises in laminated pastries, cakes, and focaccia, aiming to “mix things up” for regulars returning each week. Customer favourites include their signature coffee scroll and chocolate cinnamon scroll, as well as seasonal treats like Swedish Easter buns that are currently on offer. The summer break allowed the bakery to avoid the worst of the heat, which can be detrimental to delicate pastries. “We closed down for a couple of months because it’s quite a rudimentary little shop with no air conditioning and no refrigeration,” Sally said.

“We’re proud of the shop, but it gets very hot. So, we thought, let’s just take the break for January and February.” Now back in action, Austro Bakery is open on Friday and Saturday mornings, drawing a mix of loyal locals and bakery-hopping visitors. “There seems to be people doing a bit of a circuit of bakeries, which is great,” she said. Balancing wholesale production with direct customer engagement through its retail shop, Austro Bakery continues to flourish as a beloved cornerstone of the community. ●



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Royal Park stakeholders caught off-guard by council's carpark sale

Following the City of Melbourne's recent sale of its Little Collins St car park to billionaire Justin Hemmes, Lord Mayor Nick Reece hinted that the money raised would be used to fund capital works initiatives at Royal Park.

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



Cr Reece was reported in *The Age* as saying that "we are selling one asset so that we can invest in other assets ... things like new sports and aquatic centres, which are urgently needed; new sports facilities around Royal Park."

Key stakeholders and community activists who have campaigned heavily against the City of Melbourne's proposal to build new sporting fields at Royal Park were alarmed by the comments.

However, *North West City News* understands that Cr Reece has conceded he "misspoke" and was "misquoted" and that his comments referred to investments the

city had already made or had committed to making.

A City of Melbourne spokesperson confirmed that the funds from the sale of 34-60 Little Collins St would be reinvested to deliver important community infrastructure for Melbourne, but specific capital works and infrastructure projects will be

determined through the normal budget process.

The community consultation period for the draft Royal Park Master Plan closed on February 23, with the council expected to finalise and adopt the new master plan by mid-year.

Under the proposal, Lawn 7 would include

an oval, up to three rectangular fields, and amenities required to support participation in community sport. There is also another tennis court proposed for North Park Tennis Club.

In a submission made to the council at the February 4 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting, Friends of Royal Park president Kaye Oddie said Royal Park's "environmental values" should be protected and enhanced and that the park must not become a sports park.

The justification for the increase in fields is said to be due to a shortfall of around 16 ovals in the municipality. However, Ms Oddie believes that making up for a lack of sporting fields by taking away already sparse parkland is counterproductive.

"Royal Park is an iconic bushland park in the inner city," she said. "It is a place for nature and recreation, where active sports recreation is balanced with informal passive recreation."

Ashley Wallace from the Royal Park Protection Group said, "If council proceeds with this plan without revising the vision and considering alternative solutions, it will risk undermining decades of work."

"The inability to plan for an expanding population without compromising one of Melbourne's most treasured green spaces is concerning." ●

Arts House celebrates 20 years

North Melbourne's Arts House is turning 20, and it's hosting a party to celebrate, with performances and artists from the past two decades invited back on April 6 for *THE BLOWOUT*.

WORDS BY
ALEXANDRA RANDALL



2025 marks Arts House's 20th anniversary and *THE BLOWOUT* celebrates this as anyone would: with food, music, and old friends.

Featuring a sausage sizzle and DJ sets from DJ MzRizk, this event, running from 4pm to 10pm, promises to pay tribute to the bold and eclectic essence of Arts House's legacy by putting on a "wild and wonderful show".

Acting creative director Olivia Anderson told *North West City News* the vision of the party was to honour the past while looking into

the future, with the day bringing back two groups of artists familiar to Arts House.

Kicking off the day will be the group All the Queens Men, who are both hosting and performing. A format from 2007 is returning courtesy of this group, with the original curator, Bec Reid, working very closely with Tristan Meecham to bring back *180 Seconds in Heaven or Hell* – a format in which performers have three minutes to do any performance.

"It's very exciting," Ms Anderson

said, adding that artists like these were "pushing boundaries 20 years ago and a lot of them are still doing that today, which is remarkable."

The evening will be hosted by Kamarra Bell-Wykes and Carly Sheppard from A Daylight Connection, who have worked with Arts House many times over the years and will be a part of future programs.

Music, spoken word, dance and a photographic collection traversing the past 20 years of artistic

practice will all be present, transforming the evening into a celebration reflective of Arts House's vibrant past.

As a home for contemporary experimental art, the past 20 years have provided artists with a platform to be seen and heard as they experiment with their practice, with the party celebrating Arts House's incredible variety while encouraging the continuation of bold new projects for the future.

"What we really are is a function to support artists in their vision," Ms Anderson said. "We have really profiled and highlighted the voices of artists who have placed themselves at the boundaries of what is possible."

The celebration extends past the conclusion of this event, with the remainder of the year punctuated by reflections in the form of archival works dropping periodically.

"What we've got over the next six months until the end of the year, is a celebration of the last 20 years of programming," Ms Anderson said, adding that digging through the archives had been an

interesting process.

"Nothing changes but everything changes. Like the proof is there. Practice may change. Form may change. Technology will change, but the essence of experimentation, of asking big important questions. Doing it in a way that is interesting, playful, joyful. That doesn't change."

Ms Anderson's ideal for Arts House's future reflects this sentiment. She hopes the ability of the organisation to support contemporary artists does not change. The art itself, however, should always "interrogate and question"; push forwards and sit at the boundary of what has been done before.

"I hope that nothing changes, but also that everything changes," Ms Anderson said.

The entire community is invited to this event, with tickets free for children under 18. ●

For more information:
artshouse.com.au



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“Boy from the ‘burbs”: Mark Scott joins Melbourne council team

“
New councillor Mark Scott has been elected for the first time as part of Team Reece in the recent City of Melbourne election and is eager to bring his passion for learning and listening to the council.”
”

WORDS BY
GEORGIE ATKINS



While he has been “engaged with the political process” throughout his life, becoming a councillor wasn’t initially part of his plans. “When it came time to put together a team, Nick Reece and Roshena Campbell engaged with me and asked if I would like to be a part of their team,” Cr Scott told *Inner City News*. “I was quite privileged and honoured to be asked, but I had to dig deep and ask myself whether I could really put in the commitment that’s required to do the job.” With his experience as former manager of Queen Victoria Market (QVM) and owner of Ripe Cheese, Cr Scott has a first-hand understanding of the challenges small businesses face in the city. “I used to visit the QVM as a kid, like every other kid from the ‘burbs – we used to come in every other week to do our shopping and buy our ugg boots and various other things,” he said.

