New Southgate vision revealed

WORDS BY SASHA CAR
PLANNING

The owner of the iconic Southbank office and retail precinct, Southgate has submitted its long-awaited $800 million transformation plans to the state government for approval.

Following more than two years of “master planning investigations”, ARA Australia last month lodged a development application with the Minister for Planning Richard Wynne as it seeks to reinvigorate Southbank’s original shopping and dining destination.

As it no doubt looks to capitalise on the state government’s fast-tracking of building permits amid the COVID-19 pandemic, ARA’s proposal would deliver a new 21-storey office tower and more than 10,000 sqm of retail space across four levels.

With the redevelopment seeking to “better connect the site to its Southbank neighbours”, the Fender Katsalidis-designed project would also provide a new 2000 sqm elevated park, as well as a further 4000 sqm of additional open space throughout the development.

Opened in 1992 and having long outgrown its original design, ARA Australia CEO David Blight said Southgate deserved to be “repositioned”.

“It’s our responsibility as asset owners and property managers to ensure Southgate fulfils its potential for our tenants, onsite workforce and local and international visitors alike,” he said.

“The redevelopment will mark the welcome return of a Melbourne icon and arrival of a striking new architectural statement in the form of a boldly-designed office tower and re-imagined dining, entertainment and services precinct.”

“Our plans will re-establish Southgate as a truly landmark destination and reinvigorate the precinct as a place all Melburnians can be proud of.”

Currently including the two Herald Weekly Times towers, in March last year when it agreed to explore options for a potential off-market sale.

But City of Melbourne CEO Justin Hanney said this month that the council was still completing “due diligence” on the land transfer before it was able to fully consider ANVAM’s proposal.

“The land fronts Coventry St and St Kilda Rd and is the site of the former Repatriation Commission Outpatient Clinic. The building has been vacant for 20 years and is in a state of disrepair,” Mr Hanney said.

“Prior to council considering this proposal, we would need to complete the necessary due diligence on the land transfer. We would also need to view a detailed business case from the proponents on the proposed funding model and maintenance regime and to ensure the transaction is at no net cost to council.”

A spokesperson for the Department of Defence said it welcomed the City of Melbourne’s interest.

“Defence is assisting the City of Melbourne regarding its interest in an off-market divestment in acquir- ing 310 St Kilda Road,” the spokesperson said. “Defence welcomes the news that the City of Melbourne is exploring the potential future use of this property for veterans’ outcomes.”

“Defence values its veterans and recognises the importance of veterans’ rehabilitation activities. Defence will ensure that the heritage values of 310 St Kilda Road are protected as part of any sale process.”

“At present, there are safety and building compliance matters that must be addressed with recovery and reintegration into civilian life.”

Continued on page 5.
Move to simplify apartment rules.

The City of Melbourne has moved to overhaul its relationship with apartment dwellers after three months of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed weaknesses.

At a June 2 Future Melbourne Committee (PMC) meeting, councillors unanimously voted for a motion moved by Lord Mayor Sally Capp that noted the predominance of apartment living in the municipality, and the challenges presented by COVID-19.

As a result, the motion requested council management to review information and services and produce ‘tailored support’ to volunteer owners’ corporations (OCs) and strata title owners. It also stipulated the delivery of a virtual support workshop for the strata community.

But while the motion was carried unanimously, some councillors expressed reservations.

Cr Capp said the initiative sought to address the issues apartment dwellers had faced in recent months.

“We know in the City of Melbourne that the majority of our residents live in high-rises of some sort – 83 per cent, just over 140,000 people,” the Lord Mayor said.

“When you are living in apartments the type of issues you face are different to those that live in single dwellings and it’s important that we can reflect the issues that are being faced and provide support for people living in apartments,” she said.

“The Lord Mayor said many issues became clarified during the pandemic but had existed beforehand.”

Julie McLean from the Strata Community Association Victoria (SCAV) welcomed the move.

“As the motion confirms, managing jointly-owned private community spaces without specific guidelines or directions from the authorities has been challenging and has, as a result, left owners’ corporations committees at the risk of failure of meeting some of their duties and obligations,” she said.

“Committees, owners, tenants, strata and building managers have been left having to decipher vague generic directions that do not specifically speak to the unique circumstances of strata spaces.”

“As the last near pandemic was 2003, this pandemic will not be the last and to review and learn from this experience, both good and bad, is necessary to help the strata sector to be more resilient in the future.”

Southbank Residents Association (SRA) president Tony Penny also supported the move.

He said owners in Southbank were “perplexed, confused and bewildered” with what they should and shouldn’t be doing with this pandemic.

“We also hope the outcomes of the motion will be reviewed at some stage in the future,” he said.

“We know that the pandemic is still in its early stage. If there are lessons to be learnt from this or things that could be done better we hope that this, whatever it will be, a policy or process or a document, will certainly be reviewed at the end of it.”

But some councillors expressed concerns about the motion, particularly around the idea of requesting management to interpret public health orders.

Cr Aron Wood said he was worried the clause went against the decided intent of the council at the beginning of the pandemic.

“When we started COVID-19 we talked about DHHS being the single source of truth and indeed our own organisation really pushed hard that there should be a single source of truth,” he said.

“Wherever we insert ourselves in interpreting public health orders I think that we can put ourselves into some positions that we potential-ly don’t want to be in.”

Cr Beverley Pinder also expressed concern about the move causing confusion.

“There’s a whole range of issues that are really for an owner market, not for a council to be interfering,” Cr Pinder said.

Local vertical living webinar

The neighbouring Docklands Representative Group (DRG) will host a webinar on June 18 focused on helping all local residential strata communities prepare for the world post-COVID-19.

Featuring Strata Title Lawyers principal and regular Docklands News, Southbank News and CBD News columnist Tom Bacon, the webinar will help OGCs deal with many important decisions they are likely to face in the coming months as government restrictions continue to ease. To register visit docklands.org.au.
Continued from page 1.

(HWT) and IBM office towers, a three-level retail and hospitality plaza and a basement carpark, the Singaporean-listed ARA Australia purchased Southgate from Dexus in 2016 and assumed management in 2018.

Speculation regarding its planned redevelopment heightened recently following concerns raised by a number of its current tenants as to whether their businesses would be incorporated in the new plans, as reported in the March edition of Southbank News.

ARA’s head of asset management Rohan Neville said it would be accepting expressions of interest from all parties, including its existing tenants, as it sought to create an “all-day lifestyle destination.”

“ARA Australia is committed to maintaining open, two-way communication with all tenants and community stakeholders throughout this process,” he said.

“Our tenants have been aware of the master planning investigations for some time and each tenant has been contacted by an ARA representative via phone to inform them of our intention to lodge the application. Moving forward we’ll be providing regular updates and sharing new information as it becomes available.”

“We are currently exploring a range of options in relation to Southgate’s retail and dining offering, to enhance the overall customer experience for everyone who visits the precinct.”

Mr Neville said its vision incorporated a range of casual and formal dining options, on-site conveniences such as a medical centre, food hall and supermarket, as well as everyday essentials and business event and exhibition spaces.

As a central hub connecting the Arts Precinct, St John’s Southgate and major hotels Quay West and The Langham to the Yarra River, the new plans will also feed directly into the City of Melbourne’s future upgrade of Southbank Promenade.

While the two-level structure that sits in front of The Langham housing restaurants such as Waterfront and Hophaus will stay, it will undergo interior remodelling.

“In a first for Melbourne, the new Southgate will create a unique opportunity to connect with nature alongside and overlooking the river – an opportunity lost up to this point in time,” Mr Neville said.

“Fender Katsalidis has delivered on our vision to create an inviting environment, with the inclusion of outdoor parkland across the new podium building fronting Southbank Promenade, which will enable people to relax and enjoy our unrivalled riverside vista.”

“We want Southgate to become synonymous with celebration – a place that people love working and playing in, and want to return to time and again.”

“We look forward to working with both the State Government and City of Melbourne in assessing the application and the opportunity to deliver a great outcome for the city.”

Yarra River Business Association (YRBA) president John Forman welcomed the news, but said he hoped existing tenants would be supported through the redevelopment.

“It’s an exciting transformation of a space that is now 30 years old,” Mr Forman said.

“Together with the council’s refurbishment of the Promenade and Southbank Boulevard, as well as the state government’s plans for the Sturt St Arts Precinct, it really heralds a brand new era for Southbank.”

“Our only concern is for the livelihoods of those tenants who have helped to make Southgate the icon that it is over nearly three decades.”

“We trust that they can be accommodated in some way during the construction and that their future is assured into the new era.”

Southbank Residents’ Association president Tony Penna welcomed the rejuvenation of the area.

