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JULY 2026 EDITION #61

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Blender Studios founder Adrian Doyle is continuing to push the boundaries of West Melbourne's creative scene, with the Spencer St arts hub now home to a café, gallery, artist studios, workshops and its popular paint lab, where visitors can suit up, grab a paint gun and make their own mark. More on page 8. *Photo: Hanna Komissarova.*

“An appalling process”: Council warns Macaulay vision is being pulled apart

“
The future of Macaulay now rests with Planning Minister Sonya Kilkenny after the City of Melbourne issued a damning response to a state-appointed advisory committee accused of unpicking more than a decade of planning work for Kensington and North Melbourne.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR

”



At their July 7 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, councillors unanimously endorsed a council officer response urging the Minister not to adopt key recommendations of the Macaulay Structure Plan Advisory

Committee, warning the recommendations would undermine the precinct's long-held vision as a mid-rise, mixed-use urban renewal area supported by open space, jobs, affordable housing and community infrastructure.

The committee's most controversial recommendation is to remove mandatory floor area ratio controls – the density caps that sit at the heart of the City of Melbourne's planning scheme amendment C417.

Council officers warned that removing those caps would weaken the link between population growth and infrastructure delivery, creating the prospect of far greater development than the area's roads, parks, drainage, flood mitigation works and community facilities have been planned to support.

The Macaulay Structure Plan, adopted in 2021 after years of consultation, was designed to guide growth across the 90-hectare renewal precinct spanning parts of Kensington and North Melbourne. It planned for around 10,000 residents and 9500 jobs, with a development contributions plan to help fund new open space, community facilities and streetscape upgrades.

But the state-appointed advisory committee has recommended making several mandatory controls discretionary, including floor area ratios (FARs), over-shadowing controls, landscape setbacks and requirements relating to above-ground car parking.

Continued on page 6.

ARTS & CULTURE, PAGE 7

Much-loved
North Melbourne
mural painted
over

EVENTS, PAGE 12

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Festival turns
the page to
local stories

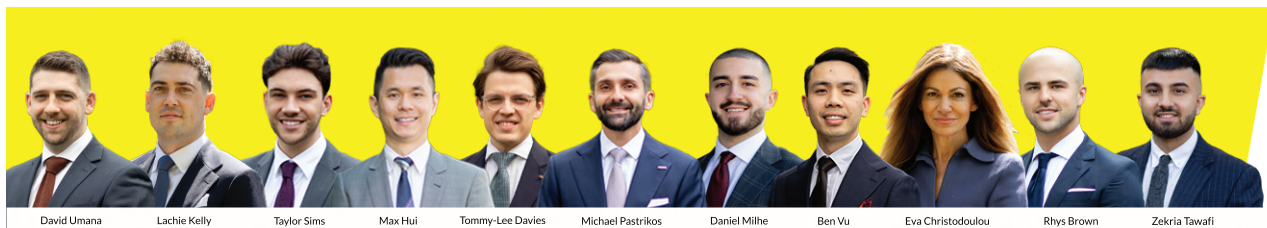
CITY NEWS



PLANNING, PAGE 9

Is this the future of the Arden Precinct?

The City of Melbourne has delivered a scathing rejection of one of the first major proposals in Arden, warning the government that approving it would undermine more than a decade of planning.



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Minister must not ignore the communities that shaped Arden-Macaulay

For more than a decade, communities in North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Kensington have been asked to participate in the future of Arden-Macaulay.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



They have attended meetings, written submissions, shared local knowledge and, in many cases, shown remarkable patience as questions around open space, schools, drainage, affordable housing and infrastructure have remained unresolved.

After the City of Melbourne's July 7 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, that patience is being severely tested.

In one extraordinary night of planning, councillors were given a worrying window into the future of two of Melbourne's most important urban renewal precincts. In Macaulay, the state's advisory committee process appears to have pulled apart years of council-led planning and community input. In neighbouring Arden, two major development proposals showed what can happen when the promise of renewal begins to collide with fast-tracked planning.

One Arden proposal, for a huge tower on Arden St, was rejected outright by councillors. Another, at Munster Terrace, was only supported subject to major conditions around height, overshadowing, affordable housing, apartment mix and amenity. The applicant opposed many of those conditions.



This is not anti-development sentiment. These are communities that understand growth is coming. Arden-Macaulay has long been earmarked for more homes, jobs and density. But density without open space, schools, drainage, community facilities and meaningful affordable housing is not planning. It is simply development.

Kensington residents have particular reason to feel aggrieved. Macaulay was a council-led process, shaped over many years with the community's involvement. Locals invested time, energy and trust into a structure plan that sought to balance growth with liveability. The state government's apparent about-face through the advisory committee process feels, to many, like a slap in the face.

Even seemingly straightforward ambitions, such as creating open space along Moonee Ponds Creek, have become a "complexitron" of bureaucracy involving land ownership, drainage, flood modelling, development contributions and ministerial decision-making. Meanwhile, apartment towers keep rising and the need for green space becomes more urgent.

Arden tells a similarly troubling story. For years, the community has been fed mixed messages: hospitals, then no hospitals;

affordable housing targets, then weakened expectations; a promised school, but no clear site or timeline; a Metro station, but unresolved questions about what will surround it.

It is often said that Arden must not repeat the mistakes of Docklands. But the existence of a railway station does not guarantee good planning. Southern Cross Station was there long before much of Docklands rose around it, and that did not save the precinct from long-running criticisms about poor public realm, weak community infrastructure and a lack of human scale.

It should also concern the community that Development Victoria, the same agency that led Docklands' development, is now leading Arden Central through a process to select a single master developer. That does not mean Arden is destined to fail. But it does mean the Minister for Planning must be especially careful not to let commercial urgency override the public interest.

Current Planning Minister Sonya now has a profound responsibility.

The Development Facilitation Program may be designed to get housing moving, but fast-tracking cannot become a shortcut around context. Context matters, Minister. The people who live in these neighbourhoods now matter. The people who will live there in 10, 20 and 30 years matter too.

Before signing off on decisions that could shape Arden-Macaulay for generations, the Minister must give proper weight to the years of taxpayer-funded planning work already done, and to the communities that helped shape it.

These precincts can still become examples of well-planned urban renewal. But only if liveability is treated not as an optional extra, but as the foundation. ●

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North & West Melbourne Precinct Association

One Star shines as a creative home

“For the past six years, One Star Lounge & Gallery on Victoria St has quietly established itself as one of North Melbourne’s most welcoming creative spaces.”

WORDS BY
CHRIS JACKSON



More than just a gallery, it is a place where art, conversation and community naturally come together, with Victorian artists exhibiting on a fortnightly rotation.

“I curate the exhibits, we change artists every two weeks,” co-owner Katy said.

For Katy and her husband Mick Harvey, musician & founding member of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, opening the gallery was the culmination of a long-held ambition.

“We’d been talking about getting a venue for different art forms when this place came up, so we went for it,” she said.

The couple have called North Melbourne home since the mid-1990s, and when the opportunity arose to transform the former One Star Coffee Lounge into a gallery, Mick was determined to preserve a little piece of the building’s history.

“It used to be the One Star Coffee Lounge,



famous for its Italian coffee,” Katy said. “he really wanted to keep the name.”

While some artists initially found it amusing, telling people they had a show at “One Star”, the name has since become part of the venue’s character.

“I like it because it’s anti-review,” Katy laughed. “Everything has to be five stars.”

Stepping inside, visitors are welcomed into a light-filled gallery separated by original brick arches that frame the exhibition space from the licensed bar. The minimalist interior allows the artwork to take centre stage, with the space transforming every two weeks as new exhibitions are installed.

The gallery has become a popular stop

before dinner or a night out, while plenty of locals finally venture inside after years of walking past.

“So many people say they’ve walked past all the time and it’s the first time they’ve come in,” Katy said. “They really enjoy the art and end up coming back.”

While visitors can enjoy a coffee, wine or beer, Katy is quick to point out that the gallery remains the focus.

“It’s gallery first,” she said. “The bar is there to support it, but hopefully it’s also a meeting place for artists, locals and all sorts of other people.”

That philosophy extends well beyond exhibitions. Alongside fortnightly openings



and closing drinks, One Star regularly hosts film screenings, live music and creative events, with many artists meeting through the space before collaborating on future projects.

“It’s a place where things can happen,” Katy said.

Accessibility also remains central to the gallery’s mission.

“We want to make it accessible, but we also want to maintain a really high quality of work,” she said.