“I have an incredible appreciation for the challenges of running a small business, because we had to live through COVID and, of course, survive.” “I know how tough it is, especially coming out of COVID – things have changed a lot, I have huge empathy for how tough it is for small businesses. That was really a huge driver in me taking on this role, to champion small businesses, as well as residents.” For Cr Scott, addressing safety and cleanliness will be top priorities in the council’s early efforts, as well as tackling the growing mental health crisis. “A lot of the issues we have to tackle are not easy, but we’ve got to keep advocating for businesses and to government,” he said. “Getting people back into the city is definitely a priority. If you want a vibrant city, it has to feel like it’s vibrant and alive.” “Particularly when we talk about the issue of loneliness – if people are sitting at home and not engaging with anybody, those sorts of things do contribute to feeling alone. So, I think social interaction is really important, and a lot of small businesses rely on people coming back into the office.” As the council’s new head of the tourism and events portfolio, Cr Scott hopes the City of Melbourne will collaborate further to reassess major events and their financial impact on the city. For example, Cr Scott envisions a “winter solstice festival” that merges the best aspects of the city’s Firelight and Now or Never festivals. “I’ve seen first-hand the summer night market at QVM and the popularity of that, and it’s only once a week,” he said. “People will come out in winter, so I think if we can find something that helps to bridge the gap in the city, it would be a really great addition to our major events program.” As a newcomer to the council, Cr Scott



COUNCILLOR PROFILE

is committed to absorbing as much knowledge as possible over the next four years, both to improve the city and enhance his personal growth. A highlight of his time so far? Delivering a keynote speech at the Melbourne Queer Film Festival. “It was an opportunity to stand up in front of a few hundred people and deliver a speech that I wrote myself that really spoke from the heart about the importance of queer film and telling queer stories,” he said. “I’m a gay man with a husband – 13 years ago I came out, so I believe in living your authentic life and truth-telling. So, to stand up and share a bit about that, and talk about the importance of inclusivity and diversity in the city, has definitely been one of my highlights.” Though just a few months into his term, Cr Scott is already learning from his fellow councillors and City of Melbourne staff, eager to grow in the role. “I’m here for one term, so I’m going to try and do the best job I possibly can in those four years,” he told *North West City News*. “I want to make a difference and walk out of here feeling like I’m a better person.” ●

Further support for retrofitting public housing towers as "ground lease model" confirmed

Despite two studies confirming the benefits of retrofitting Melbourne’s public housing towers, the Victorian Government is pressing ahead with its demolition plan following a recent Supreme Court ruling.

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



As part of a class action on behalf of 479 public housing households, Inner Melbourne Community Legal (ICML) sought to obtain cabinet documents that could explain the reasons behind the government’s decision to demolish all 44 towers. However, at a hearing on February 10, the Supreme Court ruled that the documents were immune from disclosure and couldn’t be used in the class action lawsuit. ICML CEO Nadia Morales thanked lead plaintiff Barry Berih for taking on the responsibility of representing the group, and said the organisation would continue to support impacted residents. “This class action litigation is significant, and I acknowledge Mr Berih, the residents, the legal team involved, as well as the large group of local agencies that stood

behind us – it has been a major, collective effort,” Ms Morales said. “We are immensely proud to have been able to walk alongside this community to have their voices heard so they could have the opportunity to hold the government to account,” Morales said. On March 11, Minister for Housing Harriet Shing confirmed the redevelopment of towers in North Melbourne and Flemington would be delivered through its “innovative” ground lease model – with social housing boosted by 39 per cent across the two sites. Under this model, Homes Victoria will lease the land to a community housing organisation to finance, design, build, manage and maintain the new housing for the next 40 years, after which time the homes revert to Homes Victoria management. The land

remains under government ownership. The government said its plan would deliver “400 social homes and up to 300 affordable homes along Racecourse Rd, Flemington – as well as a further 800 homes at Alfred St, North Melbourne, including at least 300 social homes, all to be completed by 2031”. Social housing is considered an umbrella term for public and community housing, with rent typically determined at 30 per cent of income. The Supreme Court’s decision comes after a new independent report refuted the Victorian Government’s claim that knocking down and rebuilding the 44 public housing towers is the only option. The study, conducted by Nigel Bertram, an architect in practice and Professor of Architecture at

Monash University, concluded that retrofitting the towers was not only possible but also cheaper. Bertram’s research found that retrofitting could result in up to 30 per cent savings in capital costs, a significant reduction in embodied carbon emissions, and a considerably shorter construction timeframe. “We know retaining and reusing existing structures saves energy and other resources, ultimately reducing greenhouse gas emissions,” he told *North West City News*. “Across 44 buildings, this could also save around \$1.5 billion in construction costs.” The findings reaffirm those of an earlier study by Simon Robinson from OFFICE, a not-for-profit architecture and research firm, which suggested that retrofitting was “cheaper” and “less disruptive”.

Under the OFFICE proposal, the public housing towers would remain in place and be progressively retrofitted, while five mid-rise social housing buildings would be constructed in and around the towers on land currently used for car parking. Simon Robinson said that, under the proposed approach, residents would be forced to relocate, which he believes has major social and health implications. “Our study shows that this relocation can be avoided by building new dwellings in and between the towers prior to refurbishment,” Mr Robinson said. Kerrie Byrne, a public housing tenant and member of the Save Public Housing Collective, struggles to understand how people can have “confidence” in the government’s approach if it refuses to release the assessments that are believed to support the case for demolition. Currently, there are 10,000 people living across the 44 towers, but after all the sites are rebuilt, the state government has said 30,000 people are expected to be housed. However, it is reported that only 11,000 would be public housing tenants, with the remaining 19,000 residents living in a mixture of social and market housing. Because of this, according to Ms Byrne, the project cannot be regarded as a “solution” for the 60,000 households languishing on the waiting list, or for the 30,000 homeless Victorians. ●

Melbourne federal election preview: can anyone unseat Adam Bandt?

“Despite two celebrity candidates in the running and recent local voting trends favouring the Liberal Party, the leader of the Greens Adam Bandt is confident he will retain his stronghold on the seat of Melbourne in the upcoming federal election.”

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



Steph Hunt



Anthony Koutoufides



Sarah Witty



Adam Bandt

The two recent state by-elections have seen votes swing in favour of the Liberal Party, which dethroned the Greens in Prahran and narrowly trailed Labor in the historically safe seat of Werribee, where Labor suffered a 16.5 per cent swing against its primary vote.

However, despite these results at a state level and strong Liberal votes in the City of Melbourne election, the Liberals' campaign team is focused on picking up marginal seats like Aston and Chisholm, leaving the incumbent Adam Bandt confident he will be able to retain his seat.

In addition to Mr Bandt, the current candidates for Melbourne include former Carlton premiership player Anthony Koutoufides, reality TV star Tim Smith, and the Liberals' Stephanie Hunt, who has previously held advisory roles for prominent Liberal MPs.

At the eleventh hour, Labor also decided to enter the race, nominating foster parent and CEO of the Nappy Collective, Sarah Witty, in early February.

Mr Bandt, who was first elected in 2012, is looking to focus on the cost of living if re-elected, pushing for Medicare to include dental and mental health support, making public schools "genuinely free" and making housing more affordable.

"In this term of parliament, I have been working tirelessly for people in Melbourne and across the country," the Greens leader told *North West City News*. "I have pushed the government to implement the solutions

to the housing and cost-of-living crisis that will help millions of people."

He drew attention to the Greens' success in securing \$3 billion for public and community housing, securing workers the right to disconnect, stopping around half of the coal and gas projects in Labor's approval pipeline, and securing \$1.7 billion to help homes and businesses lower their energy bills.

However, Liberal candidate Stephanie Hunt, who has worked in international arbitration and litigation in both the private and public sectors, believes that not enough is being done federally to ensure that Melbourne is "back on track".

She said that café owners and restaurants in the CBD were in "a lot of pain" and that more needed to be done to ensure that small businesses received better support, citing the Liberals' tax deductions on business lunches as an important policy to provide this support.