“The re-energisation of Southgate is welcomed by residents on the condition that it works for the local community and complies with the planning scheme.”

ARA Australia estimates that the project would generate more than 340 jobs during construction, which if approved, would start and finish in 2021 and 2024, respectively.

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The Southbank Community Hub is a free online space to connect with fellow Southbank locals, stay in the know, post requests for help, share skills and local knowledge, ask for recommendations, discover local services, classes, retailers, events and more!

This Facebook group is owned by Southbank News.

If you’re a local resident or business you can join up here:

www.facebook.com/groups/southbankcommunityhub/
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Council restores hope to veteran art dream at 310 St Kilda Rd

Continued from page 1.

The Department of Defence has previously nominated the property for the Victorian State Heritage Register. However, the Heritage Council of Victoria is unable to consider the application until ownership of the building is settled.

The cost of restoring the building, known to be riddled with asbestos, has been estimated between $10 and $20 million and would likely be required to be shared across all governments.

While ANVAM says that these are costs it is willing to seek philanthropic support for if necessary, the group has also previously developed a business case for its proposal at the request of Creative Victoria, which forecasts a positive return on investment.

While separated from the Arts Precinct by the Victoria Barracks, the building also sits within the state government’s zoned Southbank Arts Precinct. ANVAM says its proposal lends itself to a range of government

strategies relating to the creative industries and mental health.

ARM Architecture has been working pro bono for ANVAM on the project, which would include an art gallery and community retail, as well as an extension for a performance studio for dance, music and theatre.

ANVAM chairman Mark Johnston thanked the City of Melbourne for its interest.

“The amount of resources we poured into this process, which ended up being a very long, litigious, difficult process, was quite extraordinary. It really is unfortunate how long and complicated this process was, because if you compare the controls we’re looking at today with the interim controls that were adopted by the minister all those months and years ago, the meaningful changes between the two documents are actually negligible.”

Beyond the process, Cr Leppert said it was a “really interesting precedent” set and was surprised there won’t more push-back from private developers.

“The outcome is great. I’m really delighted that we’re here. It would’ve been fantastic if this happened years ago but for what it is, it will still be able to generate more arts and creative uses inside the Arts Precinct and that’s a fantastic thing … it will help to preserve some of what makes the Southbank Arts Precinct such a special part of our city.”

The amendment will go back to the Minister for Planning for approval.

David Schout
JOURNALIST
DAVID@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

“Complicated” process ends positively for Arts Precinct

The first four floors of new developments in Southbank’s Arts Precinct will need to be designated for the creative industries after a “long and complicated” process to amend the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

All new developments will need to comply with the now permanent regulations on the Sturt St spine, which have been temporarily in place for the past two years.

Specifically, a building’s first four storeys will be required to provide space for arts, creative, and cultural uses.

This may include performance space, rehearsal space, galleries, workshops, event spaces, studios or office space for creative institutions.

City of Melbourne planning chair Nicholas Reece said the designation of creative uses for lower portions of buildings was not something that had been done by the council before.

“The City of Melbourne is very lucky indeed to have the Southbank Arts Precinct, which has Sturt St running along its spine,” Cr Reece said.

“There are some 21 arts organisations which are located throughout that precinct and many of them are household names that have produced some of the most extraordinary work in the creative sector in our country. This planning scheme amendment will further secure that precinct and only further enhance its extraordinary reputation.”

But while there was unanimous support for the move at Town Hall, the council’s chair of arts said the protracted process could have been avoided. Cr Rohan Leppert said while he was “delighted” Amendment C323 was finally ready to be approved, it had been in the system for “far too long”.

“The pain, the cost and the labour that went into doing that properly was extraordinary,” he said.

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For more information: anvam.org.au
INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY TO KICK-START OUR ECONOMY

The City of Melbourne’s draft Annual Plan and Budget 2020-21 invests $168.5 million in infrastructure over the coming year, with an aim to create jobs and support Melbourne’s economy as it emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Renewal of Queen Victoria Market precinct: $45 million
- Improve conditions for traders and shoppers while preserving the unique heritage and character of the market.
- Including $25 million investment to deliver 500 car parks on the doorstep of the market.

Restoring Melbourne Town Hall: $6.5 million
- New customer service facilities, improved security and a flexible public forum space to encourage community participation in Committee and Council meetings.
- Roof conservation works.

Southbank Boulevard: $12.8 million
- Delivering 2200 square metres of open space, along with new lawn areas, trees and seating.

Sporting facilities
- $2.6 million investment in rebuilding the Western Pavilion at Royal Park, including new change rooms.
- $260,000 towards three new courts at Royal Park Tennis Club.
- $1 million for designs for Kensington Recreation Centre, featuring a new two-level facility plus refurbished pool, change facilities, café and more.

Have your say
Public submissions on the City of Melbourne’s draft Annual Plan and Budget 2020-21 are open until Wednesday 17 June 2020.

participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au
Street art unites in time of isolation

WORDS BY Marco Holden Jeffrey
PHOTOGRAPHY BY John Tadigiri
ARTS & CULTURE

For many Southbank residents, finding a sense of community and connection during the lockdown has been difficult. But street artist Peter Seaton hopes his new mural on City Rd can bring locals together, whether out for a walk or looking on from their apartment.

Peter, better known as CTO, said he painted the work to remind people of the importance of relationships and intimacy during the pandemic.

“One of the most human things that we have is our connection with one another and the coronavirus has sort of tested that,” he said.

“It exposed the vulnerability of how we do think that we’re invincible and something like a little virus can shake everything up.”

The mural, titled Trapped in the 3rd Dimension, depicts a man and a woman wearing gas masks locked in a passionate embrace.

It forms part of Peter’s greater body of work which focuses on human emotion, diversity and interconnectedness.

“We can reduce everything to chemical reactions within the body, but I still think the complexity of the human limbic system and our emotions are not really encapsulated with science yet,” he said.

“I think art shows us something more than just the physical. What we feel when we look at a great painting or work, it gives us this sensation that I don’t think science can quite encapsulate.”

Born in Wellington, New Zealand, Peter studied fine art at Whitcliffe College of Art and Design before choosing to focus his practice on street art.

“A lot of people go to these really high-level galleries and they see these works of art that are a broken chair or something like that, and they get aggravated at the whole art establishment,” he said.

“Street art is so in the public realm. It’s available for everyone, you don’t have to go to a gallery, you don’t have to pay anything, everyone can experience it.”

Even people in the apartment buildings adjacent to the mural were able to experience Peter’s work.

While he was painting, one local approached Peter with a USB full of photos chronicling the progress of the work, taken from the photographer’s balcony with a telephoto lens.

“He could still access [the mural] in isolation and that’s an amazing thing,” he said.

Peter has worked all over the world - the US, Europe, South America and Asia - but he still thinks Melbourne is the best place for street artists.

While the medium ‘gets left a little bit in the background’ in famous scenes like New York and Los Angeles, street art is front and centre in Melbourne.

“Street art, graffiti and urban art culture are really meshed into the fabric of its tourism and its iconography,” he said.

During Victoria’s strict COVID-19 lockdown, Peter was either working in his studio or spending quality time with his brother, who had just returned from living in London.

“I think [the lockdown] was a good reset for us all to come inwards a little bit and focus on your family unit and your home base,” he said.

“When we are in these apocalyptic settings, all we can do is love each other.”

The mural, titled Trapped in the 3rd Dimension, depicts a man and a woman wearing gas masks locked in a passionate embrace.

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COVID-19 has forced Southbank businesses to innovate in ways they never expected in order to stay afloat.

For the hospitality sector, this has meant moving every aspect—online—a difficult process which the City of Melbourne’s $5 million business grant scheme has aimed to ease.

Belgian Beer Café owner Michael Burke was among the latest round of grant applicants approved on May 29—using the money to transform the bar’s website to enable online orders.

“We received $4,545 from the grant which we used to pay back the cost of updating our website to allow online, take-away orders,” Mr Burke said.

“If that grant wasn’t available there’s no way we could have taken the chance to convert our website. We simply wouldn’t have done it and potentially we’d have had to close our doors.”

With the help of the grant—which provides support for businesses to invest in online and e-commerce capabilities—the Belgian-themed bar at Riverside Quay has stayed open all the way through restrictions. This feat has benefited the entire community.

“We were able to provide a service for the few residents that were left in Southbank and keep staff engaged in the business—particularly those international and casual workers that didn’t get any government support,” Mr Burke said.

As of June 1, Belgian Beer Café re-opened to patrons. And although business has been far from usual, the re-opening has been an overwhelming success.

