

SOUTHBANK NEWS

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There for you
Photo by Rhonda Dredge

Jaye Chin-Dusting, proprietor of Mary Martin Bookshop at Southgate, was hard at work at her chalk board last month with a few customers browsing. The bookshop has stayed open with Jaye and her son Cam braving the quiet days with fortitude and imagination. *Read more on page 10.*

What Australia's tallest tower means for Southbank

Last month's approval of developer Beulah International's project to build Australia's tallest building in Southbank has generated plenty of enthusiasm from community level right through to government. Southbank News unpacks why.

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
PLANNING

Southbank is Melbourne's home of high-rise. As Lord Mayor Sally Capp referred to us last month, "Cloudbank" is synonymous with the fact that this community is no stranger to a tall building. Vertical living defines our identity.

So, why, when other "tallest" towers such as Eureka and Australia 108 before it, has Beulah International's 365-metre project at 118 City Rd been met with a particular degree of excitement never before seen in Southbank?

A \$2 billion project that is expected to generate more than 4700 construction jobs via the provision of \$1 billion additional investment stimulus to the Melbourne construction market, it's no wonder such projects are favourable with local and state governments. Particularly during a once-in-a-generation pandemic.

But from the outset, Beulah International has recorded a number of "firsts" for a high-rise developer never-before-seen in Southbank, as well as the property industry more broadly.

From its design symposium, which brought the world's best architects together to put forward their competing visions for achieving the best outcome for the site, to the independent judging panel of experts assembled to select the best proposal, Beulah has kept Southbank front of mind in its ambitions.

And the chosen winner, UNStudio and Cox Architecture's *Green Spine*,

now known as *Southbank by Beulah*, was testament to the developer's desire to respond to the local context. The building feeds into the City of Melbourne's new linear park along Southbank Boulevard up to the Royal Botanic Gardens, paying homage to Melbourne's old title, *The Garden City*.

It also speaks true to transparency and engagement when the Southbank Residents' Association (SRA) is right behind Beulah's vision for the site, having embarked on a "rare" community engagement process.

"SRA was pleased this developer took the unprecedented step of engaging with our residents' association prior to approval for their application," SRA president Tony Penna said.

"While we have reservations with the height, we acknowledge this is not a blight on the developer as they are only required to comply with the scope of the planning scheme, which surprising they have."

"It is rare for us to see a developer that isn't trying to negotiate special dispensation outside of the planning scheme. We are particularly impressed with the sustainability efforts and the degree of street level activation."

"We believe this development has the potential to be a local's meeting point possibly transforming into Southbank resident's social centre of gravity, offering a great mix of reasons for us to be there."

Speaking at the Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting in March, where all councillors

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New leaf for Tea House building

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
PROPERTY

Southbank's historic Robur Tea Building is expected to undergo restoration having been purchased by a new owner in March.

Developer CostaFox acquired the heritage-listed building for \$28 million in an off-market sale managed by real estate group CBRE from developer RJ International (Aus) Pty Ltd who had owned it for 10 years.

CostaFox managing director Michael Fox told CBRE in March that he was "elated with the acquisition."

"To buy a site like this in this location with such a beautiful heritage building is difficult at the best of times. We plan to restore the building to its former glory."

The developer has history in restoring old buildings in Melbourne having won the Australian Property Institute Heritage Property Award in 2014 for its redevelopment of the old Tip Top Bakery site in East Brunswick.

CostaFox development director Geno Hubay said the

company had already commenced a worldwide search for the "best architects" to bring the Tea House "back to life".

While the news of a restored Tea House comes as welcome news for one of Southbank's last-remaining heritage icons, questions remain over the developer's plans for the adjoining sit at the corner of Clarendon St and Normanby Rd.

The news of CostaFox's acquisition follows Heritage Victoria's (HV) decision to refuse a permit to previous owner RJ International (Aus) Pty Ltd for its proposal to build a 24-storey hotel at the adjoining site to the Tea House last year.