The policy, which was dubbed the "long-lunch policy" by Treasurer Jim Chalmers, aims to cut red tape for small businesses by introducing a capped tax deduction of \$20,000 for business-related meal and entertainment expenses.

"This will be a welcome relief to small businesses experiencing the strain of Labor's cost-of-living crisis and higher taxes," Ms Hunt said.

Additionally, the Liberal Party plans to lower inflation through a reduction in

"wasteful" spending, provide Australians with an energy mix that includes renewables, gas, and nuclear, and unlock new affordable homes through investment in essential infrastructure.

A prominent Liberal Party member who wished to remain anonymous told *Inner City News* that Melbourne was not a priority for the major parties, given Mr Bandt's popularity and that federal opposition leader Peter Dutton's populist campaign strategy didn't resonate with the Melbourne voter.

They also noted that Mr Bandt had effectively engaged with voters in Melbourne, and as the leader of the Greens he was "recognisable" and people were comfortable with him representing them.

"It's more a question of what will happen after Bandt is gone," the source said, believing that leaders with a strong public image and profile were able to retain popularity within their electorates.

The seat of Melbourne was historically a safe Labor seat until Mr Bandt took the reins in 2012, but Labor candidate Sarah Witty is hoping to win the seat back.

In 2024, Ms Witty unsuccessfully ran as a Labor councillor candidate for the City of Yarra and she has since embarked on her federal tilt, with the cost of living at the top of her priorities.

She expressed dissatisfaction with Mr Bandt, believing that he has blocked "strong" policies that will benefit Australians in a difficult time, particularly the Help to Buy shared equity scheme for home ownership and Build to Rent tax incentives, which were ultimately passed with the Greens' support late last year.

"I'm personally disappointed by the fact

that he's been sitting in that seat for so long and really done nothing," she said.

If elected, Ms Witty's approach will be to actively engage with the community and ensure that the issues she campaigns for are shared by the voters in the electorate.

Another candidate whose recent dalliance with local politics has inspired their federal tilt is Carlton football legend Anthony Koutoufides, who is campaigning on easing the burden of the cost-of-living crisis, improving city safety, and combating antisemitism.

Mr Koutoufides said that he had watched Melbourne decline over the years and wanted to make the city prosper again.

His team is confident about his chances, noting that the redistribution of the electorate of Higgins will favour a "strong" independent candidate like Mr Koutoufides, with the traditionally more conservative suburbs of Prahran and South Yarra now part of the electorate.

Additionally, in the north, Clifton Hill is now part of Cooper, while Brunswick East, Carlton North, and Fitzroy North are part of Wills, which are historically Green suburbs.

Mr Koutoufides isn't the only celebrity in the running this time around, with Married at First Sight contestant Tim Smith also announcing his candidacy.

Mr Smith was contacted for comment but did not respond. However, on social media, he said, "I've officially thrown my hat into the ring to run for parliament for the city of Melbourne for the upcoming federal election."

North West City News will bring readers more of each candidate's plans for Melbourne ahead of the election. ●

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Delivery of Hawke Street Linear Park pushed back

Despite the City of Melbourne aiming to commence work on the Hawke Street Linear Park in 2024, the project delivery has been stymied by “complexities” posed by the West Gate Tunnel Project.

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



The proposed park seeks to mitigate the increased vehicle flow from the tunnel project, improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity through building separated cycle lanes, and green the entire length of Hawke St.

North West City News previously reported that construction for the park was meant to begin at the start of last year, following multiple rounds of community consultation and workshops since April 2021.

However, it is understood that further planning and more detailed traffic analysis is being conducted to help the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) better understand traffic impacts on Hawke St and Spencer St.

Since the final concept design was approved by the City of Melbourne in May 2023, detailed design work has been undertaken by the council and the state government. The project is now expected to be delivered by the end of this year.

It is being funded as a part of the West Gate Tunnel Project’s \$100 million Transport and Amenity Program (TAP) which aims to mitigate the impact of new road projects on North and West Melbourne and Docklands.

As a part of the program, \$32 million has already been allocated for two key projects: upgrading the shared user path on Dynon Rd for pedestrians and cyclists, and streetscape improvements on Franklin St in the CBD.

The new Dynon Rd shared user path will make it safer for cyclists and pedestrians travelling between North Melbourne and Footscray by removing dangerous spots along the current path and improving connections between the two areas.

Additionally, work has begun on Franklin St to provide more than 1250 sqm of new green space and major streetscape upgrades will also improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure between Swanston St and Peel St. ●



Kensington residents concerned over sudden removal of bus stops

Kensington residents have been left frustrated after the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) removed five bus stops along Kensington Rd without prior consultation, an action which came into effect on February 23.

WORDS BY
GEORGIE ATKINS



Rosemary Hill, a long-time Kensington resident, expressed her concerns about the disruption caused to her and others in the neighbourhood by the removal of the Route 402 bus stops.

“I was just really upset and angry,” Rosemary said.

Rosemary spoke with North West City News about how the changes, with “no warning”, left her rushing to catch the bus in poor weather.

“It was pouring rain, and I had to go all the way up to the top of the hill and nearly missed the bus,” she said.

“I kept looking back, but they come from out of sight, and it’s impossible. It was just very stressful.”

Rosemary, who relies on public transport to get to appointments and visit family, also highlighted other practical challenges posed by the changes.

“Catching the bus is the most convenient way to get to the market, and for people who want to go to the hospital or want to go to Carlton. It just doesn’t make any sense,” she said.

The DTP has assured the public that the changes will not impact bus frequency or timetables, however Rosemary says conversations with other residents suggested the removals have led to longer waits and increased crowding.

“A girl I spoke to one day said she’d been

waiting 20 minutes for a bus. This is happening ever since they changed the bus stop,” Rosemary told North West City News.

The DTP explained that the bus stop removals were part of a broader effort to streamline public transport and support the opening of the new Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation Centre in mid-2025.

The remaining bus stop at Altona St and Kensington Rd will continue to provide access to the centre.

The DTP website states that the removal of some bus stops was intended to prevent “slower journey times on Route 402 and unnecessary stops for all road users on Kensington Rd.”

However, many locals feel the decision overlooks the needs of everyday commuters, with Rosemary pointing out that even bus drivers disagree with the reasoning provided.

“The bus drivers say traffic along Kensington Rd doesn’t make a difference to their journey times. The issue is mainly in Macauley Rd with all those level crossing and building construction works,” she said.

“It seems like all they cared about is this new sports centre that’s about to open. They don’t care about the residents who actually live in Kensington, who actually use those bus services to go other places.”

State MP Ellen Sandell has encouraged residents to “speak up” about the issue, with Kensington Banks already being an “underserved” part of the Melbourne public transport system.

“Removing these stops with no consultation and no warning is hugely unfair and will especially affect older people, people with young kids, and people with disabilities who may not be able to easily walk to the next stop, even if it’s only a few hundred metres away,” Ms Sandell told North West City News.

“It’s not right that the Government can close bus stops like this with no consultation, it’s important they hear your voice, and that the community asks for these stops to be re-instated.” ●

Government responds to flood inquiry

The Victorian Government has responded to each of the 73 recommendations contained in the final report on the state-wide floods in October 2022, which was handed down by a Parliamentary Inquiry.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Following heavy rainfall in October 2022, major floods affected 63 of Victoria’s 79 municipalities, including local communities living along the Maribyrnong River.