“We’ve been at capacity every night since, which is obviously a lot lower than normal. But even though it’s not what it was like pre-COVID-19 we can see an ever-so-faint light at the end of the tunnel,” Mr Burke said.

South Wharf’s beloved Thai restaurant, BangPop, can also see that light.

“After receiving $4,940 in the same round of grants, area manager Sam Shaw said BangPop was able to re-vamp its cooking classes to allow customers to learn online.

“Instead of doing the pad thai and papaya salad classes in-house, we decided to pack all of the ingredients up and deliver it to people’s homes. The chef would then teach them how to make it individually on Zoom—so that worked really well,” Mr Shaw said.

BangPop also used the money to set up the South Wharf Restaurants Hub—a collaboration between a number of venues in Southbank to provide online cooking classes to homes all around Australia.

“We’re spending the money on providing and marketing better online classes, and we’re also looking to expand into Sydney, Adelaide and Hobart so people can buy their own ingredients there and we can see whether BangPop is successful in those markets,” Mr Shaw said.

As more Southbank businesses continue to be approved for the council’s COVID-19 business grant, venues like BangPop and Belgian Beer Café are shining examples of how local business can thrive during difficult circumstances.

And it’s this innovative spirit which Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the grant scheme intendeds to nurture.

“We have received an overwhelming response to this grants program with thousands of small- and medium-sized businesses applying for financial support,” the Lord Mayor said.

“This goes to show that even in tough times, our local businesses are ready to tackle challenges head on, think differently and adapt, which is an admirable spirit we want to reward and support as much as we can.”

Rate freeze marks economic rebuild

WORD BY Jean Car
ECONOMY

Despite unsurprisingly recording its first deficit in more than 30 years as a result of COVID-19, the City of Melbourne has made the symbolic move to implement a freeze on rate increases over the next financial year.

Having lost more than $100 million since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March, the release of the council’s draft annual plan and budget on May 19 was undeniably carried by a significant $74.4 million deficit.

Despite the financial setbacks of COVID-19, however, years of strong fiscal management and economic growth has meant the council’s finances are in good shape as it forecasts a return to underlying profit for the first time in five years.

“Years of disciplined financial management means the City of Melbourne can step up in these unprecedented times,” Lord Mayor Sally Capp said.

“This year, for the first time in more than 30 years, the budget will have a deficit. We are deliberately investing in our community now so we can support businesses and deliver infrastructure and stimulus as a platform for recovery.”

Having made a habit of underspending its capital works budget for the best part of the past decade, CEO Justin Hanney told Southbank News that new measures had been taken to ensure that trend wouldn’t continue.

“Our investment on capital works has been prioritised with a focus on projects that will help our city recover from COVID-19,” he said. “Internal project reporting has also been enhanced to track and manage the progress of capital projects.”

Headlining the infrastructure spend is a $45 million investment to ramp up the renewal of Queen Victoria Market, $12.8 to progress Southbank Boulevard and $6.5 million to restore Melbourne Town Hall.

The $832 million draft budget is underpinned by a substantial $168.5 million capital works program, $41 million investment in transport infrastructure as well as a $50 million COVID-19 recovery package to assist small businesses and ratepayers.

“The loan expires on June 30, 2021 but there are options to extend if required,” Mr Hanney said.

“The interest rate is 0.74 per cent and is very competitive.”

The City of Melbourne’s 1,482 staff, 30 fewer full-time than last year, are the best-paid in the country and are expected to cost the council $165.9 million during the 2020-21 financial year.

With the majority of council services delivered through its staff, the budget promises a reduction on expenditure on purchasing, contractors, consultants and administration and will look to “redeploy staff into areas with higher demand.”

Mr Hanney said the current enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) had expired and the agreement process was on hold while the council prioritised essential services in response to COVID-19.

“We have had positive discussions with unions and will revisit the new enterprise agreement in the coming months,” Mr Hanney said.

In addition to providing rate relief at a cost of $18.9 million, the council will also not increase fees and charges for 2020-21 for community services such as recreation centres, children’s services and libraries.

Parking revenue is forecast to decline significantly due to a decrease in the number of cars in the city during the COVID-19 lockdown. Parking fee revenue is budgeted at $28 million, down 33 per cent from $43 million the previous year. Naturally, parking fine revenue is also budgeted down at $16 million.

Overall, 64 per cent of council fees remain unchanged or are only increasing according to consumer price index (CPI).

Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood said the budget was putting “people and businesses first.”

“We are freezing rates with a zero per cent rate rise. In every announcement since the pandemic hit, we’ve focussed on fixed costs for businesses and residents,” he said.

“By not increasing rates and delivering essential services, programs and support packages, we are doing our bit to rebuild the local economy.”

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the council was also preparing a package of “shovel-ready” projects to present to the federal and state governments to help stimulate the economy and create jobs.

For more information: participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au
Australia 108 tops out

**WORDS BY Sean Car**
**PHOTOGRAPHY BY John Tadigiri**

June 9 marked the official "topping out" of Melbourne's newest tallest building Australia 108 on City Rd in Southbank.

Standing 290 metres or 100 levels, the building is officially the tallest residential building in the Southern Hemisphere. While Australia 108 takes the gong for Australia's highest floorplate, Q1 on the Gold Coast still holds the title for tallest structure thanks to its 377.7-metre spire.

Over the past five years, Australia 108 has steadily been growing on Melbourne's skyline.

World Class Global CEO David Ng said the topping out of Australia 108 was a hugely fulfilling moment and a special moment for Melbourne's skyline.

"Something we get really excited with is public private partnership," Mr Ng said.

Australia 108 is the work of developer World Class Global collaborating with architects Fender Katsalidis and builder Multiplex. Construction started five years ago and is due for completion later this year.

"Very early on with Melbourne Square we took into account all sorts of things ranging from retail amenity to green open space, to how offices would likely change in the post-COVID era. We've been running boot camps for two weeks now," he said.

Leigh Dwyer, a seventh-floor resident of the Imagine Marco building, had been hanging out for the playground to re-open and was down at the park for a playdate.

"It's actually good because kids can play with the swings," she said. "We got an email, I've kept checking on the library and the café was opened.

"There was a spike in COVID-19 cases," she said. "All the people downstairs in the park are regular visitors to the park. Spencer has perked his scooting during the lockdown.

"I work from home anyway," Leigh, an IT professional, told Southbank News. He grew up in the suburbs but got used to high-rise living while working overseas.

High-risers return to ground level

**WORDS BY Rhonda Dridge**
**COMMUNITY**

Life was slowly returning to the community of high-rise dwellers around Boyd Park this month as authorities managed the "cov-exit" by easing regulations around gatherings. A mums' group was meeting on the grass, gym sessions were underway, kids were on swings and the library chute was open.

The number of people who could meet in public was increased on June 5.

"It's been rough not being able to take Spencer to people's houses," he said. "We have a lot of friends in a similar situation."

Not everyone in this community has rushed back down to ground level to mingle, however. Those over 65 are still wary.

Anne Faithall, a 76-year-old resident of Southbank Central, has just started to visit her daughter and go for walks.

"There'll be a spike in COVID cases," she said. "All the people downstairs in the park are young."
 Calls heighten to support strangling precinct

Residents from neighbouring Beacon Cove in Port Melbourne have called on the state government to “step-up” and redevelop the deteriorating Station Pier and Waterfront Place precinct.

As a key gateway feeding into central Melbourne, the recent announcement by Spirit of Tasmania operator TT-Line that it would be relocating its services from Station Pier to Geelong has reawakened calls for the precinct to be reimagined.

Also home to the 105 tram depot, which travels directly through Southbank, an abandoned building and a series of struggling cafes and restaurants are some 700,000 annual visitors well short of the figures that were forecast.

The area requires a planned, strategic redevelopment so that it works better for all users—visitors, residents, and the ships that use Station Pier. The area is an important community precinct and a “gateway” to Melbourne for cruise ship passengers.

Member for South Melbourne Martin Foley said the future of Station Pier was a “critical part” of Victoria’s tourism and visitor economy and that now was the time to take a renewed look at the broader precinct.

“Precincts have had many visions, structure plans and other plans—rather than look to the past I am concerned to plan a new future for the new reality, the precinct faces,” he said.

“We need to resolve what is the future uses of the pier and the community interest in that future use. That will determine the infrastructure needs.”

While the City of Port Phillip (CoPP) developed the Port Melbourne Waterfront Urban Design Framework back in 2013, which focuses on the area from Bay St through to Princes Pier, the BCNA say a more coordinated, state government-led plan is required.

The state government provided the City of Port Phillip with $50,000 in September last year to develop a precinct plan for the redevelopment of the precinct, and the Victorian Ports Corporation is continuing its redevelopment plans for the pier itself.

