



## Korean eatery opens on Macaulay Rd

MR Bap, a new modern Korean eatery, which has recently opened in Kensington with a focus on customisable, made-to-order meals, is the latest venture from Max Ji and Rio Yoon, who have more than 16 years' experience serving Korean food in Australia. More on page 8.

Photo: Hanna Komissarova.

## Council's infrastructure plan sharpens focus on schools, hubs and open space in city's north-west

“The City of Melbourne will consider a new 10-year Community Infrastructure Plan on June 16, with the city's fast-growing north-west emerging as one of the clearest pressure points for future schools, community hubs, early years services, recreation facilities and open space.”

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



But for Kensington, Arden, Macaulay, Dynon, Maribyrnong Waterfront, North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Parkville, the document is also a clear signal that population growth and urban renewal are continuing to outpace the infrastructure needed to support inner-city communities.

The report notes that Melbourne's residential population is forecast to exceed 292,000 people by 2043, alongside a much larger daily population of workers, students and visitors.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said it had "never been more important" for the council to have a clear roadmap for delivering vital community infrastructure.

"For the first time, our new Community Infrastructure Plan will give us a city-wide blueprint of our community spaces – identifying what we have today, where the gaps are, and what our neighbourhoods need in the future," Cr Reece said.

"The City of Melbourne is one of Australia's fastest growing areas and we desperately need community infrastructure to maintain people's quality of life."

"Growth isn't just in the suburbs, and it is only fair that Melbourne's famous liveability extends to residents of high-density, inner-city apartments."

One of the most significant themes for the north and west is education, with the council to advocate to the Victorian Government for new schools in multiple growth areas.

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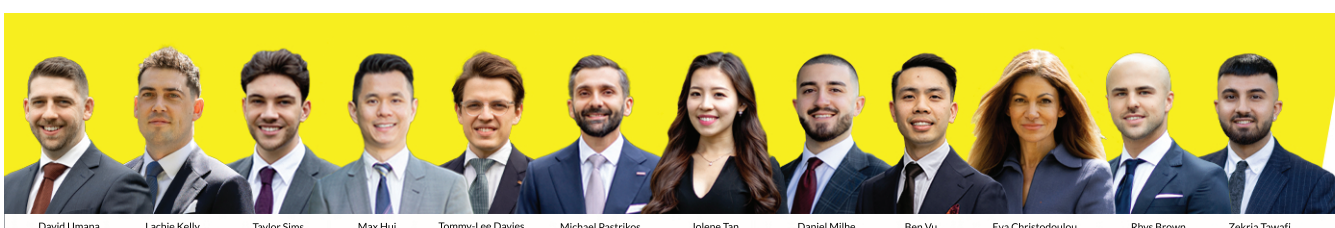
# CITY NEWS



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## North Melbourne's second lounge room

For nearly 160 years, the Three Crowns Hotel has stood proudly on the corner of Victoria and Hawke streets, serving generations of locals and earning its place as one of the area's most enduring institutions.



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# Education Minister visits Kensington Primary as school pushes for election commitment

Kensington Primary School's long-running campaign for the Victorian Government to finish outstanding building upgrades has gained fresh momentum, with Education Minister Ben Carroll visiting the school on June 1.

**WORDS BY**  
SEAN CAR



The Deputy Premier's visit followed sustained advocacy from the school community and recent reporting by *North West City News* on the unfinished works in the school's original 145-year-old Block A building.

Mr Carroll was joined by City of Melbourne councillor and Labor candidate for Melbourne Davydd Griffiths, while Greens MP for Melbourne Ellen Sandell, who is also a Kensington Primary parent, also attended.

The visit was welcomed by the school community as a positive step, but school council president Dave Frazer said the focus was now on securing a firm election commitment ahead of November's state election.

"We were very appreciative that he made the time," Mr Frazer told *North West City News*.

"We've obviously been pushing pretty hard to get him out there to show him our challenges first-hand, so it was certainly a good opportunity to do that."

Mr Frazer said the minister appeared receptive during the visit and that the school's needs were "glaringly obvious".



▲ Member for Northern Metropolitan Sheena Watt, Education Minister Ben Carroll and Labor candidate for Melbourne Davydd Griffiths.

"This isn't a new request in any way, shape or form," he said. "These are issues identified in a master plan that his department prepared, and we just want to see that through in its entirety."

Kensington Primary received \$7.365 million in state funding to upgrade Block A, with works completed in 2022. But the school council says only around 60 per cent of the original master plan was delivered after COVID-era cost escalations reduced the scope of works.

The unfinished section still requires

significant upgrades, including accessibility improvements, heating, insulation, carpets, window repairs and acoustic treatment.

A major concern remains disability access, with more than 100 students and staff still required to climb three flights of stairs to reach upstairs classrooms in parts of the building not serviced by the existing lift arrangement.

In a video posted to Facebook by Mr Griffiths, Mr Carroll described Kensington Primary as "a wonderful school" and "a school of choice in this beautiful part of Melbourne".

"Our government has invested \$7.3 million to do stage one of their master plan, but also we're wanting to continue to build on that investment," Mr Carroll said.

"Here we are looking at stage two and what's required."

Mr Griffiths said teachers at the school were doing "a fantastic job" and needed facilities to match.

Mr Frazer said the visit had come after letters from the school council and wider parent community, which Mr Carroll had acknowledged as effective advocacy.

"They did make it clear that it was the advocacy from the parents, from school council and then subsequent follow-up letters that our wider community sent to the Minister, that resulted in him visiting," he said.

"To his credit, he did say your advocacy has been really beneficial to the school, and it does work."

But Mr Frazer said the visit could not become a "box tick" for the department.

"That wasn't the end game," he said.

"We're certainly going to be pushing hard in the coming months. Our ultimate objective would be to see it bedded down as an election commitment." ●

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# North & West Melbourne Precinct Association



## The Three Crowns Hotel: North Melbourne's second lounge room



For nearly 160 years, the Three Crowns Hotel has stood proudly on the corner of Victoria and Hawke streets, serving generations of North Melbourne locals and earning its place as one of the area's most enduring institutions.



WORDS BY  
CHRIS JACKSON



retaining the classic pub favourites that have built a loyal following over the years.

"The wheel of the pub isn't broken," Pita said. "We just give people what they want."

With 20 beers on tap, daily happy hour from 4pm to 6pm, and a reputation for consistency, the Three Crowns continues to draw locals in a city where patrons are spoiled for choice.

The venue is also extending its trading hours, opening from 3pm on Mondays and Tuesdays to ensure locals can rely on their neighbourhood pub being open when they need it.

That community-first approach is now set to extend beyond North Melbourne, with Proper Pub Co taking over the Steam Packet Hotel in Williamstown from June 29.

Long-serving venue manager Aiden will lead the new venture after spending the past seven years at the Three Crowns, taking with him the same focus on local connection that has helped make the North Melbourne pub a neighbourhood institution.

"The MO of everything is community pubs," he said.

"We hire local people with local knowledge and local connections. There are still pockets of Melbourne that are close to the city but feel like little villages, and that's what we're trying to create – places where people feel connected to their community."

In a rapidly changing inner city, the Three Crowns remains a place where locals, newcomers and visitors alike can pull up a stool, order a pint and feel at home.

The Three Crowns Hotel is located at 365 Victoria St, North Melbourne. ●

First opening its doors in 1867, the historic pub has witnessed enormous change around it. But according to hotel manager Pita, the secret to its longevity is simple: people.

From the moment you step inside, the Three Crowns feels less like a pub and more like a community gathering place. Regulars are greeted by name, staff know their customers, and visitors quickly feel like part of the neighbourhood.

"It's like a second living room for a lot of people," Pita said.

"We have regulars who have been coming here for years. It's like a village here; everyone knows everyone."