Whether dropping in for a morning coffee, enjoying a glass of wine before dinner or discovering Melbourne’s next emerging artist, One Star Lounge & Gallery has become exactly what its owners hoped it would be – a welcoming creative space where art, ideas and community continue to flourish.

The gallery’s next exhibition, *Walk on the Wild Side* by Stella Sallman, runs from Thursday, July 16 to Sunday, July 26.

One Star Lounge & Gallery is open Thursday and Friday from 3pm to 7pm, Saturday from 1pm to 7pm and Sunday from 1pm to 5pm at 301–303 Victoria St, West Melbourne.

For more information, visit [@onestar-lounge](#) on Instagram. ●

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A helping hand out of homelessness



The City of Melbourne's investing \$2.3 million in homelessness initiatives as part of Budget 2026-27.

For people experiencing homelessness, a pathway to stable housing often begins with something simple: a conversation.

"A huge part of our work is consistency. We keep showing up."

After 8 years working with people sleeping rough in Melbourne, Jessica has seen firsthand how trust is built slowly, one conversation at a time.

"Everyone is different and there's no one-size-fits-all approach. Sometimes a win is someone accepting a cup of coffee and being open to a chat after years of trying to build rapport," says Jessica.

Rain, hail or shine, Jessica's teams are in the city every day. As the coordinator of Launch Housing's Rough Sleepers Initiative and Daily Support Team, they're often the first point of contact for people experiencing homelessness.

In a typical month, the Daily Support Team speaks to more than 130 people across the City of Melbourne. They connect people with health services and crisis accommodation and pathways into longer-term housing.

Jessica says while the work can be challenging, it's deeply rewarding.

"The real beauty of the work we do is seeing people who have been entrenched in sleeping rough find a home after years of persistent engagement with the team."

"We got to know someone who had been sleeping rough for 10 years. He's now moved into safe, secure, long-term supported accommodation where he can stay for the rest of his life if he chooses. This amazing outcome came from years of engagement, relationship building and support from multiple people across the team."

For Jessica, stories like this are a reminder that the right care can change lives.

To help more people find a path out of homelessness, City of Melbourne is investing \$2.3 million in homelessness initiatives as part of Budget 2026-27.

The funding will help back 2 new programs: the Melbourne Outreach Team, delivered by Launch Housing and Ngwala Willumbong, and a new Safe Space Program led by VincentCare.

Led by Jessica, the new Melbourne Outreach Team will help people sleeping rough with referrals to crisis accommodation, supported housing and other essential services.

The service will also double the number of specialist frontline workers on Melbourne's streets and introduce a dedicated complex case manager to provide trauma-informed, long-term care.

"We want to ensure people experiencing homelessness get the care they need most, working alongside trusted partners with expertise in mental health, social services and trauma. Together, we believe we can make a real, positive difference in people's lives," Lord Mayor Nick Reece said.

Jessica says the complexity of homelessness means no single organisation can tackle it alone.



"It takes strong partnerships between outreach services, health providers, housing services and local government to create lasting change."

As part of this broader network, City of Melbourne Community Safety Officers (CSOs) also help connect vulnerable people with services across the city. Their numbers are set to double from 11 to 22 as part of Budget 2026-27.

CSOs are trained in trauma-informed engagement, mental health awareness, cultural safety, substance use and family violence awareness.

The path out of homelessness rarely begins with housing. More often, it starts with trust.

"Treating people with dignity and respect won't solve homelessness but it can make it more likely that people will feel comfortable reaching out for support," Jessica said.



The team connects people with crisis accommodation and longer-term housing. Photo: Launch Housing



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Arden tower backed, but only with major changes

“

One of the first major development proposals to emerge in Arden since the opening of the new Metro Tunnel station has received cautious backing from City of Melbourne councillors, but only if the Minister for Planning imposes significant changes.

”

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



At their July 7 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, councillors voted unanimously to advise the state government that they did not object to a 27-storey build-to-rent tower at 53–65 Munster Terrace, North Melbourne, subject to conditions addressing height, affordable housing, apartment mix, internal amenity and sustainability.

The \$110 million proposal, by Novus Investco with Contour Consultants and Rothelowman Architects, would deliver 250 build-to-rent apartments, ground-floor food and drink premises and community space on a site around 100 metres from the new Arden Station on Laurens St.

The application is being assessed by the Minister for Planning under the state's Development Facilitation Program because it includes an affordable housing component. This means the City of Melbourne is not the decision-maker and has no appeal rights, but was asked to provide advice.

Council officers supported the proposal in principle, noting that 250 new homes in such a well-connected location aligned with the Arden Structure Plan's vision for significant residential growth. However, they said several key issues needed to be resolved before any permit was issued.

The most significant condition is a reduction in height by at least three storeys, or 9.45 metres, to ensure the tower does not create additional overshadowing of the future Arden Central Neighbourhood Open Space.

The proposal reaches 90.73 metres, exceeding the discretionary 64-metre

height limit under the planning controls by more than 26 metres. While it complies with mandatory winter shadow controls, council officers said the additional height would cast about 40 square metres of extra shadow on the future open space at 9am on the September equinox.

Deputy Lord Mayor Roshena Campbell said the application was a major early test for the precinct.

“This is one of the first development proposals for the Arden precinct that is coming before this committee since the implementation of the Arden Structure Plan,” she said.

“This is an incredibly significant planning decision for this council.”

Cr Campbell said the site was clearly suitable for new housing, but warned that growth had to be matched with good design, genuine affordable housing and liveability.

“If at the first hurdle in considering a proposal for Arden, we throw all that planning work out the window, we will be doing an incredible disservice to this precinct and all the future residents who come to live in it,” she said.

The council also wants the affordable housing offer strengthened. The applicant has proposed 10 per cent of dwellings at a minimum 25.1 per cent discount to market rent for 15 years, plus a \$500,000 contribution to the Victorian Social Housing Growth Fund.

Officers recommended this be increased to at least a 30 per cent discount for a minimum of 20 years, arguing the current offer was unlikely to deliver genuinely affordable rents for low- to moderate-income households.

Contour Consultants associate Konrad Braun, speaking on behalf of Novus, said the applicant did not support that condition, arguing the proposal already exceeded the threshold required to enter the Development Facilitation Program.

He also said the applicant opposed the recommended three-storey height reduction, warning it would make the project difficult to deliver.

“We're advised that the reduction in height will make the project difficult to deliver and accordingly we request that the proposal be supported in its current form,” Mr Braun said.

The applicant also opposed conditions seeking greater dwelling diversity and full compliance with private open space and storage standards, arguing the building would include substantial communal amenities.

The current apartment mix includes 61 studios, 92 one-bedroom, 92 two-bedroom and just five three-bedroom apartments.



Council officers said the development should reduce its reliance on studios and include more larger homes to support a broader range of households.

Cr Campbell said it was concerning that one of the precinct's first major residential projects included only five three-bedroom dwellings.

“We want to see a mixture of housing types,” she said.

The Munster Terrace proposal was not the only Arden development before councillors on July 7, with a separate and much larger high-rise proposal for Arden St also considered and not supported.

Together, the applications point to mounting development pressure around the new station precinct at a time when major questions remain over how Arden's promised infrastructure will be delivered.

Development Victoria has recently narrowed the field of potential master developers for Arden Central from four bidders to two, with a decision expected this year. The precinct is intended to become the mixed-use heart of Arden, but residents continue

to question whether schools, open space, drainage and other public infrastructure will keep pace with growth.

The state government previously announced plans for two new hospitals in Arden in 2022, but later scrapped the proposal due to concerns about electromagnetic interference from the Metro Tunnel.

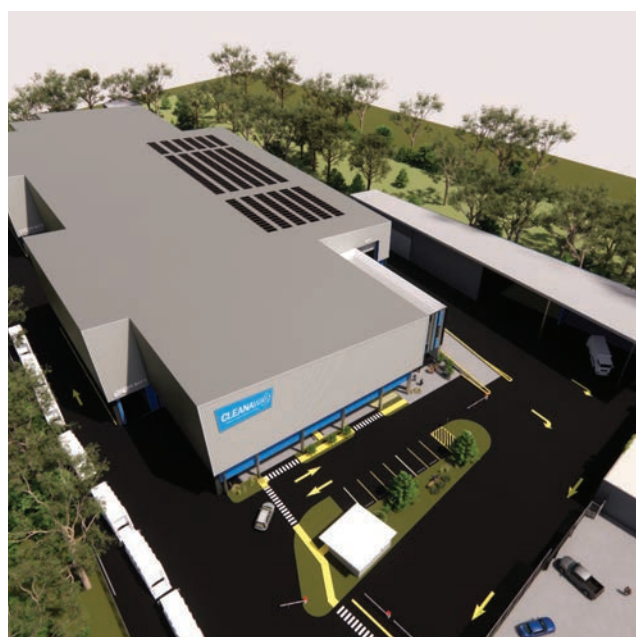
More recently, the government has said it is working to secure a site for a proposed secondary school in Arden, but no location or delivery timeline has been confirmed. Drainage also remains one of the precinct's biggest technical barriers, with major upgrades required before large parts of Arden can be built out.