Among those were residents living in Kensington Banks, where the extent of damage was widely considered to have been exacerbated by Flemington Racecourse’s controversial 1.6-kilometre flood wall built in 2007.

An Independent Panel’s final assessment of the flood wall found it contributed to an increase in flood extent across the catchment of one per cent and that the mitigation works put in place to offset its impact didn’t perform as well as expected.

The government has supported 16 of the report’s recommendations in full, 43 in principle and six in part. It hasn’t supported a further two of the recommendations and the remaining six are under review.

The inquiry investigated and made findings and recommendations relating to flood governance arrangements, planning and flood risk, mitigation infrastructure, emergency warnings, resourcing and response of the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES), as well as flood relief and recovery.

The government also supported, “in full”, recommendation 32: “That the efficacy and impact of the Flemington Racecourse flood wall be considered as part of Melbourne Water’s review of mitigation in the Maribyrnong River catchment announced following the updated flood modelling.”

It said that Melbourne Water was now incorporating an examination of the flood wall mitigation into its broader investigation of potential mitigation options across the catchment.

“The mitigation study has progressed through a comprehensive procurement process which is now complete, and a consultant has been appointed,” the government said. “The study will identify the most feasible solutions for riverine flood hazards,” adding that community and stakeholders would be invited to participate in the “development and assessment of options.” ●

River Nile School to host inaugural Harmony Block Party

The River Nile School (RNS) will host its first-ever Harmony Block Party on April 3 from 2pm to 6pm, a festive celebration of Harmony Day that aims to unite the community and showcase the incredible talents and resilience of refugee and asylum seeker youth.

WORDS BY
GEORGIE ATKINS



Taking place in the school’s parking lot in North Melbourne, the event will offer a vibrant mix of performances, art, food, and community activities.

“The school has historically done something internal for Harmony Day, but we wanted to do something bigger to celebrate

Cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Week,” engagement coordinator at RNS Francine Sculli told North West City News.

The Harmony Block Party will feature a variety of performances including from students at RNS, as well as young people from refugee backgrounds who will have the

opportunity to showcase their talents.

“We’re also encouraging other young people from refugee backgrounds to perform and be paid if they’ve got a talent they want to share,” Ms Sculli said.

“We’re that space for them to own it and express themselves.”

Food will also play a central role in the celebration, with delicious dishes from refugee-owned businesses.

“We have the amazing Hamida making Somali treats, and Ahia, a graduate of the Free to Feed program, will be bringing her Palestinian food truck,” Ms Sculli shared.

“It’s a great opportunity to support these incredible food entrepreneurs.”

Community organisations will also be on hand to run activities, including a basketball competition organised by Foundation House, and art therapy sessions.

“We’ve got The Huddle coming down, Foundation House running a basketball comp, and an art therapist doing some amazing activities,” she said.

“We’ve also got 3CR Community Radio

coming to do some interviews and connect with people. It’s going to be a fun and energetic day.”

The event is free to attend (with your wallet only needed to enjoy the delicious global flavours on offer) and stands as a testament to the school’s strong commitment to cultural diversity and inclusivity.

Ms Sculli encourages the community to join in the celebration and contribute in any way they can, whether by donating time to help set up or providing resources like decorations.

“We want to create a space where these young people feel seen and heard, and I think the community coming out and showing allyship will be really powerful,” she said.

“The sense of community in this school is just something I haven’t experienced in any school before. The way that the girls wrap around newcomers, and that cultural awareness, protection, sense of safety, and belonging – it’s something so special that I haven’t felt anywhere else.” ●



MELBOURNE'S NEWEST PARK AND PLAYGROUND

Bedford Street Pocket Park

Residents can now enjoy nature closer to home at the new Bedford Street Pocket Park in North Melbourne.

Two small green areas on the corner of Bedford and Courtney Streets have been transformed into one bigger and better park.

The new park features:

- 1,500 sqm of open space
- native plants and trees
- nature-inspired playground
- table tennis table
- barbeque and picnic areas.



Enjoy a tranquil nature walk

The new park will bring an abundance of biodiversity and help keep inner urban neighbourhoods cool.

A great new spot to unwind and enjoy the last of the warmer weeks.

This project was supported by the Victorian Government through the Suburban Parks Program.

For more information, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/bedford-street-pocket-park



Welcoming our international students

WELCOMING NEW STUDENTS

The City of Melbourne offers many programs to help international students feel at home.

- Join us at Lord Mayor's Student Welcome on Wednesday 12 March 2025 at the Summer Night Market live music stage at Queen Victoria Market from 5.30pm.
- Drop in at The Couch International Student Centre to make friends, learn new skills, enjoy free cooked meals and more.
- Get involved with My Melbourne for outings, behind-the-scenes tours, giveaways and more.

Find out more at melbourne.vic.gov.au

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKING REVIEWS

We are reviewing and updating on-street parking across the municipality. Tell us how parking and kerbside space could work better in your neighbourhood.

Have your say at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/neighbourhood-parking-reviews



Queen Victoria Market

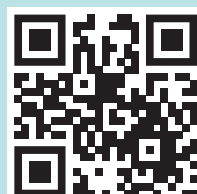
OUT AND ABOUT GUIDE

Discover free or low-cost activities and support for older people in the Out and About Guide 2025. Find local programs, events and services, and access healthy ageing support in the City of Melbourne. Pick up a free copy at your local library, neighbourhood centre or community hub, or read online at melbourne.vic.gov.au/outandabout



Makerspace pop-up

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A nature-inspired playground offers something for the whole family

Council “actively engaging” with ACCC after Citywide sale blocked

City of Melbourne CEO Alison Leighton says the City is still in active discussions with Australia’s consumer watchdog after it blocked the council’s sale of Citywide to private waste management giant Cleanaway late last year.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



In June last year the council made the surprise announcement that it was selling Citywide, and that ASX-listed Cleanaway had been “chosen as the best operator to deliver world-class waste collection services.”

The deal included Cleanaway’s \$110 million purchase of Citywide’s waste and recycling business and assets, as well as a \$35 million investment to redevelop the ageing waste transfer station at Dynon Rd in West Melbourne. The redevelopment was to be boosted by a further \$10 million from the council.

But with the sale subject to regulatory approval, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) in November said that the “proposed acquisition of Citywide Waste raises concerns”.

“We are concerned that the acquisition will extend Cleanaway’s already strong position in Melbourne by expanding

Cleanaway’s existing network of waste disposal facilities”, ACCC Commissioner Dr Philip Williams said.

“Our preliminary view is that the proposed acquisition would remove the close competitive tension between Cleanaway’s and Citywide Waste’s waste disposal facilities, particularly in the central and west regions of metropolitan Melbourne.”

“We are concerned that the expansion of Cleanaway’s waste disposal network may enable Cleanaway to charge downstream collection providers higher prices and reduce service quality.”

“Rival waste collectors, particularly commercial and industrial collectors, require access to waste disposal facilities at competitive rates, and competitive service levels, to compete effectively for customers.”

During public question time at the February 18 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting, former City of Melbourne

councillor and shareholder activist Stephen Mayne asked the council how it had signed the deal without any public consultation or disclosure.

With Citywide, which is chaired by former Premier John Brumby, having recorded a near \$8 million loss during the 2023/24 financial year, Mr Mayne asked the council whether this was the reason behind the sale of its “crown jewels”.