CoPP Mayor Bernadene Voss said that while the council understood the importance of state government stimulus funding “shovel-ready” projects amid COVID-19, it was unable pursue funding until it received more information from VicPorts about the site’s future.

“As the cruise ship industry faces global challenges due to the COVID-19 health crisis, we are expecting a much smaller cruise season and fewer ships docking at Station Pier,” Cr Voss said.

“We expect this to continue for the next few years until the industry recovers, which may have a flow-on affect for some local businesses.”

“We feel this is a unique opportunity to reconsider and co-create a plan for the future of Station Pier to become a place that is not only attractive and useful for locals all year round, but is an engaging welcome for cruise visitors.”

The City of Port Phillip prepared draft design guidelines for the Waterfront Place precinct in 2018, which Cr Voss said aimed to “guide future development, public realm and land use change”, and to inform a future planning scheme amendment.

VicPorts did not respond to Southbank News for comment.

A love affair with education

The grounds of the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) are still wrapped up in “lo-loo” with students not expected back until the end of the month.

But when they return a new Japanese beer garden will be waiting for them on campus.

Restaurant Cheng Liu took the brave move of opening in the middle of the lockdown.

Betwixt must be one of the only restaurants to launch itself during a pandemic, at a time when most other businesses have been closing down.

“The first day we took $86,” Cheng said, after investing almost $1 million in the year-long fit-out.

“We’re now taking ten times that,” he said.

The new Japanese-fusion restaurant is in an old heritage FMG building but was integrated into the campus during the construction of the Conservatorium of Music.

“We could have waited but we were committed to our stuff and we thought we should take some time to get familiar with the menu,” he said.

A miso Bolognese sauce is one invention by the chef, available for $8, as Betwixt tests out the menu on locals.

Cheng has two bars – the Homesick Café and Thubu Bar – on the Parkville campus and was offered the prime position on Southbank by the university after he was forced to close the bars when the buildings were redeveloped.

“We have a good relationship,” Cheng said, having moved to the new site even though renovations had been difficult and expensive.

Cheng worked in international trade and settled in Melbourne when his son refused to go back to China because of his liking for the school system here.

“Study is very hard in China. He was working until 1am every night on homework. It was much more relaxed here. He jumped two levels.”

Cheng said he missed the community of Tianjin. “I like to read a novel in Chinese and see my old friends,” he said.

And the restaurant has been a headache. It costs $5000 a week to run and he has had to get financial support from a family trust in China until it is profitable.

“My son likes the freedom of choice here,” he said. He is a graduate of Melbourne University and works as an engineer.

“Sixty million students graduate from secondary school each year in China and there’s a lot of competition for university places.”

Just one third have the opportunity to go to university and Cheng predicted that international students would want to return to their studies in Australia.

“If you go overseas to study, when you’re educated at Melbourne University or RMIT and go back to China, you get a job.”

Betwixt will be up and running by the time students return.

Boyd Library is back!

The council’s knowledge city portfolio chair Cr Jackie Watts joined librarians at Boyd Library on June 9 to celebrate the facility’s reopening following COVID-19 restrictions.

The council announced on June 1 that it was managing the staged re-opening of its libraries, recreation centres and community sporting fields as COVID-19 restrictions were eased across the state.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said select council facilities would begin to reopen with strict capacity and physical distancing rules.

“We know people have been missing community facilities such as libraries and pools but safety is our first priority so we will take a staged approach to re-opening,” the Lord Mayor said.

Cr Capp said pedestrian numbers had increased by more than 20 per cent over the past month but

However, we cannot rush back to the way things were. It’s vital we work together, follow physical distancing guidelines and maintain good hygiene practices to help keep our community safe.”

Along with Southbank Library at Boyd Community Hub, the City of Melbourne re-opened Victoria Library, Kathleen Syme Library, North Melbourne Library, Library at the Dock and East Melbourne Library on June 9.

Chair of the Knowledge City portfolio Cr Dr Jackie Watts said that libraries were reopening with restricted patron numbers and reduced hours.

“The safety of our staff and the community is vital as we re-open our much-loved libraries,” Cr Watts said.

“Access to our libraries will be prioritised for people who are unable to access the internet at home, those facing social isolation and people experiencing economic hardship.”

While they are not precluded to return to our branches, I certainly encourage them to continue using our digital library services.”

Since COVID-19 restrictions began, we’ve experienced a huge surge in demand for e-library services, including a 76 per cent increase in e-book loans and a 59 per cent increase in audio-book usage. Evidence shows that Libraries are well under-used as a fundamental resource to our community.”

Please support our advertisers because without them we would have no Southbank News.
The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Melbourne hard. Business and retail have been severely impacted, tourist visitation has plummeted and international students are doing it tough.

The City of Melbourne is taking action to respond to the pandemic, and protect jobs and businesses. The Council’s draft Annual Plan and Budget 2020-21 invests a record $50 million in a COVID-19 Recovery Package and implements a freeze on rate increases for residential and non-residential properties.

With a proposed total budget spend of $632 million, the draft Budget is designed to support ratepayers, strengthen our community and rebuild the local economy. The City of Melbourne is doing all it can to help businesses thrive again, create jobs and bring the city back to its vibrant best.

COVID-19 has a combined impact of more than $100 million on the City of Melbourne’s draft Budget and rebuilding Melbourne’s economy will take time and hard work. For the first time in more than 30 years, the Budget will be in deficit. This will help the City of Melbourne support our business community and invest in infrastructure and stimulus as a path to recovery.

REBUILDING MELBOURNE’S ECONOMY WITH STIMULUS AND RATES RELIEF

**DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN AND BUDGET 2020-21 SNAPSHOT**

**Infrastructure**
- The City of Melbourne will invest $168.5 million in infrastructure for our local community and economy, including getting on with the Queen Victoria Market precinct renewal, restoring Melbourne Town Hall and delivering women’s sporting facilities.

**COVID-19 Recovery Package**
- $50 million

**Transport**
- $41 million

**Climate action**
- $32 million

**Major events**
- $19 million

**Arts**
- $17 million

**Community facilities**
- $12.5 million

**Combatting social isolation and supporting rough sleepers**
- The City of Melbourne will invest up to $2 million this year to support people who are homeless, as well as investing in programs to address loneliness and social isolation among seniors. This includes $330,000 towards a daily support team which connects rough sleepers with accommodation and support.

**Supporting arts and culture**
- The City of Melbourne will invest $17 million in artists and arts organisations in the coming year through grants, investment in public art and programming. This will also support creatives to continue working through the shutdown by developing new works and online projects.

**Supporting international students**
- To support international students impacted by COVID-19, the City of Melbourne will invest $50,000 to create pathways to employment and $10,000 on wellbeing initiatives.

**Major events**
- The City of Melbourne will invest $19 million in major events in a bid to entice people back to the city once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

**Preparing for major events**
- $19 million

**Have your say**
- Public submissions on the draft Annual Plan and Budget 2020-21 are open until 5pm Wednesday 17 June 2020. Visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au
COVID-19 RECOVERY PACKAGE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND RETAIL

The City of Melbourne is supporting small businesses and retail precincts through a $50 million COVID-19 Recovery Package. This includes $18.9 million in residential and commercial rate relief and direct grants to small businesses.

To attract people back into the city when the time is right, $19 million will be set aside to be spent on major events and festivals. Council will collaborate with precincts to boost marketing and events and protect local shopping strips and neighbourhoods.

To improve safety and bolster community confidence as more people return to our streets, laneways and parks, $6 million will go towards extra cleaning across our public areas. Traders can also request a free service to clean and sanitise door handles and other touch-point areas.

The COVID-19 Business Concierge Hotline has connected more than 4000 businesses with information specific to their individual needs.

RATES RELIEF FOR BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS

Since the pandemic hit, the City of Melbourne has continued to focus on fixed costs for businesses and residents. To support struggling ratepayers, rates will be frozen in 2020-21. Fees and charges for community services such as recreation centres, children’s services and libraries, will not be increased this year.

YOUR COUNCIL

Melbourne City Council (from left): Cr Susan Riley, Cr Kevin Louey, Cr Beverley Pinder, Cr Nicolas Frances Gilley MBE, Lord Mayor Sally Capp, Cr Nicholas Reece, Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood, Cr Rohan Leppert, Cr Cathy Oke, Cr Philip Le Liu, Cr Jackie Watts OAM.

Council’s vision
Find out more about the Council’s shared vision for the city, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/councilplan

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$17 million for local art

The City of Melbourne will invest $17 million in the arts to keep Melburnians connected to our creative sector as the city responds to COVID-19, Lord Mayor Sally Capp said. Melbourne is Australia's undisputed arts and cultural capital, but these sectors need to be supported due to the severe downturn from COVID-19, she said.