Cr Andrew Rowse declared a general conflict of interest due to a social connection with a property owner in the vicinity who may be affected by the Munster Terrace proposal and left the chamber before councillors considered and voted on the item. Cr Rafael Camillo and Cr Owen Guest were both absent.

The final decision now rests with the Minister for Planning. ●

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“An appalling process”: Council warns Macaulay vision is being pulled apart

Continued from page 1.

Council management said full implementation of the committee’s recommendations would “undermine” the structure plan’s vision, including affordable housing outcomes, by removing mandatory FARs, omitting mandatory affordable housing contributions and weakening non-residential land-use requirements.

In a strongly-worded submission, Kensington Association chair Dr Kate Kennedy said it was “difficult to overstate how appalling the advisory committee process and final report are”.

The association said the recommended version of C417 was fundamentally different to what the public had seen and been consulted on and would “uncap density control entirely”.

It warned this could encourage development “more than twice” the level forecast in the structure plan, while leaving in place an infrastructure plan designed for a much smaller population.

“The advisory committee recommends that Macaulay can take more than triple the Structure Plan’s forecast population of 10,000 ... but locks in an infrastructure plan designed to meet the needs of 10,000,” the association said.

“That is completely unacceptable.”

Dr Kennedy’s submission warned that abandoning FARs risked a “civil- and community-infrastructure crisis” that would be physically or financially impossible to fix, while fuelling land speculation and reducing housing affordability.

The association also raised concerns that small retail, hospitality and employment uses could be lost from main streets if non-residential use requirements were reduced to mere encouragement, and criticised weaker design requirements, including the potential for above-ground car



parks to dominate parts of the public realm.

The Greens’ state MP for Melbourne, Ellen Sandell, also attacked the recommendations, accusing the state government of repeating “all the same mistakes of Docklands”.

She said residents had been promised new parks, infrastructure and street-level activity to match growth, but could instead face “poorly-designed buildings” and less than half the promised infrastructure.

“Labor is increasing the density of this area by two to three times, but refusing to invest anything extra in parks, schools, affordable housing, public transport or traffic management to match the population growth,” Ms Sandell said.

The July 7 council debate was complicated by conflicts of interest.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece, Deputy Lord Mayor Roshena Campbell, Cr Kevin Louey and Cr Mark Scott all declared material conflicts due to campaign donations from a landowner potentially subject to a public acquisition overlay and left the chamber.

Cr Owen Guest was absent from the meeting.

That left the decision to six councillors: Cr Dr Olivia Ball, Cr Rafael Camillo, Cr Davydd Griffiths, Cr Philip Le Liu, Cr Gladys Liu and Cr Andrew Rowse. The motion, urging the Minister not to adopt the committee’s main recommendations, was carried unanimously.

The conflicts again highlight a recurring tension in Macaulay decisions. Cr Reece and members of his team have had to recuse themselves from multiple votes relating to the structure plan and public acquisition overlays due to campaign donation conflicts linked to landowners in the precinct.

That creates an awkward political reality: the endorsed resolution requests that the Lord Mayor write to the Minister for Planning to press the council’s position, even though he was unable to participate in the vote that settled that position.

Cr Le Liu, who chaired the item, said Macaulay could and should contribute to housing supply, but growth needed to be planned carefully.

“We need planning controls that balance new development with liveability, affordable

housing, open space, flood protection and community infrastructure,” he said.

He said the community’s vision had always been clear: a neighbourhood with housing, jobs, services, open space and infrastructure that supports future populations.

Cr Dr Ball was more blunt, also describing the outcome as “appalling”.

“This council has been stripped of our powers to complete this planning scheme amendment, and the casualty is not us, but our community,” she said.

She said the advisory committee’s recommendation to remove density-based controls “cannot proceed”, arguing it would be reckless to provide infrastructure based on one population forecast while allowing development that could produce far larger and unpredictable populations.

“This is planning done to communities, not with communities,” Cr Dr Ball said. “It’s an appalling process and there is nothing democratic about it.”

The council’s endorsed position asks the Minister to maintain mandatory FARs, include a discretionary affordable housing contribution, retain employment-use requirements, apply a public acquisition overlay to part of 18–76 Robertson St to expand Robertson Street Reserve, and continue pursuing overlays for state government land identified for Macaulay Terraces and Stubbs North Reserve.

It also supports further investigation of the active transport corridor within CityLink land.

After 13 years of planning, the council and community now face a nervous wait.

The advisory committee’s report is with the Minister, and the final decision on whether Macaulay becomes a carefully managed renewal precinct or a test case for uncapped density now sits with Spring Street.

North West City News understands the minister is expected to announce her decision by the end of July. ●





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Much-loved North Melbourne mural painted over

“

The painting-over of a popular North Melbourne mural has prompted bewilderment from those involved in creating it as well as for many members of the community who regarded it as a precious local landmark.

”

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



The City of Melbourne and the North & West Melbourne Precinct Association (NWMPA), which funded and organised the mural project, were reportedly both taken unawares when it was painted over on June 22, although according to the council it was always intended to be temporary.

NWMPA president Sylvia Hungria wrote on social media that she was saddened by the loss of the “much-loved neighbourhood feature”.

The association had invested in the project “in good faith, with the aim of beautifying the neighbourhood and creating a public artwork that the community could enjoy,” she said.

“What makes this particularly disappointing is that the mural existed through the goodwill and cooperation of those involved.”

Adrian Doyle from Blender Studios, who designed and painted the work with his studio mate Matt Hannah (Maha) in 2023, said he had been very upset to learn it had been “buffed”.

“I don’t get why they did it,” he said. “People really liked that one.”

“I had so many people contact me about it so angry.”

The mural was located in both Doyle’s and in Maha’s own neighbourhood.

As the street artist pointed out, the recently white-painted wall has since been adorned with graffiti tags.

Although he couldn’t recall the mural’s exact cost, he estimated it would have been around \$10,000, factoring in the hire of two scissor lifts and the services of a specialist anti-graffiti fixer, in addition to paint and the artists’ fee.

“It was a big production,” he said, of the “really beautiful, really colourful” work, which featured Christmas beetles as part of a Christmas theme as well as waratahs, native birds, and gumnuts.

“We worked for ages getting the composition down.”

The threat to the mural seems to have begun when the building’s former tenants, who were very supportive of it, were forced to close their 7 Eleven after a car crashed into the shop on November 25 last year.

Doyle said he was proudly pointing out his mural to people at a winter solstice party on Errol St on June 21 and being told that everyone loved it.

“The next day someone sent me a photo of it getting buffed.”

There have been suggestions that the building’s owner is planning to replace the wildlife scene with another mural.

North West City News made multiple attempts to contact the owner to find out more but received no response.

“I have a feeling it’ll be advertising or a billboard or something, and I hope the City of Melbourne doesn’t give them the permit,” Doyle said.

Sylvia Hungria said she hoped whatever was planned for the site would “continue the same “spirit of placemaking and community benefit”.

“It would be unfortunate to lose such a prominent cultural landmark to a purely commercial display, especially when the wall has demonstrated the value that public art can bring to our suburb,” she said.

However, according to Doyle, the expensive anti-graffiti coating applied to the mural meant it would be possible to bring it back.

“On the plus side, if enough people made a fuss about it, all that paint could be cleaned off, and underneath, the mural probably wouldn’t be that damaged,” he said.

“We could fix it as it was; it wouldn’t be a big deal.” ●



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Café a gateway to rare blend of art and initiative

“West Melbourne’s Blender Studios now has a café that aims to bridge the gap between the multi-faceted street art enterprise and its local community. Meanwhile founder Adrian Doyle is going hard on an extraordinary range of projects.”

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



On a wintery Saturday afternoon two young guys are having a coffee at the Blender Art Café.

Opened in September last year in the Blender Studios building on Spencer St, the café offers a menu of tasty, freshly made items including fresh chicken sandwiches, smoked salmon bagels, toasties, cookies, cakes and a popular “dirty chocolate berry latte”.