That sense of connection is no accident. The venue employs 29 staff and places a strong emphasis on hiring locals who understand the community they serve.

"We employ on personality," Pita said. "You can teach someone how to pour a beer, but you can't teach them how to genuinely connect with people."

The Three Crowns is operated by Proper Pub Co, led by publican Chris, whose

philosophy centres on creating welcoming community pubs where everyone feels comfortable walking through the door.

"Be smart, be brave, give a s\*\*t and be humble" is the company's guiding mantra, helping foster a workplace culture that has resulted in strong staff retention.

Among those long-serving team members is head chef Kenny, who has been part of the Three Crowns family for 11 years.

While the pub proudly embraces its traditional roots, it is not standing still. The venue is introducing new menu additions while

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- Total budget: \$804.8 million
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- Capital works program: \$175.1 million
- Safety and cleaning: \$73.2 million
- Events, arts, culture and activation: \$41.4 million
- Garden City: \$26.4 million

**We know budgets aren't the most exciting thing to wrap your head around – but this year's Budget really matters, because it sets out a plan to support a more liveable Melbourne.**

Here are some of the ways you'll see the difference:

#### WE'LL BRING OUR STREETS TO LIFE

- Streets and laneways will become safer with \$2 million for new lighting and the upgrade of existing fixtures in hotspots like Hosier Lane, Collins Street and Hardware Lane.
- Major events including New Year's Eve, Moomba and Christmas Festival will get a \$26 million boost – driving visitation and supporting local businesses.

#### WE'LL PROVIDE RESPONSIBLE RATES AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT

- While we delivered a full rebate on the Victorian Government's 3% rate rise last year, ratepayers will see an average of 2.75% increase on their rates notice – an increase that ensures we can continue providing reliable core services.
- Free fitness classes in the park, \$2 weekday summer pool entry and free summer swim lessons will continue – keeping people active and connected.

#### WE'LL KEEP THE CITY CLEAN, SAFE AND EASY TO GET AROUND

- The number of Community Safety Officers on the street will double from 11 to 22, with a focus on providing compassionate support to vulnerable people.
- People will be able to move through the city more easily, as we explore extending the iconic Bourke Street Mall and improving pedestrian access on Flinders Lane.

#### WE'LL GROW THE GARDEN CITY

- Thirteen new or upgraded parks and green open spaces will be fast-tracked, including Chapman Street pocket park in North Melbourne and Miles and Dodds Street reserve in Southbank.
- Works will progress on Market Square at Queen Victoria Market – the city's biggest new park in more

than 50 years – and a greener, more pedestrian-friendly Franklin Street, connecting the State Library Station to the market.

#### WE'LL GIVE EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD A FAIR GO

- People experiencing homelessness with complex mental health challenges will receive more support to access housing, healthcare and social services with a \$2.3 million boost.
- Early childhood programs will get an additional \$500,000 – improving literacy, promoting healthy living, and supporting more families through early intervention and domestic violence prevention.



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CITY OF MELBOURNE

# Council's infrastructure plan sharpens focus on schools, hubs and open space in city's north-west

Continued from page 1.

In the north-west district, which includes Kensington, Arden, Macaulay, Dynon and Maribyrnong Waterfront, the plan identifies the need for a new secondary school. The council says broader community need should be considered early in planning to support shared use arrangements, allowing school facilities to also benefit the wider community.

In the south-west district, which includes West Melbourne, Docklands, E-Gate and Fishermans Bend, the council says it will advocate for new and/or expanded primary schools in West Melbourne and Docklands. However, it doesn't make mention of a secondary school specifically in this region.

The push comes as Docklands Primary School, which opened in 2021, is already at capacity, while West Melbourne continues to experience major growth and lacks indoor community spaces managed by the City of Melbourne.

The plan also identifies strong future demand in Arden, where the population is forecast to grow from 449 residents in 2023 to more than 8000 by 2043. Over the same period, Macaulay's population is expected to rise from 3537 to 9688 residents, while Kensington is forecast to grow from 11,547 to 16,871.

In the short term, the council says growth will increase demand for early years services, while Arden will also require a primary school, family services and a range of flexible community spaces as development accelerates around the new Arden Station.

Among the major local projects listed for the next four years is the new North Melbourne Community Hub on Melrose St, which will co-locate services from the



▲ The site in Parkville Gardens where locals hope a community hub might be established one day.

Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre and North Melbourne Community Centre.

The council will also explore redevelopment options for the existing North Melbourne Community Centre and Buncle Street Reserve, with the report suggesting the site could support a sports and recreation-focused hub, expanded open space and additional land for organised and unstructured sport.

In Kensington and Macaulay, open space is another major focus. The council will finalise the design and delivery of the new 3600-square-metre Chelmsford St open space and plan for further open space improvements identified in the Open Space Strategy, Macaulay Structure Plan and Arden Structure Plan.

This includes the acquisition of land to expand Robertson St Open Space and temporary activation of land along the rail corridor and Moonee Ponds Creek, in

partnership with the Victorian Government and local community.

The report says the north-west is generally well served by aquatic and recreation facilities, including the Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation Centre and JJ Holland Park, but still faces demand for additional open space and land for both organised and unstructured sport.

Future ideas include upgrading recreation assets, revitalising facilities such as the JJ Holland Park skate park, reviewing early years and maternal and child health services in Kensington, Arden and Macaulay, and exploring the purpose and activation of the Kensington Town Hall precinct.

For Parkville Gardens, the plan directly acknowledges a long-running community request for better local facilities in north-west Parkville.

The report says the council should "consider the need for a community hub in

north-west Parkville to provide access to programs and services, including flexible community, health and wellbeing spaces".

It also identifies demand for maternal and child health, family services and early years education spaces in Parkville, while noting that north-west Parkville is less connected to the rest of the municipality and lacks flexible, bookable community spaces.

Other north-east projects include finalising the Royal Park Masterplan, reviewing existing pavilions for broader community use, working with universities and institutions to open facilities for organised sport, learning and bookable space, and advocating for health and wellbeing spaces as part of the Parkville Precinct redevelopment.

Cr Reece said the plan would help the council identify where community spaces were most needed and how they could be delivered.

"As Melbourne grows, we want to ensure people have places to come together – whether that's a local community hub or sport and recreation facilities," he said.

"This plan identifies where those spaces are needed most so we can get on with the job of delivering across our neighbourhoods."

The plan identifies 43 community space projects to be progressed over the next four years through delivery, planning, partnerships or advocacy. It also makes clear that the council cannot deliver all community infrastructure alone, with partnerships with schools, universities, developers, government agencies and private landowners expected to play an increasing role.

If endorsed, the council will publish an interactive online version of the plan and report on progress annually, with a major review every four years. ●

## Kensington church sold to faith-based community

In what looks to be a good news story for the neighbourhood, a 19th century Kensington church that was up for sale has been snapped up by another local church.

WORDS BY  
JENNY DENTON



Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church, located less than 100 metres away on the corner of Epsom and Kensington roads, which already has a "children's centre" next door.

The 1288 sqm Christ Church has frontage to Epsom Rd as well as McCracken St and houses a double-storey brick building and a storage building as well as the church itself.

Originally known as the Wesleyan Church, which dates back to 1889, it was designed by architect Alexander Eleazar Duguid, who was responsible for at least three other churches in the broader area, and housed one of seven known organs exported to Victoria in the 1860s by London organ builder John Courcelle.

North West City News understands that five or six offers for the Uniting Church property were made under an expression of interest system by a mix of housing developers and other proposed occupiers.

Bec Smith from the Kensington Neighbourhood House, which is opposite the church in McCracken St, said she was glad to see the outcome of the sale.

"I'm really pleased that the site will remain as a church and be used by a new faith-based community," she said.