“Arts and culture are a huge factor in our city’s nation-leading liveability and contribute $31 billion annually to the Victorian economy.”

“Investing in our creative talent now will cement our city’s strengths, while protecting local jobs and supporting billions of dollars in economic activity. More arts and culture in Melbourne means local businesses thrive and more people stay in jobs.”

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An emerging talent

When Aimée Lipscombe discovered she had won Capture Magazine Australasia’s emerging photographer award, it was by accident.

Words by Katie Johnson

“I was sitting in bed with my family, reading the magazine, and my husband pointed out to me that I had actually won something. I was shocked,” she said.

Aimee originally thought her portrait series had only been shortlisted. But the third-year Photography Studies College (PSC) student had blown the judges away with the “haunting beauty” of her portrait series.

The collection of 12 images is indeed haunting. It portrays children in eerie night-time scenes—a theme which Aimée said was inspired by her experience of motherhood.

“What happens as a parent is that you’re almost paralysed by the ‘what ifs’. There’s a lot of messaging by the media about the risks to our children, when actually they’re probably the safest they’ve ever been,” she said.

“So, the idea behind the series was that instead of easing people’s fears it might be quite fun to play on them.”

One of the strengths of the untitled series—which includes Aimée’s own children, her niece and some of her friend’s children—is the ambiguity of the images.

“The children might be completely safe or there might be something sinister going on—so it’s up to the viewer’s own perception,” she said. Surprisingly enough, Aimée began her studies at PSC with the intention of being an architectural photographer. But after a tutor pointed out her flair for portraits, she changed her focus.

“I was always second guessing myself with my work and portraiture is quite difficult because you want to portray people how they want to be portrayed. So, because of that insecurity I didn’t recognise the quality of my portraiture work until my tutor pointed it out to me,” Aimée said.

With the encouragement of her PSC tutors, Aimée was able to hone her talent for photographing children—despite them often being the hardest subjects to work with.

“I love photographing kids because they aren’t self-conscious in front of the camera. And contrary to what everyone says they’re actually easy to direct,” Aimée said.

“They’re always open and curious about the story. And they have fun with it.”

As a former producer for ABC’s The Drum, Aimee had considerable experience with cameras before studying. But despite her passion for photography, she had never pursued it seriously. Her decision to study part-time at PSC allowed her to continue her freelance media work while also working towards her photography goals.

“Going back to study was a way to re-focus my energy and invest time in myself after investing in my kids for a few years,” Aimée said. “This was important for me because I found it quite hard, as a woman, being successful on a particular path and then having children. Because it derails everything and you feel quite lost.”

Aimee’s latest PSC project is a deep look into her own family. It documents the joys, struggles and uncertainty of parenthood—particularly during this period of isolation.

And despite its challenges, Aimée said the photography project had made her appreciate her family on a deeper level.

“It’s making me actually stop and see the moments in my family. To have this period of isolation has been really lovely because I’ve taken that frame of mind of stopping and enjoying the moments.”

For more information: aimeelipscombe
Taking age seriously

If your immune system is young and not compromised then COVID-19 may be a relatively easy ride.

But if you’re over 65 or have co-morbidities you shouldn’t be foolhardy.

These are words of advice from Anne Fairhall, a high-rise resident of Southbank Central.

Anne is aged 76, was a theatre nurse and has a son who caught the virus, taking 10 weeks to recover.

Every time she returns to her 39th floor apartment she takes off her shoes, washes her hands and wipes down any purchases.

She’s not taking any risks, having spent every night on the phone with her son and his family in Switzerland as she monitored the pandemic.

“We will see spikes, because the virus is highly contagious,” she said. Even though she is starting to loosen up a bit, she is still taking precautions and not visiting too many places at ground level.

“When I am inside I feel safe. The first time I went out to get my own milk and eggs I put on gloves and a mask but it felt really like a contaminated task.”

Instead you will find her most days on her phone socialising. “I’m isolating but I’m not isolated,” she said. During the lockdown, she’s kept up her public talks on Zoom, helped organise a new online Probus group, visited her husband who has dementia and kept up with friends.

It is exhausting just hearing about all of her activities, including the regular but restricted half-hour visits to her husband in aged care. “My life is big but it has become bigger over COVID-19,” she said.

But it is the story of her son, aged 51, and his infection that has preoccupied her, giving her close experience with the way the disease manifests itself.

She said many people from Milan drove over the border to Verbier, a mountain village in Switzerland to get away from the virus and they pretty much infected the town.

Her son Marcus phoned her in early March and said, “you mightn’t have much awareness of this, Mum. Look, you need to take this virus seriously.”

He didn’t reveal that he had tested positive. So had his wife and son. “Are you going into lockdown?” he asked.

He was sick for eight weeks with classic symptoms. “It’s hard on the body,” he told her. He had no energy, headaches, loss of taste and smell and a sore throat. Then he felt better for two weeks.

But Brigitta had very different symptoms. She had raging temperatures, neuralgic pain, a rash like shingles and secondary pneumonia.

Then they discovered that the infection had spread to Marcus’s kidney. He still had the virus in his blood even though he tested negative on a nose swab.

His travel business had collapsed and at first Anne was worried about the economic situation but this soon gave way to concern for his health.

“We in Australia don’t know very much,” she said. “My son was very sick.”

The new Melbourne Bearbrass Probus Club contract is:

Secretary – Sue, 0419 134 206. Email: bearbrassprobus@gmail.com

Shutting down is easy.

Opening up is hard

That’s something that has become abundantly clear to me as we, at St Johns, have started planning to reopen the church for public worship.

Closing the doors in response to the COVID-19 crisis and resorting to livestream worship on YouTube seemed complicated at the time, but it’s nothing compared to opening the doors to a new normal.

We, like many places of worship, are going to have to do things very differently in the interests of public health and safety – things like limiting the number of worshippers per service; insisting on hand sanitising upon entrance; disallowing handshaking and hugging; keeping an attendance register for contact tracing; arranging socially-distanced worship seating, cancelling our much-loved morning teas, and so on.

On the face of it, these things might seem only a matter of logistics. But there’s more to it than that, particularly when one starts to think about Holy Communion, which is one of the most profound elements of Christian worship.

Holy Communion is, like it sounds, about communing with another one. It’s about community and intimacy, with God and with each other. In times gone by, we would kneel together, shoulder to shoulder before the altar, as the pastor would (with his bare hands) give us a morsel of bread to eat, followed by each of us drinking a sip of wine (from the same cup!), all the while being close enough for sacred words to be uttered at a whisper’s volume. In a very real sense, participating in Holy Communion forms us into the community that we at St Johns hope for, pray for, and strive to be.

But for the faithful, this is more than a matter of hygiene and safety. These matters strike at the heart of our very identity. Jesus, in his earthly ministry, was someone who touched lepers, and who used his own spit, believe it or not, in acts of compassionate healing! Being disciples of Jesus has never been a sanitary endeavour.

It is supposed to be about opening the door to the stranger, breaking bread together, crying on one another’s shoulders and holding the hands of the sick and dying. But in this moment, we have to acknowledge that the compassionate and loving thing to do is to maintain distance and sterility. What we can and must do, is to retain some sense of welcome, warmth and community – even if our communion feels less than holy for a time.

Yes, closing down was the easy part. Opening up will be the real challenge. It will be difficult for members of our congregation who will need to recalibrate their expectations of how their spiritual lives are expressed. And I expect it will be a little awkward for visitors walking into a church of the new normal. But as we do open up, be assured that not just our doors, but our hearts and minds will be open to you, even if our worship might initially look un-welcoming compared to what one might have previously expected from St Johns.

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Tunnelling in full swing

All four of the Metro Tunnel Project’s tunnel boring machines (TBMs) are now building the project’s twin nine-kilometre rail tunnels across Melbourne, as tunnelling kicks into full gear.

From the site of the new Anzac Station, 22 metres below St Kilda Rd, TBMs Alliie and Alice are now tunnelling 1.7km towards the eastern tunnel entrance in South Yarra.

At North Melbourne, TBMs Joan and Meg have been re-launched from the site of the new Arden Station and are carving out the 1.4km twin tunnels towards Parkville.

This marks the start of peak tunnelling operations for the Metro Tunnel, and the first time all four TBMs have been operating at the same time.

TBMs Joan and Meg were the first to launch in 2019 and completed the first 1.2km section of tunnels from Arden to the western tunnel entrance in Kensington earlier this year.

Pieces from the 1000-tonne TBMs were then returned to Arden Station by trucks with the rest of the TBMs pulled back through the tunnels and reassembled. Tunnelling experts then conducted the routine tests on electrical, hydraulic and mechanical systems required before relaunch.