It is largely overseen by Pia Suksodsai, the partner of Blender founder Adrian Doyle, who devised the menu.

After finishing their drinks and glancing around at the books, games and art materials available to play with, the guys wander through the rest of the complex, checking out the open plan studios, where artists work in different genres and mediums, and chatting with a few who are hanging out there.

This is the idea behind the café, Doyle says – to “bring the community in” with good food and coffee and “super-friendly” service, engaging their curiosity in the adjoining gallery and other projects.

A lot of people don’t know what’s going on in the big grey former pub on Spencer St,

he says, and faces are often seen peering in through the windows.

While the café “creates an engagement” with the outside world Blender hasn’t had before, so far the model is only partly working, with the café during the week essentially functioning as a separate entity.

It is also challenging to run, Doyle says, because the studios have so many other projects.

One thing immediately clear about the white-coated artist is that he is not shy of a project.

“If you don’t take risks, then you’re celebrating mediocrity,” he tells North West City News.

“I think sometimes it’s better to lose and at least to have tried than to not try and always wonder.”

It has been 25 years since Doyle set up his “collaborative studio space for artists” which is also “a base for a range of collective art endeavours”.

In addition to Blender’s uncommonly affordable 20-odd artist spaces, its Dark Horse Experiment “research gallery” and new café, he and Pia run “production leg” Blender Creative, which provides murals, installations and other public work for clients ranging from suburban councils to swank hotels.

They also organise urban and street art tours, led by Blender artists, and school workshops covering skateboard spray-paint art, freehand painting and working with stencils.

A popular recent initiative is the “paint lab”, a colourful chaotic “splash room”, where groups of up to 15 people put on protective clothing and get in front of an easel to try their hand at creative work, taking away the results on a canvas afterwards.

The sessions attract a diverse range of people, including school kids, couples on dates, multi-generational family groups and a surprising number of people with disabilities – something new for the studios which Doyle likes a lot.

Generally, “they leave with a big smile on their face” and often “stop and sit in the cafe, and all of a sudden they’re playing Uno,” he says.

The paint room activity, like many of Blender’s other activities, helps pay the rent on the big inner-city building, which



recently went up \$1200 a month.

When he set up Blender Studios in 2001 Doyle was on the dole and it was a month-by-month proposition, he says.

“We just managed to pull it off.”

It was fortunate he was able to stay in the relatively cheap Franklin St space for 17 years.

“Because of property prices it’s nearly impossible for places like Blender to exist anymore,” Doyle says.

“But we’ve been lucky enough that we have been able to monetise it by doing things like the street art tours and workshops.”

In any case, the frenetic activity seems to inspire the 48-year-old, who along the way has found time to complete a PhD on the role Blender Studios has played at “the intersection of street art and fine art” and still makes and shows his own work.

“The more things that are happening here, the cooler it is,” he says.

“Sometimes the studios can have three paint workshops in a day, this place is packed.

“There’s the school holiday projects going on, there’s an artist in residency upstairs, we get international artists come through. There’s like a million things happening at once, and it’s just so exciting.”

“I love it when it’s crazy busy.”

On the day North West City News visits, Doyle has just hours earlier arrived back from Thailand, where he is building a gallery on the Malay peninsula, where Pia has family.

The next phase of their creative lives, and of Blender’s, is something of a work in progress, he acknowledges.

But that’s ok for an artist whose philosophy includes a commitment to not repeating himself.

“Everything’s changing,” Doyle says. “We don’t quite know how it’s all going to pan out.

“But we’ve just got to throw shit into the wind.”

Blender Art Café is at Blender Studios at 400 Spencer St, West Melbourne.

For more information: theblenderstudios.com ●

Council slams “rule book” bypass on Arden tower

“

The City of Melbourne has delivered a scathing rejection of a major high-rise proposal in Arden, warning Planning Minister Sonya Kilkenny that approving the project would undermine more than a decade of planning work for one of Melbourne’s most important urban renewal precincts.

”

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



At their July 7 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, councillors unanimously backed an alternative motion advising the Minister that the council did not support proposed Planning Scheme Amendment C492Melb for 189–203 Arden St, North Melbourne.

The application, lodged by Arden Village Group under the state government’s Development Facilitation Program, seeks to enable two towers of 44 and 28 storeys, reaching 162 metres and 110 metres respectively. The development would include 619 dwellings, retail space and a proposed linear open space along Laurens St, on a site directly opposite North Melbourne Recreation Reserve and next to the new Arden Metro Tunnel Station.

But the council’s concern is not simply the size of the project. It is the way the proposal seeks to use a site-specific planning control to bypass the recently adopted Arden planning framework, including height, density, overshadowing and infrastructure contribution requirements.

Council officers said the project was one of the first major development proposals in Arden since Amendment C407 implemented the Arden Structure Plan in 2022. They warned that approving a site-specific control so early in the precinct’s life would undermine the objectives of the structure plan and set a dangerous precedent for future development.

Deputy Lord Mayor Roshena Campbell, who moved the alternative motion, was particularly blunt.

“In my view, seeking a site-specific planning control is simply inappropriate in circumstances in which over a decade of strategic planning work has just been completed for this precinct,” Cr Campbell said.

“This proposal in essence asks us to throw away all of that rate-payer and taxpayer-funded work and instead consider



something that throws that rule book out the window.”

The proposal far exceeds the preferred controls for the Arden Central Innovation sub-precinct. Council officers reported that the eastern tower’s proposed height of 162 metres is well above the preferred 81 metres, while the project’s floor area ratio of 15.54:1 is also significantly above the preferred 10:1.

The amendment would also exempt the development from mandatory shadowing requirements, development contributions and public open space contributions. Council officers estimated the exemption from the Arden Development Contributions Plan alone would cost about \$17 million to \$17.5 million in infrastructure contributions.

Cr Campbell said that money would otherwise help fund parks, streets, public realm improvements and community infrastructure to support Arden’s future population.

“In our view, the Minister simply should not make such a decision in the absence of finding an alternative way to fund that infrastructure or compelling the applicant to do so,” she said.

The council’s adopted motion argues that the proposal lacks sufficient strategic and economic justification, or public benefit, to warrant such a substantial departure from the planning controls. It also says

there is inadequate information to assess the affordable housing outcome, despite the proposal indicating that 15 per cent of the 619 apartments would be affordable housing.

Officers also warned the project was overwhelmingly residential and did not provide enough non-residential floor space for institutions, small businesses or anchor tenants, despite Arden being planned as an employment and innovation precinct.

The public realm impacts were another major concern. The proposal would overshadow future protected open spaces, while the proposed Laurens St open space was described by officers as unacceptable because it would be encumbered above and below ground by basement levels, wind mitigation measures, stairs and ramps.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said the application was the third development considered by councillors that night under the state’s Development Facilitation Program, and each had raised “very significant issues”.

With the Arden St proposal, he said councillors were being asked to consider a project “more than double the height controls”, more than 50 per cent above the preferred floor area ratio, and seeking exemptions from overshadowing and development contribution requirements.

“It’s as if they’re having a lend of us,” Cr

Reece said. “It is just so over the odds, so beyond anything that we’ve ever seen here at Town Hall.”

He said Melbourne’s reputation for liveability was built on being a well-planned city, not one that discarded carefully developed rules when a major proposal arrived.

“Yes, we want to see projects going here in the City of Melbourne. We are, after all, a pro-development council and we support development,” Cr Reece said. “But we don’t want to throw out the rule book.”

The concern for Arden is that this proposal is not an isolated test. The precinct is only just beginning to emerge around the new Metro Tunnel station, while key infrastructure questions remain unresolved, including the timing and location of a promised secondary school. The precinct continues to face complex drainage and infrastructure challenges as a Development Victoria decision awaits this year on the winning consortia to deliver Arden Central.

If approved in its current form, councillors fear the Arden St tower could become a precedent for future projects seeking to bypass the very controls designed to ensure growth is matched by open space, jobs, infrastructure and liveability.