“It looks like you’ve suffered an unprecedented loss, and you’ve decided to sell off the crown jewels,” Mr Mayne said. “What’s happening with the deal and why did you do it so secretly?”

The council’s CEO Alison Leighton responded by saying that the matter was still under active consideration by the ACCC after it released a statement of issues with the sale in November.

“There is an active dialogue taking place right at the moment between the City of Melbourne and also Cleanway in relation

to their [the ACCC’s] assessment of the proposed transaction,” Ms Leighton said.

“It’s fair to say that given that there was a very significant degree of commercial-in-confidence information in relation to the process that council undertook to assess its options and to engage with the market around potential bidders ... meant that it was appropriate that it was a confidential consideration.”

“As soon as there was an ability to make a statement to the public around council’s intention, that was done.”

But Mr Mayne said after his efforts to sell Citywide during his time as the council’s finance chair had fallen on deaf ears, “I fell off my chair when they just announced a done deal with no public consultation and no advertising process.”

“I thought it was a very untransparent process. Really shocking,” Mr Mayne told Ali Moore’s ABC Drive program on February 20. “Then the ACCC comes out and said ‘no ... you’re creating a monopoly, and everyone’s prices are going to go up.’”

“Why are you [the council] doing this deal if you’re going to put everyone’s prices up just because you’re embarrassed you’ve lost \$8 million?”

Citywide is a wholly owned subsidiary of the City of Melbourne, which established the business in 1995 after then Premier Jeff Kennett implemented compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) to force local governments to compete for contracts.

Having invited public submissions on its statement of issues until November 28, the ACCC originally said that it expected to publicly announce its final view by February 13 but that this “timeline may change”. ●

"A complete rethink": Calls for state government to return to E-Gate

With construction of the West Gate Tunnel Project nearing an end, calls are reemerging for the state government to revisit urban renewal in E-Gate to address critical shortfalls in housing, schools and open space.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



E-Gate, a 20-hectare parcel of government-owned land just north of Docklands abutting Footscray Rd between Dudley St and Moonee Ponds Creek, has been long earmarked to house more than 10,000 new residents.

But in the words of RMIT University Emeritus Professor Environment and Planning, Michael Buxton, original visions for the precinct have been just about “torpedoed” by the West Gate Tunnel Project’s (WGTP) Wurundjeri Way extension into Docklands.

Speaking with Docklands News in February, Prof. Buxton said with the toll road project affecting around 30 per cent of land in E-Gate, the government had substantially reduced its attractiveness and viability as an urban renewal project.

However he also said that with growing pressures on housing, open space and education in the inner-city, the site presented the

government with an opportunity to make up for past planning failures and give something back to the community.

In February, Docklands News reported that long-held hopes for a desperately needed secondary school to be established at the Costco building in Docklands had been dashed, with a pathology company understood to have purchased the site.

The government has also yet to allocate land in Arden for new schools despite opening new campuses for Docklands Primary School and University High in The District Docklands and a CBD office building, respectively.

Also in February, sibling publication North West City News reported on the debate surrounding the City of Melbourne’s draft master plan for Royal Park, with sporting groups pushing for more playing space in the municipality.

Speaking at the February 4 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, a council officer said that according to the state’s sporting association ratios, the city was a

long way behind in its provision of sports facilities.

Prof. Buxton said that given the impacts of the WGTP on E-Gate, the government should “completely reexamine the type of land uses” in the precinct so it could cater for more desperately needed community infrastructure.

“E-Gate needs a complete rethink,” Prof. Buxton told Docklands News.

“We need more open space for every use – both active and passive. E-Gate is an opportunity for the government to provide that and completely reexamine and reimagine its use.”

“It could turn it into an advantage despite the fact that the road has had such an impact, but it’s going to take imagination.”

Past visions for E-Gate have included maximising its potential for providing new open space connected to the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor, as well as “high-quality ecologically orientated residential development linked to public transport.”

Strategically, its activation has also largely been seen as a “critical connection” for Docklands and North and West Melbourne – potential Prof. Buxton said had been “severely reduced” by the Wurundjeri Way extension.

In its 2017 submission to the WGTP’s environmental effects statement, the City of Melbourne opposed the design of the extension due to its impact on Moonee Ponds Creek and the loss of connectivity between Docklands and West Melbourne.

A City of Melbourne

spokesperson said as per its draft Municipal Planning Strategy, which was publicly exhibited last year, it still saw the potential for E-Gate to be “a world-leading sustainable and affordable mixed-use neighbourhood.”

The council is currently considering submissions made to its proposed strategy, which aims to support the potential long-term renewal of E-Gate with connections to Docklands, Arden, West Melbourne and Dynon.

Having fought against the WGTP, Victorian Greens leader and Melbourne MP Ellen Sandell said she was worried that an opportunity had been lost to develop E-Gate with sustainable, well-designed housing, with good facilities and open space.

“E-Gate is just one kilometre from the city. It should be used to build sustainable, good-quality housing for thousands of people. It’s a complete waste to use this land for a zigzag of toll road on and off ramps,” Ms Sandell said.

“I hope Labor will finally get some vision and put this back on the agenda but given Labor’s record I’m not holding my breath!”

Prof. Buxton is equally as pessimistic about E-Gate’s chances, but says it nevertheless presents an opportunity for the government to do something for the good of Melbourne by reengaging with what the community needs.

However, he believes the government must get over its “addiction” for “poorly planned growth” to achieve this.

“This is a government that specialises in substandard master

plan precincts,” Prof. Buxton said. “The Arden model illustrates this, and it will probably be followed again at E-Gate.”

“What we don’t need in Melbourne is another failed brownfield precinct where everything possible that the government can think of is crammed in.”

“Amenity is everything for these sites to work ... Docklands perfectly illustrates that where too many people have been crammed in without the expected services and particularly open space.”

“That’s put immense pressure on existing services and highlights a lack of open space, so the government really has an opportunity to make up for that failure and provision of services with E-Gate.”

Docklands News contacted the state government for comment, but it was unable to respond by deadline.

But in its latest statewide housing targets, it has forecast more than 120,000 new homes to be built in the City of Melbourne by 2051.

In its 2024 submission to the government’s Plan for Victoria, which will be released soon, the council said one of its “great comparative advantages” was “the enormous extent of brownfields development sites”.

These include Arden and Fishermans Bend, currently being developed, as well as E-Gate and Dynon, whereby the council noted “planning has not commenced, but which needs to balance housing delivery with employment and economic development”. ●

Your forever home awaits in the heart of Melbourne

640 Bourke Street is the quintessential Melbourne address, where heritage and modernity converge in a landmark development designed for contemporary living.

Anchored by the historic Eliza Tinsley building, an elegantly sculpted 68-storey tower rises, offering a refined collection of one-, two- and three-bedroom residences that speak to Melbourne's timeless character.

Designed by Rothelowman, each residence is purposefully crafted with generous floor plans, curated finishes, and an intelligent approach to spatial design. Inspired by the best in global apartment living, these homes offer a rare level of sophistication, balancing functionality with an eclectic design aesthetic. From the reimagined kitchen island and dining table to intricate art deco-inspired tiling, every detail has been considered.