It’s a big milestone for the Metro Tunnel Project, where work is continuing at all sites in accordance with strict safety measures – supporting jobs and supplying businesses across the state through the coronavirus pandemic.

Anzac Station update

As TBMs Alliie and Alice tunnel towards South Yarra, construction of the new Anzac Station continues.

At ground level, works are continuing to complete the remaining section of the station roof, with excavation and installation of steel reinforcements underway before pouring the concrete roof slab.

The 300-metre-long station is being built “top-down”, with the walls and roof built first followed by excavation underneath. This approach has been adopted to minimise disruption and keep people moving around the worksite.

Works are also progressing on the new station entrance from the Shrine of Remembrance.

For more information visit: metrotunnel.vic.gov.au

Communicating to your communities during COVID-19

Right now, there are a lot of question marks as to when and if, it will ever be possible to get back to “normal” following the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the restrictions ease, and as Melburnians go back to their schools and workplaces, now is the time for all of us to consider the “new normal”.

For an owners’ corporation (OC) responsible for managing a large and diverse community, my advice is to implement a comprehensive communication strategy, and to be seen to lead from the front.

Face to face meetings are not possible, so a Zoom or Skype meeting, or a telephone conference facility is going to be crucial. Emails are effective, but so often we see very long email chains between committee members that go off topic, or simply go in circles. A short and sharp meeting by telephone or Zoom (with minutes) is preferable.

For starters, the contractors that you engage and pay good money for, need to act in a co-ordinated fashion. The OC managers, concierges, facilities managers and cleaners all need to be in constant communication with each other and to work as a team. For some larger buildings, this will need to be every day, for other buildings, a weekly meeting will suffice.

These contractors need to be discussing cleaning practices, cashflow issues, and safety and security issues every day, and they need to be reporting to the committee about these issues every day and every week.

Let me break this down further:

Cleaning practices – the committee and residents need to be kept in constant contact about whether it is safe to do certain things. When will the gym and pool be reopened? How often are the elevators, stairs and common property doors and intercoms being cleaned, and with what products? Have the cleaners been instructed to use a special product? If so, what is it? How many times a day is this being applied? Have the cleaners’ on-site hours been increased? Are log books being kept? Who is checking them?

Cashflow issues – the OC manager needs to be keeping an eye on the bills. For many OCs, the holding the annual general meeting (AGM) is not possible right now. But for many buildings, new budgets need to be struck and levy letters still need to go out. Of course, some owners will not be able to pay those levies. So, if the cash is not coming in quickly for the OC, the committee needs to have a plan to keep the lights on. This might include borrowing money from the maintenance fund, or applying for a loan, or otherwise entering into payment plans with owners for their levies to be paid by instalments. The committee needs to keep on top of this, and try to manage the budget carefully while acting as humanely as possible.

Security issues – the concierge and building managers and security staff need to act vigilantly to ensure that short-term rental accommodation operators are not permitted to operate. The public health order has not yet been lifted at the time of publication, so no unauthorised holiday makers should be permitted in buildings at this time. The concierge, building manager and security staff needs to keep a list of apartments where these laws are being breached, and the committee should be ready to report these owners to the police if it becomes an issue.

A weekly or fortnightly newsletter to residents about these issues needs to be circulated. Owners need to be kept in constant contact with the committee about these laws being breached, and the committee should be ready to report these owners to the police if it becomes an issue.

As the restrictions ease, and as Melburnians go back to their schools and workplaces, now is the time for all of us to consider the “new normal”.

For more information visit: metrotunnel.vic.gov.au

Flora Indian Restaurant: 238 Flinders Street

As coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions start to ease, Flora is excited to welcome you back for an authentic Indian dining experience.

Flora will continue to operate between 10am – 8pm in cooperation with social distancing protocols without sacrificing on their ever popular over-the-counter service style.

For more information, follow Flora on Facebook and Instagram or visit floraindian.com.au

Reopened for business

Coffee break

Vince was looking for someone to spot him a latte

Victoria College of the Arts
We cannot avoid the unexpected events in life that produce the need for change, the events that force us to step out of our comfort zone. What we can do instead is modify our relationship with change so that we can learn to accept the parts of change that scare us and use it to continually grow. If we do not grow from these unexpected events and rise to the challenges, we are denying ourselves that opportunity to learn.

Adaptability is an individual’s capacity to respond appropriately and make good choices in times of change. There are three key aspects involved in adaptability to change; adjusting your thinking, adjusting your behaviour, and adjusting your emotions.

- Adjust your thinking: approach the situation in a different way, try to find the best aspects of the new situation you are having to adjust to, such as what new opportunities this might bring. This will help you see the positives of the change, rather than the negative.
- Adjust your behaviour: this could be proactive, such as seeking out more information or reorganising and developing a new schedule that helps you adjust to the changes.
- Managing emotions: You can try to find humour in daunting situations, find the positives and remind yourself what is most important in your life. Things such as family, friends, or hobbies can make a big change more manageable.

Once we are able to make some adjustments to our thinking, behaviour and emotions, we can ask ourselves some questions to assess our understanding of the situation:

- What opportunities does this change offer? Change means that things are different from before, with new doors being opened. What will you do to take advantage of those new doors? By sitting down and evaluating what new fascinating opportunities there are after the lockdown finishes you may find it being remembered as a growth opportunity rather than dark times.
- What is beyond my control, and why is this okay? Of course, some things we can’t change, like how other people react to their return to society, or the eventual change of the schedule you’re so used to. We need to understand that some things are going to happen without our choosing, and that we do what we can to adapt to this.
- How can I help others in their return to society? It can be as simple as listening to your significant other about their day, striking up conversations with your colleagues or even just saying “thank you” to the barista making your coffee.
- How can I grow from this change? Whether it’s setting new goals, letting go of regrets, finding new meaning in life, or writing a list of scary things - and doing them, the key is that you commit to activities that enable you to be resilient, optimistic, physically and mentally fit to successfully work through the impact that change can bring to your life.

Most of us desire to live successful, happy and long lives. To achieve this we need to be proactive about how we manage the change we face in our lives. Not with denial and resistance, but with adaptability, resilience and a shift in mindset.

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**Health & Wellbeing**

**Adaptability in a time of great change**

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- What opportunities does this change offer? Change means that things are different from before, with new doors being opened. What will you do to take advantage of those new doors? By sitting down and evaluating what new fascinating opportunities there are after the lockdown finishes you may find it being remembered as a growth opportunity rather than dark times.
- What is beyond my control, and why is this okay? Of course, some things we can’t change, like how other people react to their return to society, or the eventual change of the schedule you’re so used to. We need to understand that some things are going to happen without our choosing, and that we do what we can to adapt to this.
- How can I help others in their return to society? It can be as simple as listening to your significant other about their day, striking up conversations with your colleagues or even just saying “thank you” to the barista making your coffee.
- How can I grow from this change? Whether it’s setting new goals, letting go of regrets, finding new meaning in life, or writing a list of scary things - and doing them, the key is that you commit to activities that enable you to be resilient, optimistic, physically and mentally fit to successfully work through the impact that change can bring to your life.

Most of us desire to live successful, happy and long lives. To achieve this we need to be proactive about how we manage the change we face in our lives. Not with denial and resistance, but with adaptability, resilience and a shift in mindset.

---

**Southbank Sudoku**

A variation of Sudoku, with the letters **SOUTH BANK** replacing numbers. The rules are the same as regular Sudoku, each line must contain the letters “SOUTHBANK” as must each 9-square box. This Sudoku is MEDIUM, good luck!

Last month’s Sudoku solution

```
B  H  A
U  S  T  K  T
A  O  A  O
K  B  A  O
B  K  T
H  S  T  U
O  N  H  A  T  S  U  B
A  R  I  N  S  O  O  H  K
```
A concierge’s perspective on vertical living

Many vertical villages count their concierge as among their most valued features. How do these “keepers of the keys” view our vertical lifestyles? Given the first person encountered when starting your vertical living journey is the building concierge.

And I really liked the idea that I wasn’t enter-
ing a new and anonymous building - that there was someone readily contactable and knowledgeable in the ways of this apartment building. And that, at least, wasn’t quite sure what to expect from a vertical village concierge.

I was aware that the origins of the role could be traced back to old France where the royal household employed a concierge to cater to the various needs of guests and be the “keeper of the keys” to the many castle rooms.

And I was also aware that rather than dying off, this role was alive and well in a range of sectors - albeit with a less regal focus. There is the familiar hotel concierge who helps visitors secure those tricky theatre tickets, then there is the airport concierge and, more recently, the hospital concierge. And with a nod to their exclusive past, the well-to-do can avail themselves of personal concierge services (not to be confused with one’s personal assistant or butler).