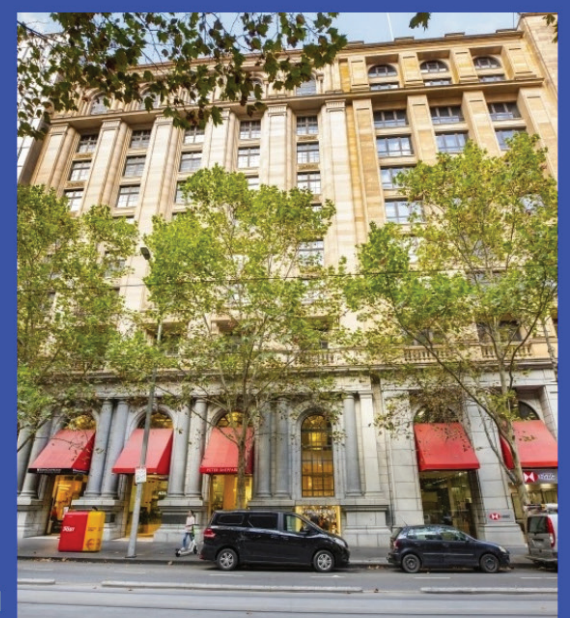
The final decision now rests with Ms Kilkenny, who is expected to determine the amendment imminently. ●

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Urban forest plans aim to cool growing inner north-west

North and West Melbourne and Kensington will be targeted for new tree planting, biodiversity corridors and more resilient streetscapes under updated urban forest plans being considered by the City of Melbourne.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The final Urban Forest Precinct Plans for Kensington, Docklands and North and West Melbourne went before the July 7 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, setting out 10-year directions for street tree planting and urban greening.

The plans form part of the council's broader Urban Forest Strategy, which aims to increase tree canopy cover across the municipality to 40 per cent by 2040.

For the inner north-west, the plans come at a time of major change, with growth in Arden, Macaulay and West Melbourne placing renewed pressure on streets, open space and local amenity.

North and West Melbourne currently has 18.1 per cent canopy cover, below the municipal average and well below established greener precincts such as South Yarra, East Melbourne, Parkville and Carlton.

Kensington performs more strongly, with 24.1 per cent canopy cover, but the plan says there are still opportunities to improve greening, particularly in recently developed areas, along creek corridors and railway lines.

The council report says the plans are informed by tree data, including canopy

cover, age, health, species and neighbourhood character, as well as environmental data such as heat, biodiversity, climate risk, water opportunities and land use.

It also says the updated plans reflect an evolution in urban forest planning, with tree species diversity now targeted to reduce risks from pests and diseases, and streets prioritised according to canopy cover and the performance of existing trees.

In Kensington, the plan builds on the suburb's distinctive "urban village" character, with the Macaulay Rd shopping precinct, established residential streets, industrial history and nearby Arden-Macaulay renewal area all shaping future planting.

Kensington's urban forest is strongly influenced by peppercorns, ash and native trees along the historic stock route and railway corridor, as well as strong avenue plantings of English elms and London plane trees.

Community feedback calls for the suburb's urban forest to contribute to a "walkable,

self-sustaining residential suburb", build on existing and planned green spaces, and create habitat corridors for wildlife.

The plan notes support for more native species, more understorey planting and better greening along Moonee Ponds Creek and rail corridors.

Kensington has one street mapped as important for insect pollinator habitat, while three streets have been identified as potential biodiversity corridors because of their connections between parks and their suitability for more diverse planting.

The plan also recognises the need to care for significantly aged avenues, many of which date back to early planned street planting programs in Melbourne.

In North and West Melbourne, the urban forest reflects a more varied history of industrial, residential, commercial and cultural uses.

The plan describes the precinct as having a strong cultural identity linked to its arts

community and proximity to Queen Victoria Market, with a mix of wide streets, planted medians, narrow lane-ways and dense residential pockets.

Its tree character is shaped by mature spotted gums and other eucalypts, as well as elms and planes common across the city. North Melbourne has more native species than many other parts of the municipality, while West Melbourne has the highest percentage of indigenous species.

Community feedback for North and West Melbourne calls for a well-planned, climate-resilient, sustainable and healthy urban forest where people, flora and fauna can thrive together in a cool, water-wise and walkable neighbourhood.

Residents identified opportunities for more planting in recently developed areas, more biodiversity and better walking and cycling corridors along waterways and railway lines.

The plan also acknowledges that some species central to the area's character, including elms, are vulnerable to rising temperatures, pests and disease. It says alternative species should be used where possible to make the urban forest more resilient.

The plans note that trees can take up to 20 years to provide significant canopy cover, meaning streets with low canopy but recent planting are expected to improve over time. Streets with low canopy and no recent planting will be prioritised over the next decade.

The report says delivery costs will be considered through future annual plan and budget processes. The estimated cost to deliver the three precinct plans in full over 10 years is \$2.52 million. ●



Brazilian Cultural Centre opens in Kensington

“

Victoria's first Brazilian Cultural Centre has opened in Kensington, creating a new home for Melbourne's Brazilian community to connect, celebrate culture and access support services.

”

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Located at 41 Stubbs St, the centre was officially launched with an open day on June 27 featuring live Brazilian music, food and activities for all ages.

The new facility includes community service rooms offering Portuguese-language support for mental health, legal advice and consular matters, as well as a small library featuring works by Brazilian and Australian authors.

It also includes an auditorium designed to host art exhibitions, film screenings and other cultural events showcasing Brazilian creativity across music, dance, literature, theatre, visual art and more.

The centre is modelled on a successful pilot program in Sydney and aims to provide a dedicated space where Brazilians living in Melbourne can maintain cultural connections while sharing their traditions with the wider community.

Future programming is expected to include yoga, Brazilian dance and Portuguese language classes for residents of Kensington and surrounding suburbs.

According to 2021 Australian Bureau of

Statistics Census data cited by the centre, Melbourne is home to 5427 Brazilian-born residents, making it the third-largest Brazilian-born population in Australia after the Gold Coast and Sydney. Australia is home to more than 70,000 people of Brazilian nationality.

The centre's organisers expect that number to have grown in recent years, particularly with the return of international students to Australia after 2022.

The opening marks a significant milestone for Melbourne's Brazilian community and adds another layer to Kensington's growing cultural and community life.

The centre is open weekdays 9am-5pm ●



Open House unlocks north-west city stories

From build-to-rent housing to Victoria's public records and Ukrainian history, this year's Open House Melbourne Weekend will offer behind-the-scenes access to some of the city's most interesting buildings, stories and ideas.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



Held from Friday, July 24 to Sunday, July 26, the festival will feature more than 180 buildings and "experiences" under the theme "generous city".

In Melbourne's north-west, Open House will lean into its architectural roots by showcasing several build-to-rent developments

that demonstrate new ways of thinking about housing, design and "people and planet-first architecture".

Open House Melbourne executive director and former architect Tania Davidge told *North West City News* the build-to-rent model remained relatively uncommon in Australia.

"It's interesting, I think, for a country that is essentially in a housing crisis, to understand how it might work," she said.

The issue will be explored through tours of Local: Kensington at 348 Macaulay Rd, a project designed by Hayball architects and comprising six buildings arranged around a landscaped courtyard.

The development includes shared co-working spaces, creative studios, lounges, bookable kitchens, a 24-hour gym, green space and a "bark park".

Its 42 homes include social housing for women over 55, affordable homes for key workers and specialist disability housing.

Fully electric and with a "6 Star Green

Star" rating, the initiative "shows what renting on another level can look like in practice", according to Open House.

In North Melbourne, Breathe Architecture principal Camilla Carmichael will lead a tour through Two Sisters at 8 Curzon Place, a "sweet bespoke development" where 10 one-bedroom townhouses, four apartments and a music studio have been created for two sisters and their community out of a former warehouse.

The project has also transformed a once gated and neglected laneway, returning it to the public realm and landscaping it to provide a space for residents and neighbours to gather.

On a different note, visitors will also have the chance to go beyond the airlocked doors of the Victorian Archives Centre on Shiel St.

Inside the carefully maintained, dust-free and climate-controlled environment, more than 100 kilometres of colonial, state and Commonwealth government records dating

back to 1836 are stored.