Across 3000 square metres of amenities, residents can curate their own daily rhythm. The Social House fosters connection with a whisky lounge, billiard room,

and discreet speakeasy, while The Wellness House offers a fully equipped gym and restorative bathhouse. For select residents, Eliza Tinsley House provides an intimate retreat, complete with a cinema, art therapy room, and mindfulness lounge.

At street level, a new public plaza and boutique retail precinct create a vibrant city hub. Moreover, 640 Bourke Street offers breathtaking views of the city, with higher floors providing unobstructed panoramas of Melbourne's skyline, Port Phillip Bay, and beyond.

Positioned in the heart of Melbourne's most storied boulevard, residents are steps from Flagstaff Gardens, Queen Victoria Market, luxury shopping, and iconic laneways. With tram and train connectivity at the doorstep and arterial routes nearby, the entire city is within easy reach.

With residences from \$640,000 to \$3,950,000 and off-the-plan stamp duty savings available until October 2025, 640 Bourke Street presents a rare opportunity to secure a forever home in the heart of Melbourne. The Display Gallery opens late February, offering an exclusive preview before construction begins.

640bourkest.com.au •



Bobbie Peels launches weekly run club in North Melbourne

North Melbourne's beloved pub Bobbie Peels has launched an exciting initiative aimed at bringing the community together in a fun and unique way.

Every Wednesday at 5.45pm, the Bobbie Peels Run Club meets at the pub's parklet at Queensberry St for a casual four- to five-kilometre run through the streets of North Melbourne, finishing at the serene Royal Park.

"We've been working hard to build a stronger community here in North Melbourne, and the Run Club is one of our most exciting initiatives," Bethany Hepburn from Bobbie Peels said.

After the run, participants can cool down with a refreshing drink, either a beer, cider, or wine, provided by local partners Kaiju! Beer and Ricca Terra Wines.

Inspired by the recent surge in running culture, including the sold-out Melbourne Marathon, Bobbie Peels wanted to create an inclusive space for all fitness levels.



"Our group is open to everyone, whether you're just starting your fitness journey or you're a seasoned marathoner," Bethany told North West City News.

Phil Gjisbers, co-owner of Bobbie Peels and a marathon and ultra-marathon runner, is passionate about promoting running as a way to build community.

"We have people who walk a bit, jog a bit, have a chat, push a pram, run with a dog – a bit of everything," he said.

The run club is entirely free, including the post-run drink. Runners also receive 10 per cent off their dinner at the pub, making it the perfect midweek reward after a fun fitness session. •

Residents call for vacant site to be turned into open space

West Melbourne residents are calling for the City of Melbourne to purchase an undeveloped local site to create new green space.

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



The site, located at 127-153 Stanley St, West Melbourne, backs onto Rosslyn St and has already been partially developed, with townhouses built by Goldnest Constructions on the Rosslyn St side.

However, West Melbourne resident Gemma Gooding said that

the development had been completed to a very low standard and that the remaining vacant space on the site had the potential to be purchased by the council and developed into open space.

Currently, the planning permit for stage 2 of the site was due to expire by June 2025, and the company that constructed the townhouses has been deregistered by ASIC.

"By the council purchasing part of the remaining site, this could become a pocket park," Ms Gooding told North West City News.

"A trial could be undertaken, given the site has been vacant for so long, with the owner's agreement."

North West City News contacted the City of Melbourne for comment. •

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TOGETHER WE'VE ACHIEVED:

- ⚡ \$13 billion for clean energy
- 🏠 \$3.5 billion for public and community housing
- + Dental into Medicare for kids



Emissions by the richest people are accelerating climate breakdown

One hour of emissions from Australian billionaires’ super yachts and private jets equals what an average Australian emits in an entire year.

For the first time a report titled *Carbon Inequality Kills* by Oxfam tracks the emissions from private jets, yachts and polluting investments and makes it very clear that the super-rich are fuelling inequality, hunger and death across the world.

Climate change is a leading cause of the steep rise in global hunger as it damages crop yields. The emissions of the richest one per cent have caused crop losses that could have provided enough calories to feed 14.5 million people a year between 1990 and 2023. This will rise to 46 million people annually between 2023 and 2050.

Seventy-eight per cent of excess deaths due to heat through 2120 will occur in low- and lower-middle-income countries. The analysis shows that just four years (2015 to 2019) of the consumption emissions of the world’s richest one per cent will be enough to cause 1.5 million excess deaths between 2020 and 2120. That is higher than the current annual death toll due to natural disasters.

The emissions of the richest one per cent have caused global economic output to drop by \$2.9 trillion since 1990. The biggest impact will be in countries least responsible for climate breakdown.

It signals that climate breakdown cannot be avoided without urgent action being taken to dramatically change the consumption and investment habits of the richest people.

The super rich lifestyles emissions dwarf those of ordinary people.

We ride our bikes, repair our clothes, use public transport, limit our car usage and air travel, grow our own food, buy second hand, invest ethically, donate to various hunger/ climate charities – yet nothing of this makes



any difference when the richest people in the country and the world travel around in their private jets, yachts and invest in polluting industries.

Are the super-wealthy willing to curb their polluting behaviour when they now know their impact?

Governments must step up to play the role they were appointed for which is to care for the majority of citizens in the country and actively introduce measures and policy to reduce the emissions of the richest, make rich polluters pay and create, and reimagine our economies and societies to deliver wellbeing and planetary flourishing.

The report suggests emission reductions for the super-rich and appropriate progressive taxes to curb their excessive consumption and investments emissions. This may go a small way to fix the damage they have caused.

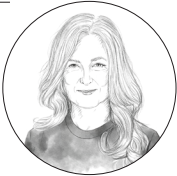
Oxfam estimates that the Global North owes the Global South a climate debt of \$5 trillion between 2025 and 2050 to compensate for their past exploitation of nature and people.

For more detail about the report visit Oxfam’s website. ●

Jacqui van Heerden

CO-CONVENER OF TRANSITION TOWN KENSINGTON

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West Melbourne: A Sense of Place

This is the title of the forthcoming publication of the Hotham History Project – an anthology providing glimpses of the evolving history of West Melbourne from pre-colonial times.

WORDS BY FELICITY JACK



It tells the story of the area and many of its diverse residents, their homes and lifestyles, and traces how the area has changed over many years.

It is written in three parts: Prehistory and Early Development; People and Houses of Nineteenth Century West Melbourne; and Twentieth Century Voices.

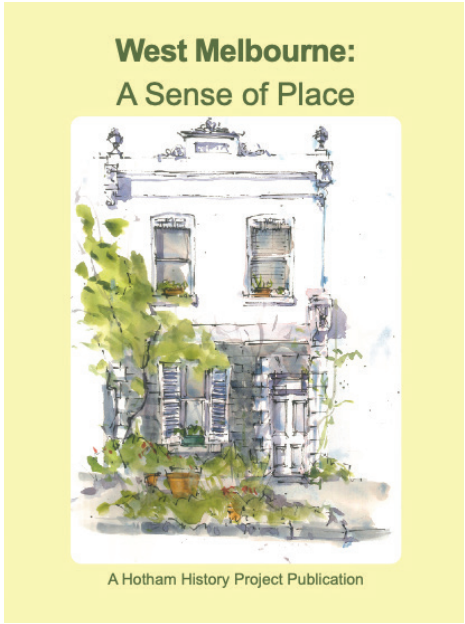
The first chapters of the book describe the area as it was before European settlement: its geology, flora and fauna, and its people.