That news came after the developer had previously attempted to seek approval for a 39-storey proposal. Its ultimate proposal for 24 storeys was knocked back by HV on the grounds that it would have negatively encroached on the Tea House.

"It has been determined that the construction of a 24-storey tower on the Robur Tea Building site would have a substantial detrimental impact on the cultural

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CONTACT
Suite 108, 198 Harbour Esplanade
Docklands 3008
southbanklocalnews.com.au
Tel: 8689 7980

EDITOR
Sean Car

PUBLISHER
Hyperlocal News Pty Ltd
ABN: 57 623 558 725

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A message from the Lord Mayor

WORDS BY *Lord Mayor Sally Capp*

As we adjust to a radically different way of life, Melbourne must remain a caring city that lends a helping hand during tough times. We know this is an extremely stressful situation for most people and looking after those most at risk has never been more important.

All levels of government are joining forces to combat COVID-19 and, amid the lockdown, the City of Melbourne is continuing to deliver essential services for the community. Waste and recycling, services to older people, family and children's services and support for the homeless are essential public health functions.

Meals and in-home services are being delivered to more than 600 older residents and residents with a disability, family violence and counselling services are being increased, child care centres remain open and maternal and child health support is being provided over the phone and via video conferencing. We continue to provide our community immunisation service, our daily support team is helping to find shelter for people sleeping rough, and cleaning services have been ramped up across the city.

The situation also calls for us to help each other through the traumatic economic shock of a sudden shut down. State and federal governments are offering billions of dollars in support for businesses and workers who have already lost their jobs. Local governments are also doing their bit for cafes, restaurants, artists and myriad other small enterprises that are the heart and soul of our neighbourhoods.

About 80 per cent of 16,500 businesses within the City of Melbourne are small businesses. They are family operations, sole traders and small firms that have taken a risk to turn their ideas into a livelihood and provide jobs for others. Real people are impacted, not just balance sheets.

As the level of government closest to the people, local councils have a direct and personal connection to many small business operators



and their staff. How can we best support them and ensure they survive this ordeal? The speed and strength of our recovery will depend on the moral support and financial lifeline we provide through this period.

The City of Melbourne recently announced a \$5 million support package that includes waiving fees for certain licences, registrations and street trading permits for three months, allocating special grants for e-commerce and online activities, halving rent for tenants in Council-owned buildings, and establishing a rates hardship policy. Queen Victoria Market offers an essential food service and its 600 traders will receive 100 per cent rent relief for the next three months.

Melbourne is also a city of artists and performers, and they are among the hardest hit by the downturn. The City of Melbourne is providing \$2 million in grants to help them and smaller creative organisations plan and create

their next work or showcase their performances online. They form the backbone of our city's cultural life and in more normal times their creative contributions uplift other businesses, attracting visitors from far and wide, especially at this time of year.

The City of Melbourne has established a Business Concierge service to provide one-on-one advice on accessing financial support, services and information. The support packages for businesses and our creative community have generated hundreds of enquiries and thousands of applications. There are so many people in need, but no easy way to keep everyone sustained.

We ask landlords to consider temporary rent discounts for local businesses, while those of us able to weather the storm should take the opportunity to spend online or by phone with local retailers and eateries. Organise home delivery from a favourite dinner spot or order a book from the local bookshop. They are small gestures, but will help the commercial heart of our communities to keep beating.

While our city is strangely silent, missing the million people who would normally be moving through the streets, safety and security remain top priorities. Many shopfronts are closed and thousands of residents are at home. The City of Melbourne's on-street compliance team is monitoring the streets daily, working closely with Victoria Police. Our cleaning services are taking the opportunity to sweep, scrub and disinfect the city. Coordination with our community service providers and state government has helped most of rough sleepers into temporary accommodation so they can receive care. No one should be left behind and it's inspiring to see how deeply Melburnians feel about this.