"Hopefully we'll be able to work with the

new owners to keep our neighbourhood house activities running there."

The neighbourhood house had been using the church as overflow space, with various exercise, sewing, art, dance, choir and cooking classes held there, Ms Smith said.

They were also tending 16 garden beds on the grounds, which were essentially open to the public and were being used as a shortcut between the two roads.

"It's a really well-used public space, I guess," she said.

According to Ms Smith, its Uniting Church congregation had stopped meeting there in 2020 during COVID and never came back, disbanding formally last year.

St Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church, by contrast, is understood to have a healthy, growing congregation.

St Mary's was contacted for comment but didn't respond. ●

# ELLEN SANDELL

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# Why Melbourne Matters



Events like New Year's Eve are major economic drivers for Victoria

## Ahead of November's state election, Melbourne is back in the political spotlight – and we want to make the most of it.

We've launched a new advocacy campaign: Melbourne Matters. Because when Melbourne does well, Victoria does too.

Many of the decisions that will shape Melbourne's future sit outside Town Hall – including housing, schools, transport and other essential infrastructure needed to support growing communities.

Our campaign focuses on 3 priorities: supporting Victoria's growth, creating safe and healthy communities, and protecting Melbourne's place as Australia's cultural capital.

### MELBOURNE MATTERS FOR VICTORIA'S GROWTH

Melbourne is one of Victoria's fastest-growing areas and generates 22% of the state's economic output, but we need the right investment and policy support to help that growth succeed.

- We're calling on the Victorian Government to give Melbourne the same level of support and policy attention as other major growth areas as our population continues to grow.
- We also want to work with the Victorian Government to unlock public land and create more green space for our growing community. The Moonee Ponds Creek corridor is one example: 1.3 hectares of locked-up land unable to be accessed by 60,000 nearby residents.

### MELBOURNE MATTERS FOR SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

We know that people in our community are currently under pressure to make ends meet, and we're seeing crime and antisocial behaviour escalating in our public places.

Melbourne must remain a city that feels safe, welcoming and accessible for everyone, including the most vulnerable members of our community.

- We need continued support from the Victorian Government

to help keep Melbourne's streets safe, including a more visible and consistent safety presence in busy areas and known hotspots.

- Many people experiencing homelessness are also living with complex mental health challenges. Too often, when someone reaches crisis point, there are only 2 places for them to go: hospital or jail. We're calling for greater investment in crisis accommodation and proven programs like Street to Home that help break the cycle.

### MELBOURNE MATTERS AS AUSTRALIA'S CULTURAL CAPITAL

Melbourne's arts, music and events scene is a huge part of what makes this city special – and with the creative economy contributing more than \$41 billion to Victoria each year, it's also a major economic driver.

- Major events like our New Year's Eve celebrations play a huge role in bringing the city to life and attracting visitors from around Australia and beyond. An extra \$1 million in state funding

would support the expansion of programming and offerings.

- We're calling on the Victorian Government to restore funding to organisations like Creative Victoria and Visit Victoria. Creative Victoria's funding has fallen by almost one third since 2022, with cuts starting to take a real toll on Melbourne's creative sector.

As we approach the state election, Melburnians should expect ambition from all sides of politics – and politicians should expect to hear directly from the people they represent.

Call your local MP. Visit their office. Ask them what their vision is for Melbourne and whether they are prepared to fight for it.

That matters, because Melbourne matters.



Scan the QR code for more information.



Southbank at sunset, courtesy of Visit Victoria



Photos: Shannyn Higgins

## CityLink "silo" art trail appeal

“

The City of Melbourne has been petitioned for funds to create a Moonee Ponds Creek “silo art trail”, using the concrete pylons of CityLink as a canvas.



”

WORDS BY  
JENNY DENTON



Cycling advocate Aaron Moon addressed the council at a special budget meeting last month to make the appeal as part of a broader argument about the value of public art.

In a brief presentation he showed photos of a small section of the trail in the City of Moonee Valley, where four pillars have been painted with arresting Indigenous waterway-themed murals by artist Tom Civil.

That project, called *Under the Bridge* and located under CityLink at Flemington, was completed in 2021 as a City of Moonee Valley Arts Recovery initiative with funding from a state government COVID relief grant.

Mr Moon said he wanted to see the pillars running along CityLink in the City of Melbourne similarly transformed into “a sightseeing area”.

While the council had allocated a very large amount in the budget to graffiti removal, which included the regular painting over of graffiti on the pillars with grey paint, commissioning street art would stop surfaces like these being defaced in the first place, he argued.



“I’m asking for funds to be directed from the graffiti removal to put into public art projects like this, and that will reduce the graffiti.”

Artist Tom Civil told *North West City News* it had been a big project that he was very proud of and he had always dreamt of extending it.

Mr Moon also advocated for funds from City of Melbourne’s community safety officer program and expanded CCTV program to be diverted to arts and environment initiatives. ●



## Melbourne is back in the game – and the numbers back it up

The federal government’s decision to fund the Suburban Rail Loop confirms a fundamental shift: Melbourne is once again a city that government cannot afford to ignore.

WORDS BY  
NICK REECE – LORD MAYOR  
OF MELBOURNE



enormous pressure on infrastructure and services.

We are already seeing the strain. Southbank has no local secondary school. We are short at least 16 sports fields and community facilities.

These aren’t luxuries. They’re essential to liveability and community wellbeing.

Melbourne is growing. But without coordinated investment, we risk growing poorly. Opportunities like Victoria Barracks, E-Gate and Moonee Ponds Creek could deliver new schools, open space, community facilities and genuinely affordable housing, but councils cannot do this alone.

The key levers – planning, transport, education and housing - sit with state and federal governments.

When Melbourne thrives, Victoria thrives. When we fall behind, the whole state pays the price.

At Town Hall, we’re stepping up by investing in parks, infrastructure and community safety. We’re proud of this and prepared to do what we need to achieve our goals. But no global city succeeds on local effort alone.

As we approach the state election, Melburnians should demand more. The scale of our growth demands ambition, backed by clear plans and real investment.

Melbourne is back at the centre of the national conversation. Now we must use this moment.

Because Melbourne doesn’t just matter. It drives the nation. ●

For too long, that wasn’t the case. While other cities secured major infrastructure investment, Melbourne wasn’t at the centre of the conversation.

That changed at the last federal election and with it came renewed attention and urgent investment.

Governments respond to incentives. When a city matters electorally, it starts to matter fiscally.

This shift comes at a critical time. Melbourne is Australia’s fastest growing capital and on track to become the nation’s largest city in the early 2030s.

But growth on this scale doesn’t look after itself.

Today, the City of Melbourne generates around 22 per cent of Victoria’s economy from just 38 square kilometres – an extraordinary strength, but one that places

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# Kensington's new Korean eatery puts a fresh spin on comfort food

A new modern Korean eatery has opened in Kensington, serving fresh kimbap, bibimbap, cupbap and Korean ramyun stew with a focus on customisable, made-to-order meals.

WORDS BY DANIEL GAWNE



Located at 429 Macaulay Rd, MR Bap is the latest venture from Max Ji and Rio Yoon, who have more than 16 years' experience serving Korean food in Australia.

The pair first met in South Korea in 1999 after graduating from high school and both moved to Australia in the early 2000s. They have remained close ever since, with Max describing Rio as "more like a brother than my family".

Together with Ayden Jung and Jun Lee, Max and Rio previously co-founded Gami Chicken & Beer, but are now focused on building something new with MR Bap.

Max said the idea was to create "something more approachable, fresh, and community-focused for the growing Kensington and North Melbourne area".

At MR Bap, the focus is on fresh, balanced Korean meals that are accessible to a wide range of customers.