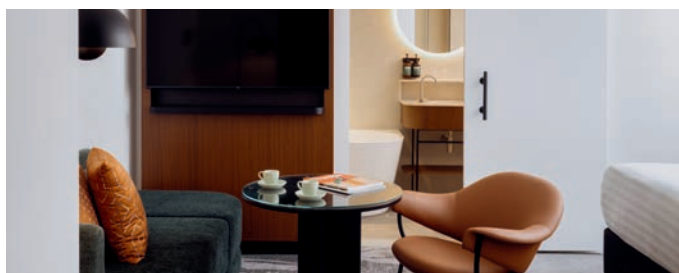
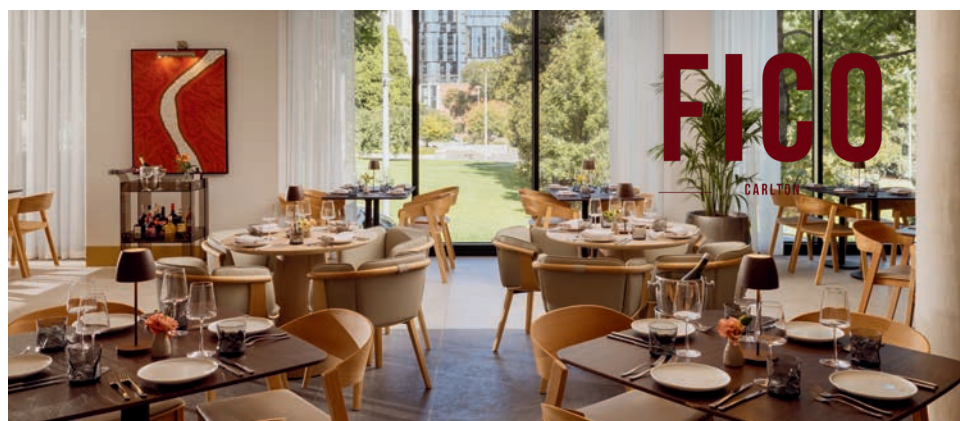
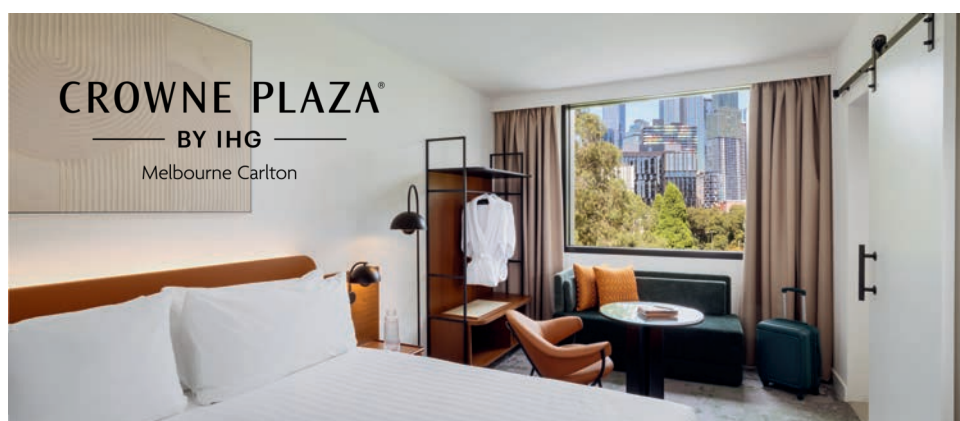
The tour promises "a peek inside the drawers, boxes and cabinets" and insight into how records are selected, stored and preserved.

The documents will be brought to life through the narratives hidden in maps, plans, images and files, including love letters used in a criminal trial and snapshots taken by government photographers.

For a different kind of historical experience, guided tours of the St Peter and Paul Ukrainian Cathedral in Canning St will offer visitors a chance to explore the building's architecture and interior design, including its stained-glass windows and sacred art.

Led by clergy, the tours will also share the story of the Ukrainian church, from its ancient Byzantine roots to its mission in the modern world, as well as the history of Melbourne's Ukrainian community, which grew after arrivals following the Second World War.

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Flem/Ken Writers Festival turns the page to local stories

Kicking off on Friday, July 17 with an already sold-out dinner, the brand-new Flem/Ken Writers Festival aims to celebrate the literary depth of the community and offer fresh and inclusive conversations and cultural connections.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



At a time when many people feel “stretched by the bare necessities of modern life” literature lover Amy Faram wanted to create an opportunity for the community to slow down, come together and have new cultural encounters and “curious conversations”.

These can “reinforce your sense of place in the world and remind you that there’s possibly more good than bad out there, when you might not always feel that way,” the Flem/Ken Writers Festival organiser told North West City News.

She also wanted to support her neighbourhood’s “high per-capita rate of resident writers” and show her young teenage kids that “that sort of creative life is happening here”.

“A little festival that sort of draws them out” would be a great way to do it, she thought.

A few months later, an impressive lineup was in place for the winter writers’ weekend, which will revolve around the Flem Ken Bowling Club.



▲ Festival founder Amy Faram with slam poet and workshop presenter Mo Sudi at the Flem Ken Bowling Club “festival hub”. Photo: Hanna Komissarova.

Local and near-local luminaries, including author Helen Garner, historian and political scientist Jenny Hocking and award-winning novelists Tony Birch, Katherine Brabon and Murray Middleton, will take part in events exploring “neighbourhood and personhood”, “perspectives in story telling” and the legal battle to release “the Palace letters”.

There will be sessions on using public records to bring stories to life and on writing and appreciating poetry, while Footscray-based outfit 100 Story Building is running fiction workshops for kids.

An “enchanted” show by The Village

Square featuring live music and “stories of love, loss, misfortune and mirth” will be the Saturday night attraction, while a blues poetry slam with the Melbourne Blues Appreciation Society and slam poet Mo Sudi will close out the festival on Sunday afternoon.

For Katherine Brabon, who rediscovered the “small town feel” of her early years in the country when she moved to Flemington five years ago, the idea of being able to walk to the festival and join events with writers she has seen at local cafes is a novel and exciting prospect.

Winner of the Vogel’s Literary Award in 2016 for her book *The Memory Artist*, set in Russia, and the People’s Choice NSW Premier’s Literary Award for her 2021 novel *The Shut Ins* about the isolated hikikomori in Japan, the young author is a keen observer of place and its implications.

Her latest work, *Partum*, a novella set to be published by Ultimo Press in December, features Flemington in “a closely considered way” through the lens of a character “very much tied to their suburb”.

Katherine’s Saturday afternoon event with novelist Laura McPhee-Browne is set to explore location, among other things.

“We’ve both written about Melbourne, but we’ve also both written a lot about other locations,” she said.

Laura’s latest book, *Worry Doll*, “beautifully brings to life Melbourne and also some locations in New Zealand,” with “the very evocative atmosphere” contributing to its themes.

“I think we both like to explore identity, relationships with the body, even how place can impact and shape us,” she said.

Amy says local businesses have warmly embraced the festival initiative and the City of Melbourne has provided a small grant but most support received so far has been of a material nature, meaning organisers have put up the money to cover its costs.

“I felt like even in these tough times some of us had some disposable income to spend on something that we think is important,” she said.

“We think we’ll recover those costs, and we’re looking at getting there.

“We still need to sell a few more tickets and T-shirts, but I think we’ll get there, and I think it’ll be a really great weekend.”

For more information: flemkenwritersfestival.org ●

Council spends \$150K collecting nangs, votes in favour of crackdown

The City of Melbourne has acknowledged it lacks a proper management plan for dumped nitrous oxide cannisters or “nangs” and has voted to support a crackdown on the misuse of the gas and seek the development of a multi-agency response to the problem.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



Following an early July announcement by the NSW government that it will tighten laws around supply of nitrous oxide, Lord Mayor Nick Reece moved a motion at a Future Melbourne Committee meeting noting the “growing public health, public amenity and waste impacts associated with nitrous oxide misuse and the dumping of nitrous oxide canisters in the municipality”.

As North West City News has reported, the gas, which is being used recreationally by young people in many countries around the world, is listed as a Schedule 6 poison under Australia’s *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act* – meaning it is considered to have moderate potential to cause harm, which can be reduced through strong warnings and safety directions on packaging.

Its sale or supply for inhalation outside of medical settings is prohibited in Victoria but it is readily available in Melbourne, including via 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week home delivery by companies professing to



▲ Cr Rafael Camillo with Lord Mayor Nick Reece during a social media video promoting the council’s efforts to curb the use of nangs in the city.

sell it for culinary purposes.

When inhaled, it is “rapidly absorbed by the body and produces a rush of euphoria, heightened consciousness and disassociation that includes both anaesthetic and sedative components,” according to a recent report by the Victorian Coroner’s Court.

“Two years ago, I had never heard of nangs,” the Lord Mayor told councillors at the July 7 Future Melbourne Committee meeting. “Now they’re an absolute scourge

on our city.”

Large silver or brightly coloured gas canisters were appearing daily on footpaths, in laneways or piled up next to rubbish bins, he said, signalling a growing public health concern as well as a waste problem.

“Victorian hospitals are seeing increasing numbers of patients with serious health problems including nerve damage, paralysis, mental health complications, brain rot and death,” Cr Reece said.