A chapter by Dr Gary Presland, Pre-European West Melbourne: People, gives a brief but excellent description of the Indigenous residents of the area and their culture. These were the Wurundjeri clan of the Woiwurrung language group as well as other members of the Kulin nation.

The part of West Melbourne now covered by the Docklands, Coode Island, and the ever-spreading industrial development, was first described in February 1803 by Charles Grimes: “the lagoon ... is in a large swamp between two rivers; fine grass, fit to mow; not a bush in it”. It was home to many Indigenous people.

The Indigenous clan groups who populated this part of Victoria used the lagoon as a huge gathering place for many ceremonial occasions as well as for arranging practicalities such as marriages and the management of disputes, with a particular emphasis on trade, conducted through rigidly observed protocols and procedures.

The later chapters trace West



Melbourne’s early years of development as a settlement that soon became a part of a great city. Angela Williams, a local artist, has donated several beautiful watercolours of the houses that have been written about including the one on the front cover.

West Melbourne: A Sense of Place comprises 26 chapters written by 23 contributors. The authors include several academics, people with close connections to the area through their families or other interests, and people who have lived here for varying amounts of time, but who share reminiscences of living in the area as young children.

Books can be purchased through the Hotham History Project website for \$39.95. hothamhistory.org.au ●



The new heart of the CBD: Town Hall Station concourse revealed

Melbourne’s stunning “square under a square” has been revealed, with new images of the Metro Tunnel’s Town Hall Station taking shape directly under the City Square.

The station’s generous 18-metre-wide concourse will be an extension of City Square as a public gathering space, with shops and cafes, free for the public to access without a myki.

The main entrance near Collins St has five escalators leading passengers down into the magnificent two-tiered concourse, reminiscent of grand arrivals halls.

The concourse’s signature feature – eight soaring concrete and steel columns, branching out overhead to support the station roof – has been installed, in a feat of engineering deep below the heart of the CBD.

Despite the incredibly challenging logistics of building a train station up to 35 metres deep below the centre of the city, work is progressing well on the station, with



crews continuing to fit out the concourse and platforms.

Rather than opening a massive hole across an entire block on Swanston St – which would have brought this busy part of the city to a standstill – Town Hall Station has been built using deep shafts at either side of the site.

This construction equivalent of keyhole

surgery has allowed the project team to bring workers and equipment in and out of site, while Swanston St remained open to trams, cyclists and pedestrians.

When construction is finished, City Square will be returned to the public as an open space for events and to gather, with landscaping, seating, art and a permanent Smoking Ceremony dish.

Elsewhere around Town Hall Station, works are pressing ahead at Federation Square – with removal of the massive acoustic shed now well under way.

Sections of Flinders St eastbound and westbound between Elizabeth and Russell streets are closed for major work on these station entrances, with detours in place for drivers.

The state-of-the-art station will be a new gateway to some of Melbourne’s most popular destinations and landmarks including Federation Square, Birrarung Marr, Southbank, St Paul’s Cathedral and Melbourne Town Hall.

The Metro Tunnel will free up space in the City Loop by creating a new end-to-end rail line from Sunbury in the north-west to Cranbourne and Pakenham in the south-east – via a new tunnel under the city.

With construction on the first three new stations finished last year, work is continuing at pace on the final two stations – Town Hall and State Library.

The Metro Tunnel is the biggest upgrade of Melbourne’s train network since the City Loop opened in 1981 and will transform the way people move around the city. ●

NWMPA: nurturing North and West Melbourne's growth

“

At Hyperlocal News (publisher of *North West City News*), we've had the privilege of observing North and West Melbourne's steady rise, and much of that story owes a debt to the North & West Melbourne Precinct Association (NWMPA).

”



Over the past four years, this volunteer-led group has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to support our local business community. For those considering investment in the area, joining the NWMPA offers a chance to play a part in a shared effort to make North and West Melbourne a better place to trade, while connecting with businesses that share a determination to see the precinct thrive.

The NWMPA has gently shaped the area's identity with efforts like the "Live, Love, North and West Melbourne" campaign, which shines a spotlight on our arts, dining, and cultural treasures. The initiative not only celebrates these local features but also encourages residents to shop locally, with the iconic grocery tote serving as a symbol of this effort.

In a further demonstration of its commitment to both community engagement and local business support, over the past four years, the association sponsored seasonal

events including the Queensberry Cup, North Melbourne Primary School Fete, and various festive activations. These sponsorships, along with the use of the gift card program, helped drive more than \$50,000 in local spending, directly circulating funds within member businesses. This approach not only supports popular community events but also reinforces the NWMPA's dedication to fostering both cultural vibrancy and economic sustainability locally.

The NWMPA team has put in considerable effort to showcase the diverse range of businesses within the precinct. Through carefully crafted *Trader Profile* newsletters, it has spotlighted more than 100 member businesses, blending professional photography with engaging storytelling to promote them and enhance their online presence. Members receive top-notch images for their own use and are featured on the association's website at northwestmelbourne.com.au.

With robust SEO backing, the site helps direct visitors to their doors, providing a practical lift to their visibility. It's a simple yet effective way to help businesses reach new customers, making the precinct that much more noticeable to investors.

The NWMPA has a strong online presence, including a comprehensive website featuring a regularly updated "What's On" calendar and active social media channels, which are a handy resource for locals and visitors alike. Last year, we were pleased to work with them on *The North & West Melbourne Directory* local printed guide, shared with the Melbourne Visitors Centre and four neighbouring suburbs. It's been a great success, drawing new faces to the area and reinforcing its charm – a subtle signal of the precinct's potential for those with an eye on the future.

The association also brings the community together through events like the Irregular Festival during Melbourne Design Week 2024. It was a celebration of local ideas and talent, encouraging collaboration and sparking ideas that could benefit the area. Seeing members like Manze, Lumen, Bread Club, and Whitebark step up with unique food offerings, Willows and Wine & Twang Brewery manage a welcoming festival bar, and Mörk Chocolate share delicious, sweet treats. It was a gentle reminder of what a connected community can achieve.

Adding a touch of character to the precinct, the NWMPA teamed up with the City of Melbourne to commission Blender Studios to create a mural on the corner of Errol and Queensberry streets. What began as a simple wall is now a striking public art piece, dressed in beautiful graphics – a

quiet nod to the area's creative spirit.

For those running businesses or considering investment, NWMPA membership offers practical support. The association organises networking opportunities – think social media training with The Digital Picnic, coffee cupping with Small Batch Roastery, design events, or mental health workshops – all aimed at helping traders grow together. Soon, members can enjoy extras like painting and collage workshops with Creative Spaces artists Sarah and Parul, or free CorePlus classes – reformer Pilates, hot mat Pilates, or yoga.

Looking ahead, the NWMPA hopes to strengthen its ties with the City of Melbourne, keeping the precinct's economy and appeal on a steady path. Membership contributions support these efforts – funding events, small improvements, and promotion that make North and West Melbourne worth a closer look. With its diversity, honest business community, local pride, arts, and food, this precinct has a lot to offer, and the NWMPA's quiet work helps it shine.