Its build-your-own bibimbap option allows diners to create their own bowl, with vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options available. The restaurant also serves kimbap, cupbap and warming Korean



ramyun stew.

Max said the team was "not trying to create fine dining or overly complicated food".

"We simply want to provide decent, satisfying meals that help people get through their day with a smile," he said.

The restaurant opened two months ago and is currently in its soft opening phase, offering lunch service from 11am to 3pm every day except Sunday.

That is set to change in July, when MR Bap will hold its grand opening and expand into dinner trade with longer opening hours.

The team is also planning combo deals and giveaways as part of the launch.

Max said customers could also look forward to a new menu item the team had been quietly developing: a gluten-free version of

its fried chicken, which he said was shaping up to be even crispier than the original.

The name MR Bap comes from Max and Rio's initials, but it also carries a deeper meaning.

In Korean, "bap" translates directly to rice, but is also commonly used to refer to a meal.

Max said that in Korea, asking someone whether they have eaten is often another way of asking whether they are doing well and looking after themselves.

In that spirit, he said MR Bap was intended to feel like "the Korean equivalent of a good local sandwich shop or bakery" – a place serving "honest, reliable food that people can enjoy regularly".

MR Bap is open Monday to Saturday at 429 Macaulay Rd, Kensington. ●

## Future Melbourne podcast wraps pilot season with Lord Mayor Nick Reece looking ahead to 2050

“The pilot season of *Future Melbourne* is set to close with a fitting final guest: Melbourne Lord Mayor Nick Reece, joining the podcast for a wide-ranging conversation about the city's future and the decisions that will shape it over the next 25 years.



Titled *Melbourne 2050*, the season finale brings together many of the big themes explored across the podcast so far, from housing, city safety and Docklands to Queen Victoria Market, the Yarra River, Fishermans Bend, Lygon St and the future of the CBD.

It also returns to one of the key inspirations behind the series itself: the City of Melbourne's 2050 Summit, held in May 2025, which sought to spark a broader public conversation about what kind of city Melbourne wants to become.

In the episode, Cr Reece reflects on why he launched the summit in his first year as Lord Mayor, what emerged from it, and how its longer-term vision sits alongside the council's more immediate four-year plan. The discussion also grounds that vision in the numbers shaping Melbourne's future, including strong projected growth in residents, jobs and housing, as well as the continuing challenge of homelessness and inequality in the central city.

From there, the episode moves into a rapid recap of the major topics covered across the pilot season, with the Lord Mayor offering his own take on the issues and places that have defined the series.

That includes the future of Queen Victoria Market as it balances heritage and renewal, the CBD's recovery from COVID and the role of international students, the growing pressure on housing affordability, and the city's layered response to safety through police, community safety officers and outreach services.

The conversation also revisits some of Melbourne's most contested and ambitious urban renewal areas. In Docklands, Cr

Reece speaks about the precinct's long-term potential and what a fully realised waterfront community might look like by 2050. On the Yarra and arts precinct, he reflects on the importance of Greenline, public realm investment and preserving Melbourne's creative identity during a period of major transformation.

The episode also explores Fishermans Bend, Arden-Macaulay and Lygon St, asking how Melbourne can grow while still protecting the character, accessibility and diversity that define it.

Alongside those place-based discussions, the finale tackles the bigger questions raised by the 2050 vision: what it means for Melbourne to be green, alive and climate-resilient, how the city stays welcoming and inclusive as it grows, and how First Nations knowledge and custodianship can be meaningfully honoured in the city's future.

As a season finale, the episode works both as a recap and a long-view conversation. It brings together the themes, tensions and ambitions that have shaped the pilot series, while giving listeners a final opportunity to hear directly from the city's first citizen about where Melbourne is heading next.

For those who have followed the season from the start, it promises a strong and thoughtful conclusion. For newer listeners,



it also offers a concise entry point into the big ideas that have framed the series so far.

Either way, *Melbourne 2050* closes the first chapter of *Future Melbourne* by asking the biggest question of all: what kind of city does Melbourne want to become?

The episode is available now via Spotify and YouTube. ●



# Help keep the magic coming at The Venny

“One of Kensington’s most beloved institutions is appealing for donations to help offset rising costs as it continues to conjure its low-key magic for the community.”



WORDS BY  
JENNY DENTON



The Venny, its name short for “adventure playground”, has been serving up fun and food in a big backyard environment to kids aged five to 16 since it was established more than 45 years ago.

Among the ingredients of the supervised “risky play” it promotes are trampolines, fires, things to climb, bikes, ropes, animals – currently ducks, chickens and a hive of bees – and a veggie garden.

Built to serve the kids of the nearby public housing estates who had no backyard, its vision is nevertheless inclusive of everyone and resolutely free of charge.

“There are no labels – everything’s free and everyone’s welcome,” CEO Carolyn Webster told *North West City News*.

“We operate on the three frees – children are free to come and go, children are free to choose how they play and we operate free of charge.”

Ten-year-old Finn first came to The Venny when he was five and now visits by himself after school.

“One of the main things I like about it is

free play,” he said.

“There are no time restrictions or anything like that and more things you can do [than at school].”

While The Venny doesn’t have many overheads, its costs, particularly for staff, have gone up, with recent increases to the Children’s Services Award, Ms Webster said. “The rising cost of wages, the cost of everything does not correlate with any increases of funding, so essentially, we’re kind of going backwards.

“So, we do rely on getting a certain amount of money each year from fundraising just to kind of cover our costs really.”

Five-year-old playground users Wilhemina and Anais had little doubt about the worth of the enterprise, their mothers said.

Wilhemina, who hugged Anais when she arrived, and was keen to hit the sandpit

and cubby house, “absolutely adores” The Venny, her mum, Mads Colvin, said.

“I don’t think there’s a day I pick her up from kinder next door that she doesn’t ask to come here.”

“It’s just such a special place to have.”

“Having somewhere outdoors where kids can just be kids and build forts out of pieces of wood and broken skateboards and explore without the judgement of adults ... having a safe space for them to engage in that kind of play is just so important.”

Anais’ mum, Temader Mustafa, said Anais also loved The Venny and Ms Mustafa vouched for it as a place for adults to spend time.

“We don’t have any family here, so it’s been really good – the community, the feeling, the people I met here, friends, other adults, the staff,” she said.

“And you can sit down while the kids play safely.”

“I don’t think there’s another place like it around that connects everyone together like this.”

Ms Webster said the community-owned organisation received no state government funding and depended on funds from local government, philanthropic sources and their own fundraising initiatives.

At a time when rising cost-of-living pressures were seeing increasing family vulnerability, donations would help provide meals and potentially life-changing mentoring, outreach programs and trusted relationships for local kids, many of whom were experiencing a range of challenges, The Venny’s management said.

All donations over \$2 are deductible: [givenow.com.au/2026eofy](https://www.givenow.com.au/2026eofy)

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# Community organisation boss calls it quits



The Venny CEO and former Kensington Neighbourhood House boss Carolyn Webster has always liked to keep busy but after 20 years at the helm of some lively local organisations she is ready for some down time.



WORDS BY  
JENNY DENTON



When her kids were little Carolyn Webster took on the role of coordinating volunteer-run newspaper *Flem Ken News*.

"That kind of sparked my interest in the community," she says, "because all of a sudden I got to find out about lots of different things, got to meet a lot of people."

While she was still running the paper Carolyn was asked to join the board of the Kensington Neighbourhood House (KNH), where her daughter was attending childcare.

That led, before long, to the suggestion she apply for the manager's job, which she took on in 2004 and would do for the next 16 years.

It was a job-share role and "quite manageable", initially, Carolyn says.

Aside from childcare and English classes there wasn't a lot going on in terms of programs.