“There were indeed four deaths last year here in Melbourne because of nangs,” he said, acknowledging also the legitimate uses of the gas.

His motion noted that the collection and disposal of the containers was “a difficult and costly business”, with more than 6600 illegally dumped canisters costing ratepayers \$146,000 over the past 12 months.

Furthermore, there had been incidents of them exploding inside waste trucks and bins.

“We need to get a proper policy and strategy in place for how we collect and dispose of these nangs,” he said.

“Practical steps” the council endorsed included “writing to ministers and appropriate department heads calling for intervention” and facilitating a roundtable to develop a coordinated plan.

It also asks council officers “to investigate practical and logical measures including faster removal of dumped canisters, better reporting systems, collection programs and also looking to learn from other cities who are considerably more advanced than Melbourne is in dealing with this issue.”

The motion calls also for a ban on flavoured nitrous oxide, and as a result of amendments introduced by Cr Dr Olivia Ball, a ban on “nozzle silencers”, which make the gas more amenable to consume, as well as the introduction of plain packaging with mandatory health warnings.

The Lord Mayor thanked “the many active citizens and residents” who had brought the issue to the attention of the council, particularly Matthew Harris from the owners’ corporation at the Aurora building on Latrobe St.

The council voted unanimously in support of the approach, which will see council staff report back on the issue in three months. ●

HISTORY



History comes alive on Errol St

On June 20, Errol St became the setting for the second Winter Solstice Street Party, a local celebration of the longest night of the year supported by the Hotham History Project.

WORDS BY
CLAIRE MORGNER

Organised and hosted by the team from The Courthouse Hotel, the event brought together locals, traders and history enthusiasts for an evening of food, drink, storytelling and winter atmosphere.

Local hospitality favourites Here's Looking at You Kid, Bakery Hill and Bear's Wine Bar served up snacks, street food, cheese platters, mulled wine and spirits. Here's Looking at You Kid also created a special "After Dark" negroni for the occasion, which proved popular with the crowd.

Entertainment was provided by volunteers from Hotham History Project and Arts House, with tours of the Town Hall Belltower running every 15 minutes.

The tours attracted strong interest and provided a rare opportunity for locals to glimpse inside one of North Melbourne's best-known landmarks, while taking in a unique view of Errol St and the Winter Solstice festivities below.

Ghost tours were also popular, with children following the path of the bluestone laneways to hear stories about the night soil man, the resident "ghost" of Flinders Street Station, and a regular ghostly apparition on one particular Route 58 tram.

Even the downpour at 6.30pm could not dampen spirits. Once everyone had dried off, the festivities continued into the night.

Author Fiona Gatt attended a fireside chat to share stories from her bestselling book *Old North Melbourne*, while local cultural archaeologist and ghost sign enthusiast Sean Reynolds chatted to attendees under the marquee.

The final fireside chat of the night was hosted by Andrew Chapman, who drew a crowd with his retelling of the famous Crutchy Push murder trial. The Crutchy Push was a notorious gang that terrorised inner Melbourne during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Courthouse Hotel's Ryan Moses said organisers were thrilled with the response.

"We were overwhelmed by the support," he said. "We really didn't expect such a terrific turnout."

"Clearly the community loves the chance to connect and hopefully it is something we can bring back next winter." ●



Want to know more about
Hotham History Project?
hothamhistory.org.au



PARKVILLE GARDENS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



Quiz night and questions for you

The table with the youngest team was crowned trivia champion at our Quiz Night and Community Dinner on June 25.

They certainly had an age advantage for questions relating to popular culture, but a great time was had by all.

A happy mix of new and familiar faces, wonderful hospitality from our host Carlo Pavia at the Reggio Calabria Club, and a well-practised and congenial quiz master all played their part in making the evening most enjoyable.

Special thanks to Carlo for the generosity of his catering – a full three-course meal at a special bargain price for the residents' association. Thank you, Carlo, you did us proud!

All in all, the event fulfilled Parkville Garden Residents' Association's (PGRA) constant aim of bringing local residents together in a safe, inclusive and welcoming way.

It was really satisfying to see a bunch of people so diverse in age, way of life, and cultural heritage spend the evening together in such a convivial community spirit.

The only qualification to this verdict of success was our disappointment at several no-shows, as a result of which some on the waitlist missed out on the night.

We now hibernate for a while. Our next event will be the AGM in a month or two, followed by Halloween and an exciting community event in November.

Committee members and office-bearers are elected on an annual basis at the AGM, so now is the time to consider putting up your hand to serve the community.

What's involved? The committee meets once a month except in January. That's when we consider issues that concern the

neighbourhood, determine what action we can take, plan our events, and allocate tasks. It's a very positive and satisfying commitment to make.

A key associate member of the team is our City of Melbourne Neighbourhood Partner Nas Mohammud. Nas keeps us informed about and connected to council initiatives that are of benefit to Parkville Gardens. It's a vital link.

This month she alerted us to possible grants and to the upcoming publication of the Parkville Parking Review and the City's Urban Forest Plan consultation. That prompted mention of the Snap, Send, Solve app that can be downloaded to your mobile and used to report issues of concern to the council.

In recent times the committee has operated with two office-bearers, a president and a secretary/treasurer. As one might expect, these are more demanding roles. A preferable arrangement would be to split the role of secretary/treasurer and add a vice-president.

Please consider putting your hand up for any one of these positions. They'll all be vacant at the AGM.

One committee member who came on board at the last AGM, Vicki Boyle, has moved away from Parkville Gardens and therefore submitted her resignation.

Thanks, from us all, Vicki, for the fine contribution that you made in that time. It was great to have your company, and we wish you all the best. ●

Tom Knowles

PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT@PGRA.ORG.AU



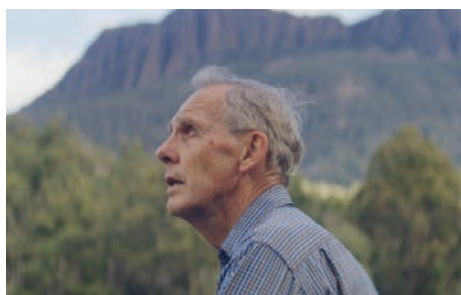
ENVIRONMENT

Love is the most ancient practice of land care

For First Nations people it's embedded in the way they relate to land, the sea, birds, animals, stones, rivers, etc. Connection, listening to and caring for are part of the practice.

Love for the land shifts our relationship from one of extraction to one of stewardship. A common meaning of stewardship is "the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care". Some say this puts humans in a position of "dominance over" whereas Indigenous cultures view us as part of the web of life.

Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council's statement on their website says "Cultural Heritage is the legacy we inherited from our Ancestors. And it includes responsibilities to protect both the physical aspects – land, water, flora, fauna and today, archaeology; and the intangible aspects – our story, language, mythology and lore. Our Ancestors



understood that caring for Country allowed Country to care for them".

When did we stop caring for land that environmental movements had to begin?

Rather than a single moment in time, a series of accelerating phases such as the Industrial revolution, the colonial era, to the present advent of synthetic fertilisers, heavy mechanisation and global supply chains post-World War II have seen humanity's relationship shift from reciprocal custodianship to mass exploitation.

Pre-industrial times showed a greater respect and awareness for nature in general, as most people lived and worked within it. Yet several civilisations perished because of environmental collapse. Even back in Palaeolithic times it has been reported that over hunting by humans caused extinction, and maybe the impact was not so significant as there were much less humans than there are today.

When we become disconnected from place, is this when we stop caring? When we are moved off our homelands by war, famine – displacement taking us to lands we were not born in - does this impact our care for land?

Greening needs to occur in our hearts and our minds.

"Coming to love the land involves coming to view the land's interests as our own" says R. Briggs in an environmental ethics extract from *The Greening of Heart and Mind: A Love Story*.

Returning to love as a way to care for the

land means moving from a mindset of ownership to one of kinship. Some things we can do are cultivate daily intimacy, track seasonal changes, practice gratitude, take only what is needed, leave spaces better, give back to the soil – the foundation of life.

Align with Indigenous wisdom and foster biological health.

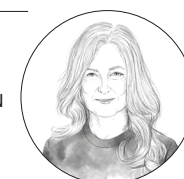
When we return to this and advocate for the wellbeing, caring and nurturing of land (directly related to the wellbeing of humanity) we will not allow the rapid technological and other advances such as AI data centres to go unchecked.