What could I expect from a vertical village concierge?

According to the US National Concierge Association (and yes, there are several such groups), duties will differ from place to place. But among the most connected and passionate about their role are invaluable traits. Also high on the list is the ability to listen and observe and then make sense of what is seen and heard.

So, what have our vertical village concierges observed about our vertical lifestyle?

This led nicely onto our third question about his biggest challenge as concierge and James then spoke about the issues which consumed a great deal of his time.

It will likely come as no surprise that the top complaint was noise - and that our “stay-at-home orders” have seen a dramatic increase in the number of noise complaints with a corresponding drop in people’s tolerance of these incidents. Resolving such issues is where a seasoned concierge like James and his strategy is to take a personal approach by directly engaging with all parties and seek- ing reasonable resolutions - and, in so doing, “educating people about standards”.

For our final topic, I asked James about what innovations he saw for our sector. Perhaps drawing upon his corporate background, James nominated the trend towards better systems integration, especially the ability for residents to access information in the way they wanted.

I also asked his opinion about some trends, including the move towards 24/7 concierge services. His advice is that we need to be very clear about this rule and, in particular, whether this is a concierge or security position - or some new hybrid.

Regarding the demand for better and brighter amenities, James’s view is that flashy facilities are extraneous to the modern world at this time. If anything, most don’t utilise these. In his opinion, it is what is inside a resident’s apartment that is more important - along with the face that greets you as you enter your vertical village!

Do you know about the funding list?

Many buildings have been identified for potential rectification. But what are the criteria for funding? And how do you find out if your building is included?

We have learnt that the state-wide cladding audit has resumed building inspections during COVID-19 restrictions, with protective equipment and social distancing measures.

If your building is to be inspected as part of the audit, you should receive a letter from the VBA. Building managers and OCCs should also be contacted by the VBA prior to any inspection. (We Live Here does know that notices have not always been received - if you have experi-
enced this, please let us know).

The inspection usually involves cutting out a piece of each cladding type, each about the size of a CD. The holes will be plugged and sealed by the inspectors.

VBA sends the samples off for chemical and fire testing resistance. The inspection entails much work in the samples. The extent and fire risk of all instances of cladding will be examined in detail. The inspectors will return to the building to do a full assessment and other documentation.

Four stages to determine eligibility for funding

There are four stages to determine eligibility. Your building must satisfy ALL criteria:

1. Deemed higher risk by the state-wide cladding audit
2. Subject to a VBA Building Notice or Order related to combustible external wall insulation
3. Referred to CSV by either the VBA or the City of Melbourne; and
4. Prioritised for rectification by CSV.

To date, 487 buildings have been referred to the CSV. These buildings are now being prioritised. CSV says that it is reviewing 60 buildings a month.

If any other readers have more stories about long-term changes replacing short-term letting please let us know.

COVID-19 and apartment living

Is your building changing any processes as Melbourne prepares for a post-COVID-19 reopening?

We would welcome feedback on how the COVID-19 pandemic is being managed in your building and whether any specific issues have arisen.

Your stories

Thank you to all those who have contributed your stories to date, please keep your emails and cards coming in!

Campaign donations

As a not-for-profit organisation, donations from individuals and buildings keep our campaigns going. To register as a supporter of We Live Here or to donate, please visit our website at welivehere.net. We Live Here does not accept donations from commercial tourism interests.

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We Live Here
Pet’s Corner

The gift that keeps on giving

Local ferret Kanela was Mina’s Christmas gift to Priscilla three years ago.

WORDS BY Tamara Clark

She was the runt of the litter which stood out to Mina as an overwhelmingly adorable trait. Her owners think it’s a possibility that her teeny-tiny nature somehow correlates to her incredible sneakiness.

The couple describe their furry little companion as a cheeky little devil. Kanela’s favourite activity in the world is stealing socks (but only the dirty ones). In fact, she loves to steal whatever she can get her tiny paws on, with her shifty missions often going unnoticed for a significant period of time!

If her life had a soundtrack, everyone in her life knows it would be the Pink Panther theme song.

Mina is a fashion film producer and Priscilla is a pattern maker for Kookai. So, when they told Southbank News Kanela lives to gallivant, run and strut around their Southbank apartment, the dots were immediately connected. Basically, she’s a fashionista, just like her human parents!

According to her mums, Kanela’s most quirky habits were her addictions to biting and scratching. She seems to be an inherently kind creature, yet her excitement for destruction raises some questions, at times.

While her body is small, her personality is huge and it just keeps getting bigger as she grows older. Kanela was the gift that has kept on giving, according to Priscilla.

slowly starting up again

It’s great to see our neighbourhood come alive again, now that the threat of COVID-19 is slowly subsiding.

It’s even greater to finally be able to start our regular meet-ups again! Our first meet-up will be on Saturday, June 13, 10am at Boyd, while the following one will be held on Saturday, June 27, and we’ll continue to meet every two weeks after that. That is, provided restriction measures don’t tighten up again.

While we are slowly going back into our routines, or into new routines, we still need to be mindful that the risk has not completely passed yet. While we all want to completely relax and not worry about physical distancing, we know that this is the most critical time to ensure we clear the pandemic threat. Like those last few doses of antibiotics we don’t care to take once we start feeling better. This means that for a while, our meet-ups will be a bit different, so that we keep everyone safe.

For now, our meet-ups will be restricted to 15 participants maximum and people are required to register through Eventbrite, so we ensure we don’t exceed the 15-person limit. We also ask that people bring their own gardening gloves, tools, mask and hand sanitiser if they have them. We will meet outside, in Boyd’s front yard where the garden beds are located and we will make sure that a one-and-a-half-metre distance is held between each participant at all times. I am sure we are all going to be very tempted to get close or even hug our friends and neighbours when we meet again after all this time, but a warm smile and a lovely conversation while gardening will have to do instead.

If you are interested in joining our meet-ups, please email us or send us a Facebook message. We can share the Eventbrite registration link or other details about the meet-ups.

Beyond gardening, there is plenty of good news for our neighbourhood to share. All the paperwork is now done, and we have received the two council grant funds our group had won. One for free community educational days, and the other for the long-awaited composting hub. The first educational workshop we had pre-COVID-19 on the topic ‘A Melbourne Practical Guide to Zero Waste Living’, exceeded our expectations with 46 participants and some wonderful feedback on the value and usefulness of the workshop. Upcoming topics will include ‘Apartment Gardening 101’, ‘Conscious Consumerism and Fast Fashion’ and ‘Sustainable Xmas’ to name a few. Some will be moved online, while some we will do outdoors at Boyd. Keep an eye on our Facebook page or email us for more details.

We are also still accepting volunteers for delivering the community composting hub at Boyd Park. A very exciting project, a Southbank Sustainability Group initiative, the dots were immediately connected. Basically, she’s a fashionista, just like her human parents!

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SOUTHBANK SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

Reach us at: southbanksustainability@gmail.com or facebook.com/SouthbankSustainabilityGroup

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What’s behind the lights?

Living in Southbank affords many residents a spectacular and sometimes unique view of the city skyline.

I’ve enjoyed seeing various buildings lit up for a variety of causes, but I’d love to know if there’s a central reference to let the people of Melbourne know which causes the buildings in the city are lit up for.

Many buildings were lit in blue to honour the four police members tragically killed in that terrible traffic accident a few weeks ago. I found a website for the Bolte Bridge but haven’t been able to identify a single unifying source of information.

Last week I saw two buildings (one of which was the Arts Centre) lit up in orange, but had no way of finding out the cause it was in aid of. Any information would be very welcome indeed.

Tracey Allen

▲ Arts Centre Melbourne lights up in April in memory of the four police officers killed on the Eastern Freeway.
**Time flies in a pandemic**

Is it just me, or does time just seem to be flying by during our COVID-19 isolation?

Despite the expected reduced tempo from the lockdown that it is ever. Last month was certainly no exception.

A few points to note from last month...

As we are aware, Southbank Precinct is scheduled for a significant upgrade/makeover. Southbank Residents’ Association (SRA) has some concerns with the removal of the trees, but particularly with what was planned for their replacements.

In our submission to council we specifically requested for the city arborist to reach out to SRA to give our committee a clearer understanding of the tree situation. The team certainly reached out to us, but owing to COVID-19 we have not been able to meet with them as yet.

In any case, in owing to the significance of this project, Cr Rohan Lepert felt that the wider stakeholder community was entitled to be part of the conversation and moved a motion at the Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting on June 2 to put its foot forward. Melbourne for the future. For many and special interest groups, such as Melbourne Heritage Action and Bicycles Victoria, to be able to have their say.