"We started introducing cooking classes, and one-off workshops, just to kind of tease people in, and also started doing after-school stuff for kids and then evening programs."

The idea was to "make money out of people that have actually got money and bring everybody together under the one

roof" so that the neighbourhood house had "something for everyone".

Current manager Bec Smith has a graph of KNH income going back to 1999.

"You can literally see when Carolyn came on board," she says.

"She established our suite of what we call 'fee-for-service' programs ... all the recreation and wellbeing programs, exercise classes, art workshops."

"She was really instrumental in working out that we needed diversity of funding sources, that you can't just rely on recurrent government funding because you might not get it, and that one of the beauties of having such an interesting and diverse population here in Kensington is that we can offer different things for different people."

A colourful example of what was on offer were the annual camps for Vietnamese seniors the house ran, which over the years went all over Victoria.

Many of the attendees, though once locally based had relocated permanently away when their public housing was redeveloped, and the trips were primarily about companionship, Carolyn says.

Around 80 people would get on the bus, then self-cater at the school camp-style destinations they drove to, spoiling Carolyn in the process.

"It was probably one of the easiest jobs that I did," she says.

An important KNH contribution during her time there was a two-year project with the Kensington Management Company and in partnership with AMES to introduce new residents of the rebuilt estates to the suburb and help settle them in through place-based social activities and classes.

In 2016 a major highlight came when the neighbourhood house won "Community Education Provider of the Year" at the state government-run Victorian Training Awards.

"We were up against 300-odd community training providers, and we took out the gong," Carolyn says.

"It was super exciting for such a small organisation to be seen to be of that quality."

Overall, though, the real standout was "the people and connections and the great team of staff".

NORTH WEST CITY LOCAL



"Most of us lived locally, and most of them are still there and I think that works well in a small organisation.

"There's nowhere to hide!" Carolyn says, laughing. "But it also creates that passion."

Starting at The Venny, where she became CEO in March 2025 after a couple of years of occasional voluntary work, it had been "lovely" to see a lot of the same families she got to know at KNH.

"I've worked in a few other different communities, but nothing has ever been quite as special as Kensington," she says.

"Everybody's so connected, and just really looks out for each other."

The Venny's board recently acknowledged their CEO's coming departure on social media with gratitude and sadness.

Carolyn had "overhauled the organisation's systems and processes, created foundations that would serve the community for years to come", and "led her team with real care and warmth," they posted on Facebook.

Bec Smith credits her former colleague with doing the same at KNH while passing on "strong community development principles" of "listening to community and responding to needs rather than imposing things from above".

While Carolyn has "no plans" after leaving The Venny in August beyond a four-week trip to England it is unlikely the Flemington resident will disappear from view.

"If they need somebody to come and look after the chickens on the weekend, I'll be the first person to put my hand up!" ●

# Arts House invites audiences inside a Blak family home

Arts House will transform North Melbourne Town Hall into a fantastical Blak family home this winter, with the world premiere of *a bit thing* opening on June 27.

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



Led by matriarch and curator Dr Paola Balla and co-created with her children Rosie Kalina and Katen Balla, the free exhibition invites audiences into an intergenerational domestic world where art, family, culture and everyday life are inseparable.

Running until July 18, *a bit thing* reimagines the home as an exhibition space, building bedrooms, shared living areas and a "Blakyard" inside the North Melbourne venue.

Visitors will move through a richly layered house filled with family photos, books, textiles, protest materials, pop-cultural references and contemporary artworks. Together, the works create a domestic



setting shaped by memory, humour, care and cultural knowledge.

Rather than presenting art as something separate from daily life, the exhibition places creativity within the rhythms and textures of home.

Rosie's room is described as a hyper-sensory world of colour and youthful

imagination, while Katen's room becomes a photographic and sonic archive. At the centre of the house, a kitchen and living room invite visitors to pause, make a cuppa and stay a while.

Dr Balla said the work was intended to feel generous, intimate and familiar.

"We wanted to make a space that feels

like visiting family," she said.

"The home is where we learn, where we get respite and where we imagine together."

Rosie Kalina said the exhibition drew on stories that had shaped the family across generations.

"We've grown up inside these stories," she said. "This work is about sharing them, but also about creating space for others to feel held inside them too."

Katen Balla said the installation embraced the layered, lived-in nature of family life.

"This is a world built from our histories and everyday lives," he said. "It's messy, layered and embedded with humour, just like home always is."

Alongside the exhibition, Arts House will present a public program curated by Paola, Rosie and Katen, activating the house and Blakyard as places of gathering, exchange and shared practice.

The program includes workshops, screenings, shared meals, yarning circles and Koorioke during NAIDOC Week.

Public events include an opening curator talk and tour on June 27, Painting with Paola on July 4, Blakyard Feed, Yarns and Koorioke on July 10, and Yarns and Damper with Aunty Margie Tang on July 11. ●

# Damning cohealth review calls for final warning as confidence in board collapses

A scathing independent review into cohealth has found serious failures in governance, management and financial oversight, recommending that the Victorian Health Minister formally put the embattled community health provider on notice or consider a complete government takeover.

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



The long-awaited report into cohealth's general practice and related services was released by the federal government on June 3, months after community outrage erupted over the organisation's decision to close its GP clinics in Collingwood, Fitzroy and Kensington.

The review, led by Professor Stephen Duckett AO with Dr John Furler and Jane Seeber, found the three clinics were running at a loss, but rejected cohealth's repeated public argument that Medicare funding was the main cause of the problem.

Instead, the panel found the clinics' financial problems were driven by four inter-related factors: cohealth's management oversight and governance, its model of care, the complex needs of its client base, and the Medicare Benefits Schedule funding model.

"Contrary to the views expressed publicly by cohealth ... we found that ineffective governance and management had also contributed significantly to cohealth's financial problems," the report said.

It concluded that cohealth's clinic losses were partly driven by its management of GPs and clinics, patient appointment scheduling, and the way overhead costs were allocated.

The report was particularly blunt about confidence in the organisation's leadership.

"We therefore have limited confidence that the Board of cohealth will engage with or correct the underlying issues," it said.

It also found cohealth had not met relevant performance standards for community health services, including effective

management, financial management and risk management.

The review recommended Victorian Health Minister Harriet Shing formally provide the report to cohealth and invite it to show cause why she should not form the view that cohealth is "ineffectively managed" and/or has failed to meet one or more performance standards.

While the report stops short of immediately recommending the board be stood down, it says the Minister could pursue a more transformational option under the *Health Services Act*, including dismissing the board and appointing an administrator.

If that path is not adopted, the review says the Victorian Department of Health should impose clear performance targets, stronger oversight, possible board renewal, and conditions on government funding.

Ms Shing told multiple outlets it was her "strong expectation" that cohealth demonstrate the "integrity, transparency and accountability required to deliver the important health services some of our most vulnerable community members rely on", noting the state government provided \$68 million to cohealth last year.

For local campaigners, the report has confirmed many of the concerns raised since cohealth announced the planned clinic closures last year.

Save Our Community Health said the report "starkly describes the alarming lack of governance and management" for cohealth services in Kensington, Fitzroy and Collingwood.

"There is nothing in the report that gives

us confidence that the cohealth board and management will turn community health services around," the group said.

"It is now a matter of urgency that cohealth, state and federal government engage with the community to action the recommendations."

The campaign said the review's recommendations aligned with its calls for transparency, accountability, appropriate funding, saving the Collingwood site and reinstating services such as pharmacy and counselling.

It also welcomed the recommendation that cohealth formally acknowledge the traumatic impact of its decisions on staff and the community.

The review heard from about 100 people and received 326 submissions, more than half from patients or clients. It found patients were overwhelmingly positive about the care they received from cohealth's frontline GPs, nurses and allied health staff, but deeply distressed by the decision to close services and the way it was communicated.