We'd encourage businesses to consider renewing their membership and joining this journey. The NWMPA's progress shows what a collective effort can do for our local economy – Hyperlocal News sees it as a modest but meaningful opportunity worth exploring. Step in with the NWMPA and help North and West Melbourne flourish. ●

For more information:
northwestmelbourne.com.au



PARKVILLE GARDENS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

March in Parkville Gardens

March is a multi-faceted month. Autumn has arrived, universities are back in full swing, football's kicked off, Moomba fever is in the air, annual religious observances are under way for believers, and the Parkville Gardens Residents' Association (PGRA) is once again hosting a seasonal event.

In case you missed last month's column, here's a snapshot of what's coming ...

Thanks to a Thriving Communities grant from Greater Western Water, we're having a Neighbours Day Festival on Sunday, March 23. Locals are urged to come along to the Galada Ave Reserve from 11am to 2pm for a kaleidoscope of activities.

There'll be a magic show and balloon twisting for the kids, as well as a Taekwondo demo. Everyone's welcome to the midday barbecue (veg and halal catered for).

Kids and adults alike can engage with helpful Greater Western Water staff, friendly officers from the Neighbourhood Policing Team, and wonderful librarians from the City of Melbourne's mobile library (the MelVan). It's not to be missed!

The official consultation process for the draft Royal Park Master Plan has closed, but you can still inform the council of your views.

As reported last month, four community groups – Friends of Royal Park, the Royal Park Protection Group, the Parkville Association and Protectors of Public Lands – have lodged strenuous objections to it on the grounds that it proposes to expand and intensify the use of Royal Park for active

sports at the expense of informal recreational enjoyment.

The next meeting of the City of Melbourne (the Future Melbourne Committee) is on Tuesday, March 18. The full agenda and documentation will be available from 2pm on Thursday, March 13.

The PGRA committee was pleased to welcome local state member, Ellen Sandell, to its monthly meeting in February.

The two main topics of discussion were housing and neighbourhood safety. She is well informed about community concerns and is actively engaged with government authorities and Victoria Police on our behalf.

We also conveyed to Ms Sandell our continued disappointment that the community centre promised to us by the state government after the 2006 Commonwealth Games never eventuated.

The designated building was sold and has never been available for our use. The Parkville Gardens population has now grown to more than 2000 people, and the need for a local hub has become more pressing than ever.

Ms Sandell has undertaken to approach the Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkeny about the matter. Residents are encouraged to appeal to her themselves via sonya.kilkenny@parliament.vic.gov.au.

On a cheerier note, Parkville Gardens residents, please put March 23 in your diary! ●

Tom Knowles

PRESIDENT
PRESIDENT@PGRA.ORG.AU



STATE MP

We need 50-cent public transport fares

Taking public transport is too expensive, and it shouldn't be!

Our transport sector makes up nearly a quarter of our state's carbon emissions. But getting people to choose public transport is difficult when costs keep rising.

A full fare daily ticket now costs up to \$11, which adds up to more than \$200 a month for regular commuters.

At a time when people are already struggling with the rising costs of rent, mortgages and groceries, Victorians need some relief.

Queensland recently introduced 50c public transport fares and in just six months, Queenslanders saved more than \$180 million, and public transport patronage is up by 20 per cent.

The Greens and I want to try the same thing in Victoria. If Queensland can introduce 50c public transport, why not here too?

Our CBD still hasn't fully bounced back from the challenges of the pandemic. The revival of our city's vibrancy depends on attracting workers, students, and tourists back into town.

Fifty-cent public transport fares will not only provide some much-needed relief for people, it's an opportunity to entice people back to our CBD.

The Greens and I are calling for Victoria to follow Queensland's lead and introduce a six-month trial of 50-cent fares in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

We can pay for it by making the big banks, corporations and property developers pay their fair share of tax.



Ellen Sandell with Queensland Greens MP Elizabeth Watson-Brown.

We'll also keep pushing to fill holes in our timetables and make our public transport network better.

We want to see Metro trains and trams run every five to 10 minutes from 7am to 7pm, and a high-frequency bus network across Melbourne and our regional cities.

Everyone should have access to good quality, affordable public transport and the Greens are fighting to make that happen.

If there's anything I can do for you, please get in touch with me at ellen.sandell@parliament.vic.gov.au ●

Ellen Sandell

STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE
OFFICE@ELLENSANDELL.COM



WHAT'S ON
March

Experience the north west city buzz this month with workshops, festivals, exhibitions and more.

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL
FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW

The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show returns, offering an immersive world of insta-worthy colour, creativity, and inspiration for every home.

Royal Exhibition Building

26 – 30 MARCH

MELBOURNE FOOD AND
WINE FESTIVAL

The Melbourne Food and Wine Festival brings a 10-day feast with the best of the best from Australia and the world direct to your lips.

Melbourne

21 – 30 MARCH

MELBOURNE ZOO

Make the most of the school holidays, when children under 16 receive free entry, and see over 300 species of animals in a beautifully landscaped setting.

Melbourne Zoo, Elliott Ave, Parkville

OPEN DAILY FROM 9AM

FROM PERIODS TO MENOPAUSE

This workshop will look at women's hormones, the menstrual cycle and common conditions that women experience. It will provide useful information to support women's health.

Kensington Neighbourhood House

SATURDAY 29 MARCH, 3.30PM – 5PM

HARMONY WEEK STORYTIME

This week is a celebration that recognises diversity in Australia. Join in for some special storytimes to celebrate multicultural communities. For ages three to five years.

North Melbourne Library, 66 Errol Street

TUES 18 MARCH, 10.30AM – 11.15AM

HEALTHY COOKING MADE SIMPLE

Sonya will show you how to use batch-roasted vegetables to create a vegetarian feast. Drawing from her background in nutrition she brings you tips to make healthy cooking easier.

Kensington Neighbourhood House

SUNDAY 16 MARCH, 10.30AM – 12.30PM

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL
COMEDY FESTIVAL

Comedy is taking over the streets of Melbourne, with laughs around every corner! There's something for everyone.

Melbourne Town Hall, 90/130 Swanston St

26 MARCH – 20 APRIL

ENGLISH READING CIRCLE

Read along with others and practice pronunciation. Improve your English comprehension and vocabulary. Meet new people in a safe, welcoming environment. The program welcomes both native and EAL speakers.

Hotham Room, North Melbourne Library

FRIDAYS UNTIL APRIL 11, 10.30AM – 12PM

PERSIAN GEOMETRIC DRAWING

Explore Persian nomadic patterns and Iranian tiling geometry in this beginner-friendly workshop. Pouya Bagheri will talk you through the process one step at a time and help you create your own designs using simple tools and pencils.

Kensington Neighbourhood House

SATURDAY 29 MARCH, 2PM – 3.30PM

DEATH, DECEIT AND DUCKS

Death, Deceit and Ducks is a fast-paced, hilarious potpourri of short-form theatre, in which the cast trip lightly across themes of mortality, deception and waterfowl, with just an occasional stumble into the dark side.

Club Voltaire, 1st Floor/14 Raglan St

12 – 16 MARCH

THE FINDERS KEEPERS FOOD MARKET

Discover and savour mindfully made flavours as The Finders Keepers market team showcases fifty plus food and drink creators to celebrate the creative food community.

Meat Market, 3 Blackwood St, North Melbourne

22 – 23 MARCH, 9AM – 4PM

Business Directory

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PRECINCT

NORTH + WEST MELBOURNE
PRECINCT ASSOCIATION

SCHOOL

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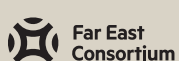
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