The committee will certainly engage through this channel as well, but we encourage the wider community to also contribute to the conversation if there is something in the plan that you feel strongly about.

Mayor Sally Capp has also acknowledged the confusion, and often conflicting, COVID-19 information that has been circulating in the community with regards to our high-density living.

Apparently $3 per cent of the municipality live in an apartment or high-density environment. These environments create their own challenges during mandatory isolation and can present greater risks to its residents. The Lord Mayor resides in a Docklands apartment, so she has experienced these complexities first-hand.

At the FMC meeting on June 2, Cr Capp moved a motion requesting the council to take a greater interest in the information that is provided and to approach the council to be proactive with the formulation of information and its dissemination.

The council is hoping to engage with many of our owners’ corporations (OCs) to ascertain where it can improve the communication flow and indeed identify where it was deficient.

I commend the Lord Mayor for this initiative. As the convener of the Southbank Owners’ Corporation Network (SOCN), I personally found this confusion and uncertainty was evident across a number of our member buildings and as the restrictions have started to ease the confusion has once again entered the space.

While the initiative could be one of those that far down the rabbit hole moments, the intent of the motion was certainly acknowledged and appreciated by all councillors and SRA and we look forward to assisting the council with this.

It is promising to see the restrictions are slowly easing, but we now need to be more alert than ever. While the government, and the community, has done a great job with flattening the curve, this has bought the government much needed time to prepare for this pandemic. They now have two more weeks to prepare our hospitals, manufacture ventilators, source PPE, prepare and train contract tracers and, most importantly educate the public.

Tony Penna

**Fly as a bee**

Director Tony Penna

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As the Prime Minister pointed out when quizzed why the modelling was so wrong, it didn’t consider such high community compliance. So, well done to us all so far. But this is still far from over.

A quick reminder that since the end of financial year is approaching, it is time for our members to renew their annual membership fee for time for our annual general meeting (AGM) which is scheduled for July. Watch this space, our website and Facebook page for updates as we work through how we are going to be able to hold our AGM to comply with restrictions yet keep it a public event and preserve the integrity of the governance formalities.

If you are not a member of our not-for-profit, volunteer-run organisation and would love to show your support, it is only $10 per year, you can do this by signing-up on our website southbankresidents.org.au or Facebook page SouthbankResidents. Or, you may even be keen to join our committee! If so, please reach out to me at president@southbankresidents.org.au

**Keep safe!**

Tony Penna

**SOUTHBANK RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION**

**MONTAGUE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

**Kindness and communication: the route to the future**

As we emerge into a new phase of managing this pandemic and start back into the world, it is important to notice the effect on our community here in the Montague Precinct of Fishermans Bend.

There are some distinct things we have noticed emerging...

**Frustration**

For obvious reasons there are less in-person community meetings and time for people to support each other in those hitherto unnoticed casual meetings on the streets, in the market, in a café etc.

These casual encounters provide a sense of belonging and connectivity that supports our wellbeing and indeed our mental health.

The consequences are that there is a notable growth in people feeling frustration about the current restrictions, with the most minor things that the community would not normally even notice or mention — some examples reported are: builders arriving too early, people not taking in the bins, dogs off leash on the streets, footpaths rather than the bike paths. Really as a community we enjoy and encourage a diverse and inclusive environment that is growing so quickly.

Sadly... racism

As in Southbank, we here in Montague have a growing population and from the perspective of the Montague Community Alliance (MCA) we enjoy and encourage a diverse and inclusive neighborhood and community engagement.

Sadly (and with my own sense of frustration) there are instances of negative remarks towards certain members of our neighborhood.

We must do everything we can to be inclusive and welcoming especially as we are a precinct that is growing so quickly.

No communication

We have nothing to report regarding any meetings or contact with the City of Port Phillip, Fishermans Bend Taskforce, or our local state member. We have tried... and a salutary reminder that we have no third party rights in Montague, every weekend morning a group of residents from Montague and Port Melbourne take our dogs to Kirrip Park - the only off-lease park in Montague or Southbank.

We, the dog owners, are obsessively focused on cleaning up after ourselves as we collect litter from the streets and we do not want the park and our neighbourhood connections.

Last Sunday, with NO warning, or communication to the community (yes, City of Port Phillip... there is one!) signs went up saying it was no longer leash-free. To say we were shocked by the lack of communication or notice is somewhat of an understatement, as a community we are being ignored again.

It is worth noting that in the new apartments in Gladstone St there are more than 20 extra dogs. Where is the amenity? Where is the communication? Where is the kindness?

Trisha Avery

**YARRA RIVER BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**

Support your locals

As I write this column we are slowly re-emerging from lockdown. If you think it has been a long 10 weeks, then spare a thought for our businesses that had their income cease overnight.

For some of them, it could potentially ruin their businesses for the next six to 12 months, until we get the return of international tourism, business conditions for many in Southbank may be marginal.

This is where you, as Southbankers, can really play your part. It was vital that we had the restrictions, but I now urge you to get out and support the precinct’s cafes, bars and restaurants. Collectively, they are our lifeline and create the colourful vibe of the area, which makes it such a great location in which to live.

More than ever before, they will need local support to open their doors and to keep them open.

I have also urged our businesses to actively reach out to the local community and perhaps engage with them for the first time. Southbankers should be a constant and repeat source of business for them, but only if they look after you. Now is the time to really cement that link between our precinct businesses and residents. Basically, that means providing great customer service not some special offers and perhaps special events.

Ironically, in this time of lockdown and slow re-emergence the future of the precinct has never been stronger. The recent announcement by ARA Australia regarding the redevelopment of Southgate is a local in a long list of new developments in the pipeline.

Rebuild International’s development for the BMW site has gained both local council and Spring Street approval.

This will not just be the biggest building in Melbourne, but I hope it will usher in a new era of sustainability and green credentials for high-rise buildings, not to mention community connections. The revised plans for the former convention centre site at the corner of Spencer and Flinders streets will radically change the look of that area behind Crowne Plaza.

The Seafarers North Wharf development by Riverclay will also be an exciting “book-end” for the look of that area behind Crowne Plaza.

The Seafarers North Wharf development by Riverclay will also be an exciting “book-end” for the look of that area behind Crowne Plaza.

And a sad and salutary reminder that we areinstilled to get out and explore our local area.

We hope that you have enjoyed the series of local walks that we have featured in this paper over the past three months. Although June is the final walk, we hope that you will always be inspired to get out and explore our local area. All the walks are included in a pocket-size publication Melbourne City River Walks, which is free and available from the Town Hall Visitor Hub, or just drop an email with your address to MicroRiver.info and we’ll post a copy out to you.

John Forman

**MONTAGUE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

**SOUTHBANK RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION**

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Southgate新愿景揭晓

撰稿 Sean Car

标志性的南岸办公楼和Southgate零售商业区的业主已将其期待已久的8亿澳元改造计划提交州政府审批。

据了解，墨尔本市政有意收购位于南岸的圣基尔达(St Kilda)路310号的前归国军人诊所大楼。

经过两年多的“总体规划调查”，ARA 澳大利亚公司今年3月向州规划厅长理查德·怀恩(Richard Wynne)提出了开发申请，寻求重新定位其南岸办公楼和Southgate零售商业区的业主已将其期待已久的8亿澳元改造计划提交州政府审批。

联邦政府和州政府之间先前的交易谈判失败了，但墨尔本市政在去年3月同意探索一个潜在的市场外交易选择时，却把ANVAM的梦想抛到了九霄云外。

墨尔本市政的首席执行官贾斯汀·汉尼(Justin Hanney)本月表示，市政仍在完成对土地转让的“尽职调查”后才能完全考虑ANVAM的提议。

汉尼先生说：“该建筑面向考文垂(Cowenvery)街和圣基尔达路，以前是归国军人指定的门诊诊所。这栋建筑已经空置了20年，而且年久失修了。”

“在市政审议该提议之前，我们需要完成对土地转让的必要尽职调查。我们还需要从提议者那里了解提议的融资模式和维护体系的详细商业案例，并确保交易对市政不构成任何净成本。”

联邦国防部发言人表示，欢迎墨尔本市政考虑ANVAM的提议。
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- **Listed - 16 properties**
- **Sold - $10,583,688**
- **Settled - $11,259,500**
- **Apps Received** 338
- **Leased** 64
- **New Landlords** 39

**Our Sales Activity**
- Listed - 16 properties
- Sold - $10,583,688
- Settled - $11,259,500

**Our Rental Activity**
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- Inspections 438
- Tenants Inspected 613
- Apps Received 338
- Leased 64
- New Landlords 39

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