The report said submissions showed strong negative sentiment towards the closure decision, with patients concerned about vulnerable neighbours, continuity of care and the likely pressure on hospitals if services were lost.

It found cohealth's claim that patients could easily transition to other local providers was "disingenuous", noting there were no other fully bulk-billing practices in Collingwood, Fitzroy or Kensington taking new patients.

The review also criticised cohealth's engagement with its own clinicians, finding there was "little evidence" of sustained efforts to work with GPs on improving clinic viability before closure was presented as a fait accompli.

Professor Duckett previously told this masthead he was appalled by what he found during the review process, particularly the distress caused to patients and the breakdown of trust between cohealth's leadership, staff and the communities it serves.

Despite its criticism of cohealth's management, the review also found Medicare funding needed to change, particularly for community health services caring for patients with complex social, mental health and medical needs.

It recommended the Commonwealth extend support for cohealth for another two years, use it as a pilot for a new multidisciplinary primary care funding model, and add community health services serving high-need communities to GP training settings.

For its part, cohealth welcomed the review's release, saying it provided a "clear pathway" to long-term reform of multidisciplinary general practice care.

The organisation said the review confirmed its clinics delivered high-quality care to highly complex and disadvantaged communities, and that existing Medicare funding was structurally misaligned with the needs of multidisciplinary care.

cohealth said it accepted all recommendations directed to the organisation and had already begun reform work, including recruiting a chief medical advisor, strengthening governance arrangements, reviewing overheads and improving community and staff engagement.

It also acknowledged the process had been traumatic for some patients, community members and staff.

But the question now is whether governments and communities believe the existing organisation can rebuild trust quickly enough.

Save Our Community Health said, "clearly things must change if community health at cohealth will survive".

"We want accountable governance and management, community engagement and sustainable community health care," the group said. ●

## Ozanam House to play key role in city's homelessness support boost

Ozanam House in North Melbourne will play a central role in the City of Melbourne's expanded frontline response to homelessness, as the council prepares to deliver what it says is the biggest suite of dedicated homelessness services in its history.



As part of its 2026-27 budget, the council will invest \$2.3 million to double the number of specialist frontline workers on city streets and strengthen support for people sleeping rough.

Two new programs will be delivered through partnerships with specialist homelessness providers: the Melbourne Outreach Team, run by Launch Housing and Ngwala Willumbong, and a new Safe Space Program led by VincentCare at Ozanam House.

The Safe Space Program will provide a welcoming and inclusive environment where people can rest safely, access support and be connected with housing, health and wellbeing services.

For North Melbourne, the role of Ozanam House gives the citywide initiative a strong local focus. The VincentCare facility has long been an important part of Melbourne's homelessness service network, providing accommodation and support for people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

Under the new program, Ozanam House will become a key place where vulnerable people can access practical help, from food and health support to housing assistance and pathways into longer-term services.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said the investment was about making Melbourne "safer and kinder" by transforming the way the city responded to challenges on its streets.

"The City of Melbourne is delivering the biggest boost Melbourne has ever seen to on-street outreach for people sleeping rough and expanding safe space services for vulnerable people," Cr Reece said.

"We are putting resources on the frontline, with over 50 people working on our streets, in safe spaces and in housing services to help make Melbourne safer and kinder."

The new Melbourne Outreach Team will help people sleeping rough connect directly to crisis accommodation, supported housing and essential homelessness services.

It will double the number of specialist frontline workers operating in the city, extend hours of service and introduce a new complex case manager to support people requiring trauma-informed, longer-term care.

Community and city services portfolio head Cr Gladys Liu said the investment would mean more people could access help, dignity and care.

"We're taking an unprecedented step to back our most vulnerable community members by partnering with VincentCare and Launch Housing to ensure those who need it most get support," Cr Liu said.

Launch Housing CEO Sherri Bruinhout said outreach workers were essential to meeting people where they were, often during crisis, and connecting them with pathways to safe housing.

St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Group CEO Charlie Spendlove said the Safe Space Program at Ozanam House reflected "exactly what we know works".

"Too many people sleeping rough have nowhere safe to simply exist with dignity while they work toward more permanent solutions," Mr Spendlove said.

Ngwala Willumbong CEO De-Joel Upkett welcomed the council's investment in supporting Aboriginal community members experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.

The new services will operate alongside the Make Room transitional housing project and the council's Community Safety Officer program, which is also set to double from 11 to 22 officers. ●

# City of Melbourne flag celebrating whaling set to endure

“An appeal for the redesign of the little-known flag of Melbourne has met with disinterest from the council, with Lord Mayor Nick Reece linking the issue to a future Australian republic.”



represents who we are today.”  
 Former Lord Mayor Sally Capp had raised the prospect of a redesign in 2022, Mr Robinson said, requesting a public consultation on the question be held.

In response, Lord Mayor Nick Reece, speaking as representative of the finance, governance and risk portfolio, described himself as “a very proud republican” who looked forward to “the day when Australia cuts the apron strings to Britain and we stand on our own two feet as an independent nation – still of course proud of our heritage and connected to the Commonwealth”.

The Lord Mayor noted that the Melbourne flag featured “a bullock, a sheep, a whale and a ship and of course a huge crown right in the middle,” and that it would surely be updated at some point – “perhaps at the same time as Australia’s national flag is updated”.

Cr Reece enthusiastically recommended the City of Melbourne “M” logo as a modern, well-designed symbol of the city, which he wore on a badge.

“Whenever I travel, I often have other mayors remark how much they love our city logo, and if it’s been a good meeting I will sometimes gift them my badge,” he said.

The council didn’t see a need currently to review or redesign the city’s flag, he said, and no further action would be taken at this time. ●

WORDS BY  
 JENNY DENTON



The flag features an English cross of St George, a crown and symbols of the four key sectors of the city’s economy in 1843 when the common seal it was adopted from was approved: wool, cattle, shipping and whaling.

It is flown at Town Hall and previously, when there was one, on the mayoral car.

It can also be seen atop the mast of the replica 19th century tall ship *Enterprise* and at *Enterprise Park* on the north bank of the Yarra every August 30, when it is raised to commemorate Melbourne Day.

In a public question during a recent Future of Melbourne Committee meeting Henry Robinson “respectfully urge[d] the council to consider redesigning the flag”.

“Our current flag is largely invisible in practice, illegible at small sizes, difficult to reproduce and unknown to most Melburnians,” he said.

“A great city deserves a flag that residents recognise, display with pride and that



# Trio charged over QVM ATM explosion

Three men from Melbourne’s inner north will appear in court next month charged with blowing up an ATM machine at the Queen Victoria Market in May and stealing around \$5000.

WORDS BY  
 JENNY DENTON



The trio allegedly caused an explosion to gain access to the ATM on Victoria St at about 2.45am on May 13.

Police said their homemade device had ignited in the face of one of the alleged offenders, 45-year-old Adam Park, from Fitzroy, who was left with serious, life-changing injuries.

Mr Park appeared in court on June 5 charged with a suite of offences relating to the incident, including cause explosion likely to cause serious injury to property, theft, reckless conduct endangering life and reckless conduct endangering serious injury.

When detectives from the arson and explosives squad arrested him on June 3 he had also been charged with burglary and theft in relation to the alleged burglary of a Heidelberg West educational facility on May 10 and producing an intimate image, which was found on his mobile phone.

A 40-year-old from Brunswick West and a 40-year-old from Brunswick who were charged on June 1 and May 29, respectively, were remanded in custody.

The Brunswick West accused faces charges of theft, use explosive and conduct endangering life while the Brunswick man is facing more than 20 charges, including cause explosion likely to cause serious injury to property, reckless conduct endangering life, drive in a manner dangerous, theft of motor vehicle and evade police.