Greening is not just an external landscaping project; it is a profound internal shift. ●

Jacqui van Heerden

CO-CONVENER OF TRANSITION
TOWN KENSINGTON

JACQUIVANHEERDEN@GMAIL.COM



Quiz



1. Which country hosted the first Commonwealth Games in 1930?
2. Which Kensington church sold for \$2.8 million in June?
3. Author Lynley Dodd is best known for her books about which canine character?
4. What is the name of the 3600-square-metre open space planned for Kensington and Macaulay?
5. Who were the two lead actors in the 1978 film *Grease*?
6. Willis-Ekbom Disease is more commonly known by what name?
7. Which community facility on Melrose Street is being redeveloped by the City of Melbourne?
8. The chequered markings on emergency service vehicles are named after which patterned cake?
9. Chloë Sevigny (pictured) played Nicolette Grant in which drama TV series about Mormon fundamentalism?
10. What is the name of the new Korean eatery that recently opened on Macaulay Road in Kensington?
11. Which school was visited by Education Minister Ben Carroll in June?
12. Which historic North Melbourne pub has been described as the suburb's 'second lounge room'?

QUIZ SOLUTIONS

1. Canada 2. Christ Church Kensington 3. Harry MacLary 4. Chelmsford Street Open Space 5. John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John 6. Restless legs syndrome 7. The North Melbourne Community Hub 8. Battenberg cake 9. *Big Love* 10. Mr Bap 11. Kensington Primary School 12. The Three Crowns Hotel

5x5

No. 325

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

B		E		D
	E		U	
A		E		T
	E		S	
S		Y		R

SOLUTIONS

BLEND, REVUE, AVERT, TERSE, SLVER

PUZZLES AND PAGINATION
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July, 2026

Sudoku

No. 060

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

EASY

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

HARD

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

SOLUTIONS

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

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

Wordfind

Theme: Peru

The leftover letters will spell out a secret message.

A	L	A	T	O	C	A	E	T	I	O
M	N	Y	S	O	C	C	H	F	A	M
A	M	A	E	Q	U	O	C	A	C	C
Z	O	C	R	U	S	N	I	A	A	C
O	N	U	O	I	C	D	V	C	P	A
N	K	C	F	N	O	O	E	Z	L	C
H	E	H	N	O	U	R	C	A	A	T
P	Y	O	I	A	I	C	C	N	H	U
S	N	I	A	T	N	U	O	M	U	S
A	M	E	R	I	C	A	N	D	E	S
M	O	C	H	E	J	A	G	U	A	R

- ALPACA
- AMAZON
- AMERICA
- ANDES
- AYACUCHO
- CACTUS
- CEVICHE
- CONDOR
- CUSCO
- JAGUAR
- MOCHE
- MONKEY
- MOUNTAINS
- NAZCA
- QUINOA
- RAINFOREST

Secret message: Location of Machu Picchu

Crossword

No. 060

ACROSS

- 1 Suggests (7)
- 5 Expressing much in few words (7)
- 9 Terrific (9)
- 10 Caribbean Sea island (5)
- 11 Sequence (6)
- 12 Becoming prominent (8)
- 14 Red wine (6)
- 15 Most important; major (4)
- 19 Not false (4)
- 20 Commercial (6)
- 24 Self-government (8)
- 25 Water-surrounded land mass (6)
- 27 Florida port (5)
- 28 From Oslo, e.g. (9)
- 29 Sources of light made with wax (7)
- 30 Traditions (7)

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
9										10				
11							12							
16		17								18				
19						20								
24														
27														
29														

DOWN

- 1 Brew; steep (6)
- 2 Food cupboard (6)
- 3 Female name (8)
- 4 Places oneself on a chair (4)
- 5 Railway vehicle (10)
- 6 Objects for sitting (6)

- 7 Maritime (8)
- 8 Replenishing (a battery) (8)
- 13 Medications given to a patient (10)
- 16 Second largest ocean in the world (8)
- 17 Large Australian spider (8)

- 18 Members of a trust (8)
- 21 Encompass (6)
- 22 Gambling house (6)
- 23 Ancient Greek figure of beauty (6)
- 26 Australian actor – Bana (4)

SOLUTION

S	W	O	I	S	N	O	S	E	T	I	O	N	V	O
I	N	E	I	L	I	Y	I							
N	V	I	E	M	R	O	N	V	A	V	I			
O	S	I	E	E	I	S	N							
G	N	V	I	S	I	A	W	O	N	O	I	N	V	
V	O	N	E	I	E	N	I							
I	H	E	A	G	V	E	N	I						
G	T	I	E	E	E	H	V							
N	I	V	E	I	E	H	V							
I	O	S	O	I	T	A	E							
O	N	I	O	E	S	E	I	E	S					
B	I	I	O	S	E	S	I	E	S					
H	V	E	E	V	O	I	S	V	N					
H	V	H	O	I	S	V	N							
O	I	N	O	O	V	T	S	E	I	E	S			

Codeword

No.030

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

SOLUTIONS

F	C	A	O	M	E	L	U	Y	X	B	R	N	K		
W	Z	J	D	G	T	V	Q	P	I	H	S				

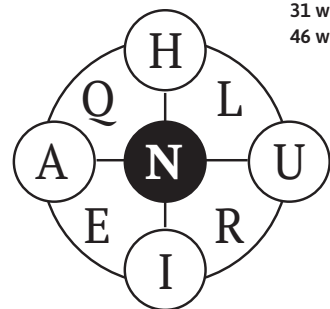
9-Letter

No. 060

Today's Focus:

- 20 words: Good
- 31 words: Very good
- 46 words: Excellent

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

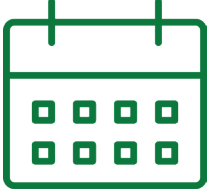


Reference: Macquarie Dictionary

SOLUTIONS

alien, anil, anile, earn, elan, HARLEQUIN, hernia, hernial, hinau, inhale, inhale, inhaled, inure, lain, lane, laring, lean, learn, lien, line, linear, lunar, lunge, nail, narlu, near, neural, quern, quin, rain, rani, rein, renal, rhinal, ruin, rune, uhlau, ulan, ulna, ulnae, unhalr, unreal, urinal, urine

WHAT'S ON
July



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

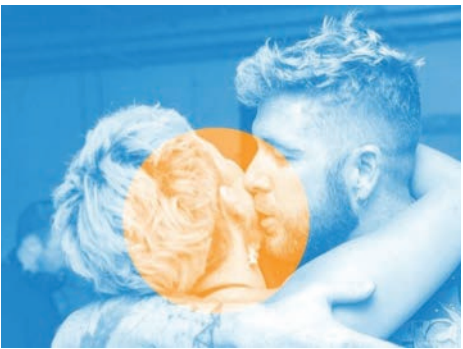


WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Explore Stella Sallman's photography exhibition showcasing recent and selected works, with all photographs available for purchase. Please join us for the opening of *Walk on the Wild Side*.

One Star Gallery, Victoria St, West Melb

THURSDAY 16TH JULY, 6PM – 8PM



Q-LIT FESTIVAL

Celebrate queer stories, history and creativity at this four-day literary festival featuring panels, workshops, performances, special events and a vibrant community book fair.

Kensington Town Hall

UNTIL 19 JULY, 10.30AM – 4.30PM



CONVERGE

Experience a one-night immersive installation blending kinetic light, surround sound and industrial atmospheres, with free movement, live music and a closing party.

Younghusband, Kensington

SATURDAY 18 JULY, 6.30PM – 11PM



BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR

Discover Victoria's archival treasures on a behind-the-scenes tour, exploring historic records, preservation practices and stories spanning nearly two centuries.

Victorian Archives Centre, North Melb

SATURDAY 25 JULY, 10AM – 3PM



MONTANA PAPADINIS FAREWELL COMEDY SHOW

Catch one of Melbourne's rising comedy stars for a farewell show packed with laughs, featuring a lineup of her favourite local comedians.

Club Voltaire, North Melbourne

SUNDAY 26 JULY, 5PM – 6.30PM



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



WINTER NIGHT MARKET

Queen Victoria Market's Winter Night Market runs Wednesdays June – August, offering global street food, drinks, shopping, live music, artisan stalls and interactive "Keys to Winter" performances.

Queen Victoria Market

WEDS UNTIL 26 AUGUST, 5PM – 10PM



CHILDREN'S PLAY: RAGNAR KJARTANSSON

Children explore drawing, storytelling and theatrical play in Ragnar Kjartansson's interactive exhibition, designed to inspire creativity and imagination.

National Gallery of Victoria

UNTIL 4 OCTOBER, 10AM – 5PM



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

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STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE

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