All three accused are due to appear at Melbourne Magistrates’ Court on August 24.

Police said there was no evidence to suggest the incident was linked to the spree of nightclub firebombings being investigated by Operation Eclipse.

They appealed to anyone with information on illicit activity to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or report at [crimestoppersvic.com.au](http://crimestoppersvic.com.au) ●

## ENVIRONMENT

# Preparing for the effects of multiple shocks – a fuel shortage, El Nino, flood and fire

Community groups are the cornerstone of local resilience.

Across Australia grassroots organisations and local networks are mobilising communities to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from shocks like flood, fires and other stresses.

What will be the ripple effects of the restricted movement of one fifth of the world’s liquefied natural gas and oil through the Strait of Hormuz. While countries can rely on their “reserves” for a period, unless the Strait is “reopened”, we can assume there will be further impacts.

The domino effect of this situation is widespread as oil is in everything – our food supply chains, our energy, our water, our transport, our sewerage. Australia relies on imports for more than 90 per cent of its liquid fuel needs.

When these stressors hit, what is the condition of our systems to manage them.

Community groups and movements such as Local Futures, Permaculture, Transition Towns, Remake the World, Degrowth, Resilience Lismore and many other regenerative organisations have been looking at how we can live in a world which does not rely on fossil fuels and so much extraction and there are lessons to be learnt from their approach.

As well as from those communities who have faced such crises like Lismore in New South Wales after the floods.



Dr Jean Renouf, founder and chair of Plan C, states that we are living through sustained disruption – climate stress, technological acceleration, geopolitical instability and rising psychosocial strain and that the question is no longer whether disruption will occur, but how we live and lead when

it does.  
 He encourages us to not prepare in a way that is about competing and surviving apart from your community and seeing them as competition for food, energy, resources.  
 He has written many articles about resilience and recently in an online webinar

discussing the fuel crisis talked about preparing in three areas – practical, social and emotional.

Consider the practical elements such as food, water, energy, shelter and build capability that connects outward to neighbours, community groups, local food networks, informal care systems and relationships.

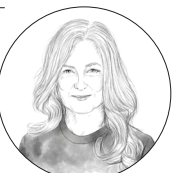
Build the social infrastructure that evidence consistently shows matters most when systems fail. He encourages us to know our neighbours well enough to ask for help and to offer it.

He continues to encourage us to belong to networks – a street, a sporting club, a local resilience group, a faith community as this is where reciprocal support already exists and is normal and does not have to be invented under pressure.

People who face this uncertainty with these relationships fare better in wellbeing, decision quality and in the capacity to keep functioning than those facing the same condition in isolation.

The most protective response is to build genuine resilience before it is needed. ●

**Jacqui van Heerden**  
 CO-CONVENER OF TRANSITION TOWN KENSINGTON  
[JACQUIVANHEERDEN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:jacquivanheerden@gmail.com)



## HISTORY

## The history of St James Old Cathedral

St James Old Cathedral, on the corner of King and Batman streets, directly opposite the Flagstaff Gardens, is an important building in the early history of Melbourne.

WORDS BY  
FELICITY JACK

It was originally a church built close to the corner of Collins and William streets. Today St James Lane marks its approximate location. The foundation stone was laid on November 9, 1839, by Charles Latrobe, then the Superintendent of the Port Phillip District.

Melbourne had only begun to be settled four years earlier and was administratively a settlement under the Colonial Government of New South Wales. The church was opened for services in October 1842, and the building was finally finished in 1847.

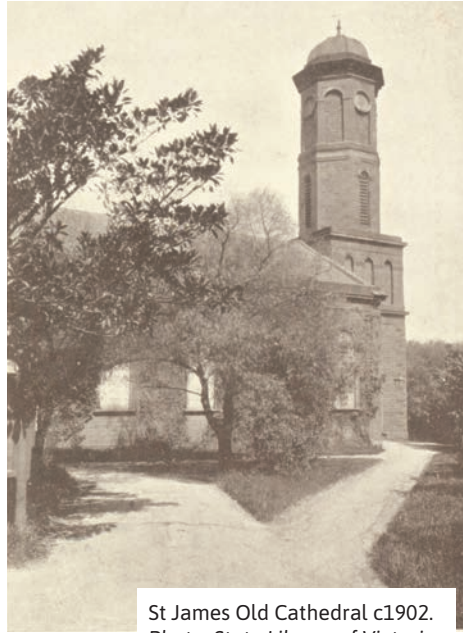
The Anglican diocese of the Church of England was proclaimed the following year at which time the church became Melbourne's Anglican Cathedral.

In 1847 Charles Perry was appointed the first Bishop of Melbourne and he arrived to take up the position in 1848. His wife, Frances Perry, founded the Royal Women's Hospital as well as other charitable institutions.

As Melbourne's population increased the Cathedral became too small for the Anglican community and in 1891 St Paul's Cathedral, in Flinders St, was consecrated. St James became known as the Old Cathedral and remained on the same site until 1913 when cracks appeared and the structure was deemed to be unsafe.

It was decided that, rather than demolish what was one of Melbourne's first buildings, it should be moved to a site opposite Flagstaff Gardens, on the corner of King and Batman streets. The church was reopened on its present site in April 1914.

Several modifications had to be made during its translocation. Its orientation was moved to North/South rather than the more usual East/West. And the design of the tower was made square to match its base, enabling all eight bells to be installed on one level. Only the exterior stone and



St James Old Cathedral c1902.  
Photo: State Library of Victoria.

timber works are completely original.

When, in 1851, the settlement of Port Philip was proclaimed the Colony of Victoria, the church was on its original site. It would no doubt have been the site of much celebration and rejoicing, although the church at that time had only one bell, reclaimed from a ship. Six bells were installed in 1852 and a further two shortly afterwards.

On July 1 this year, 175 years later, the church is again to be a part of the celebrations of Victoria becoming a Colony in its own right, with bellringers from around Australia and New Zealand congregating to ring a special "peal" of its eight bells. This involves the ringing of 5040 "changes" on the bells.

While recognising significant events in Melbourne's history, it is also important to remember that the land on which we are celebrating was, and remains, land that is sacred to the original inhabitants of the land, the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, and that the land was never ceded.

Further information or comment about the bellringing can be made to Bill Cook, captain of the St James Bellringers, email: [cookwith@gmail.com](mailto:cookwith@gmail.com) ●

Want to know more about  
Hotham History Project?  
[hothamhistory.org.au](http://hothamhistory.org.au)



## PARKVILLE GARDENS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## Our push for a community hub looks set to drag on



**Our upcoming Quiz Night and Community Dinner promises to be a grand event. Bookings are coming in steadily, so by the time you read this there's every chance we will have a full house.**

For the record the event will kick off with a pizza and pasta dinner at the Reggio Calabria Club at 6.30 pm on Thursday 25 June, followed by lots of fun, courtesy of Funky Bunch Trivia.

The event is funded by the City of Melbourne in the interests of community connection, inclusion and empowerment. Food and entertainment costs are covered, while drinks are available for purchase. It will be a great night together.

Leaving time for the excitement to die down, our next event will be tricks and treats for the local kids at Halloween. We had to give that a miss last year, so fingers crossed and weather permitting it will go ahead this year. After that we have a mystery event scheduled for November and our AGM.

Looking even further ahead, we will be celebrating Harmony Day with a community festival in March next year, thanks to a generous grant from Greater Western Water for which we are most grateful.

We have one more iron in the funding fire, but it may be another few months before we learn the outcome. The Commonwealth Department of Social Services administers grants for volunteers via its Community Grants Hub.

Our first step was to seek endorsement from our federal MP. Happily, the member for Melbourne, Sarah Witty MP, has recommended that we receive a \$1000 grant for software to assist with administration.

Thanks, Sarah! Given her support, we have submitted our application for the grant to be awarded and await the result.

All in all, we're doing our best to serve the community and foster a strong sense of belonging, pride, co-responsibility, safety and cohesion in Parkville Gardens.

One factor that limits our ability to do this is the lack of a community centre of any kind. The one that was promised at the time of the 2006 Commonwealth Games never eventuated.

Twenty years later we were heartened to see in the City of Melbourne's Community Infrastructure Plan a recognition that north-west Parkville "is less connected to the rest of the municipality and lacks flexible, bookable community spaces" and that consideration should be given to "the need for a community hub in north-west Parkville to provide access to programs and services, including flexible community, health and wellbeing spaces."

In view of this, the plan recommends advocating "to the Victorian Government to deliver additional community spaces [and] an uplift in social housing provision ..." The plan was set to be endorsed by the council at its meeting on Tuesday, June 16. It's fair to assume that a council resolution to advocate with the state government is not going to produce concrete outcomes in the short term.

Sadly, it would appear that our dream of a community hub is not about to be realised anytime soon. ●

**Tom Knowles**

PRESIDENT

[PRESIDENT@PGRA.ORG.AU](mailto:PRESIDENT@PGRA.ORG.AU)



## STATE MP

## Kensington is growing fast, but where's the green space?

**Walk along Macaulay Rd in Kensington today and the scale of change is hard to miss. Thousands of new apartments have gone up in recent years, with more on the way.**

The Macaulay area is forecast to house more than 10,000 residents in the next couple of decades, and developments like Local's 477-apartment village at 348 Macaulay Rd and Greystar's 441-apartment project next door are already filling up. Kensington is growing, but growth must be matched with infrastructure and open space if we want to retain our liveability.

Right now, many Kensington residents are missing out on much-needed open space.

Along Moonee Ponds Creek, land sits locked behind chain-link fences, filled with industrial rubbish and inaccessible to the

public.

The City of Melbourne has a clear plan to transform this corridor into a public park, with space to relax or walk the dog, along with cycling connections, and flood mitigation infrastructure. Millions of dollars have already been collected from developer contributions to fund it. And yet, the park remains unbuilt.

The reason? State government inaction.

A land dispute with VicTrack, the state-owned entity that controls the site, has created a bureaucratic deadlock that is preventing the City of Melbourne from moving forward. The funding is there. The plans are there. What's missing is the state Labor government doing its job.

This was predictable and entirely avoidable. Dense development was waved through in Kensington without the state

government ensuring the infrastructure to match was locked in. Families and children moving into these new apartments deserve access to green space, just like everyone else in this city.

There is an urgent decision point right now. I'm calling on the Minister for Planning to finalise and protect the Development Contribution Scheme, support the Public Acquisition Overlay to reserve this land for public use, and work with VicTrack to enable a timely transfer of the land to the City of Melbourne.

Kensington residents should not be denied access to green space because of government inaction. Our community deserves better.

Sign my open letter calling on the minister to act and feel free to reach out to my office on open space in Kensington at: [office@ellensandell.com](mailto:office@ellensandell.com) ●



**Ellen Sandell**

STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE

[OFFICE@ELLENSANDELL.COM](mailto:OFFICE@ELLENSANDELL.COM)





## WHAT'S ON June



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



### WINTER SOLSTICE STREET PARTY

North Melbourne's Errol Street winter festival offers food, mulled wine, live music, family activities, ghost walks and local history, showcasing neighbourhood businesses and community spirit.

**The Courthouse, North Melbourne**

**SATURDAY 20 JUNE, 4PM – 9PM**



### JOELLE MAYBERRY RECENT WORKS AND OLEH WITER *THE SKULLS*

This exhibition explores mortality, permanence and transformation through paintings and bronze sculptures inspired by fleeting materials and experiences.

**One Star Lounge & Gallery**

**UNTIL 21 JUNE, 3PM – 7PM**



### A BIT THING

Explore an immersive Blak family home where art, culture and memory connect through interactive artworks, games, books and stories celebrating community.

**Arts House, North Melbourne**

**27 JUNE – 18 JULY, 10AM – 4PM**



### PONGAPALOOZA

Enjoy a mini-festival featuring ping-pong, pop music, art, clothes swapping and Latin American snacks, while supporting Science For All through event proceeds.

**North Melbourne Community Centre**

**SUNDAY 28 JUNE, 1PM – 4PM**



### SCHOOL HOLIDAY STREET ART WORKSHOPS

School holiday workshops for ages 10+ teach spray-painting, stencil-making and skateboard art, with expert guidance, materials, protective gear and included.

**The Blender Studios**

**UNTIL 9 JULY, 10.30AM – 12.30PM**



### SATURDAYS ARE SASSY NIGHTS

Sassy Italian Restaurant combines Italian dining and live entertainment, offering a vibrant Saturday night experience inspired by *la dolce vita* in Melbourne.

**Saturdays are Sassy Nights**

**UNTIL 25 JULY, 6.30PM – 10PM**



### SOCIAL NETWORKS

Lina Buck's eight-channel installation explores language's role in shaping identity, culture and connection through spoken word, sign and song, featuring diverse participants.

**Meat Market Stables**

**UNTIL 19 JULY, 11AM – 4PM**



### YOUNGHUSBAND MARKET

Younghusband Market brings Rose Street Market's creative vibe to a historic woolshed, transforming it monthly into a lively hub of local makers, art, workshops, music, food and community.

**Younghusband, Kensington**

**SATS UNTIL 15 AUGUST, 10AM – 3PM**



### SONGBIRDS

Engage newborns to 18-month-olds with songs, rhymes, and stories, fostering early language development and rhythm. Programs run only during school terms, pausing for school holidays.

**North Melbourne Library**

**UNTIL 9 DECEMBER, 10.30AM – 11AM**



### KENSINGTON MARKET

Browse the carefully curated range of homewares, sustainable goods, delicious homemade treats, freshly brewed coffee and ceramics. Enjoy live music while you wander around the beautiful town hall. Runs on the third Sunday of the month.

**Kensington Town Hall**

**UNTIL 13 DECEMBER, 10AM – 3PM**



### STRUM AND SING UKULELE GROUP

Whether you're a seasoned strummer or a beginner, this is your chance to pluck those strings, soak up the good vibes and connect with enthusiastic people. Each session has a different theme, and there are spare ukes if you don't have one yet.

**Flemington & Kensington RSL**

**UNTIL 17 DECEMBER, 6PM – 8PM**

## Business Directory

### ANIMAL WELFARE



**Better behaviour starts here**  
Get expert, affordable help for your pet's behaviour – and support animals in need at the same time.  
dogshome.com/behaviour

### POLITICIAN



**ELLEN SANDELL**  
STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE  
(03) 9328 4637 office@ellensandell.com 60 Leicester St Carlton VIC 3053

### PRECINCT




### SCHOOL



www.sccmelb.catholic.edu.au  
273 Victoria St, West Melbourne  
**9321 9200**  
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A HIGHER STATE OF MIND



# AURA

## REFINED RESIDENCES NOW SELLING

AURA at Melbourne Square introduces the Japanese-inspired Vertical Wellness Ecosystem — a new concept in urban living where body, mind, and spirit rise together through a carefully tiered architectural experience. The AURA Club & Gardens on Level 7 offer a holistic retreat where wellness, nature and social connection converge. Lush landscaped grounds flow through sunlit terraces, open-air dining and a tranquil tea pavilion, alongside a comprehensive suite of amenities including pool, hot spa and cold plunge, gym, Pilates and yoga studios, co-working spaces and entertainment rooms—creating a balanced environment for restoration, productivity and shared experience.



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