I for one am not surprised. The depth of our generosity for others was on display during the state's horrendous summer bushfire crisis. Little did we realise worse was to come. Melbourne, we are a caring community that puts people first and there will never be a better time to reinforce that notion ●

explore your own backyard

(sports trail – 60 mins plus stops)

So, you're cooped-up at home and bored with Netflix! Don't let self-isolation jelly your brain as well as your legs.

Exercise and intellectual stimulation are important to get us through this period. Grab the dog lead, your partner or friend, and explore your neighbourhood.

There's a fascinating precinct right at your door – full of maritime history, city views, lush gardens, sports, and art.

The Yarra River Business Association presents this second in a series of local walks to get you moving and to help you feel more in love with our Yarra River Precinct.

Start at the southern end of Princes Bridge on St Kilda Road, where you get a bird's eye view of the rowing precinct.

1 Rowing activity has been held on this stretch of the Yarra for more than 150 years and the area now features seven boat sheds, the oldest of which is the Melbourne University Rowing Club, built in 1909. Major rowing events held on the Yarra include February's 'Henley on Yarra' and the 'Head of the Yarra' in November.

2 **Riverslide.** This expanse of fenced concrete was opened in 2001 by the City of Melbourne as a skating facility.

3 **The Tan.** This 3.87 km running track runs parallel to the perimeter fence of the Botanic Gardens and was originally a horse track for Melbourne's well-heeled residents. When running The Tan you could bump into professional track athletes and AFL footballers. The current record is 10 minutes and 8 seconds, set by Craig Mottram in 2006. A more leisurely stroll of The Tan will add 30-40 minutes to this trail.

Cross Swan Street Bridge to the Yarra northbank.

4 **Holden Centre/Collingwood Football Club.** Originally built to house the swimming pool for the 1956 Melbourne

Olympics, it is the only remaining major stadium structure from the Games. A plaque next to the building explains its innovative design and construction. While the exterior still reflects its original and heritage-listed design, internally it has been re-modeled to become a sports administration and training centre for the largest membership-based sporting club in Australia.

5 Adjoining the centre is **Olympic Park Oval**, a training field for the Collingwood Football Club. A beautiful sculptural piece immortalises an act of sportsmanship that took place during the Australian Mile Championship of 1956, when John Landy stopped to help a fallen Ron Clarke, then went on to win the race.

6 **Melbourne and Olympic Parks.** This is one of the world's great nuclei of sporting activity: Rod Laver Arena; Melbourne Arena, Margaret Court Arena, National Tennis Centre and AAMI Park.

Rod Laver Arena. Completed in 1988 and renamed in 2000 to honour one of Australia's tennis greats and winner of two Grand Slams. With seating for 15,000, it is the centrepiece of the Australian Open in January, but it plays host to a wide range of sports and entertainment events throughout the year.

Melbourne Arena. This 13,100 m² building completed in 2000 is an extremely versatile venue: 250 metre cycling track, a Plexicushion tennis court, concert quality acoustics, and innovative seating for up to 10,500 people.

7 **AAMI Park.** Opened in May 2010, this 30,050 seat venue features a distinctive cutting-edge bioframe design with a geodesic dome roof, which substantially covers the seating area and enables spectators to enjoy unobstructed views, free from pillars, walls or other support structures. The stadium is the Melbourne home of Rugby Union and League, as well as soccer.

Use the air bridge from AAMI Park to cross Olympic Boulevard (Swan Street).

8 **National Tennis Centre.** This exciting tennis training facility comprises eight indoor and 13 outdoor courts, gymnasium, athletes warm-up and warm-down facilities. On the city side of the Centre inspect XIV Olympic Plaque, which shows the layout of the major facilities for the 1956 Olympics.

9 **Sporting sculptures.** On this section of the walk you will find many fine sculptures depicting people and moments that have contributed to Melbourne's legendary sporting status. Most are located on the concourse of the M.C.G.

10 **Melbourne Cricket Ground.** Melbourne's love affair with sport dates back to September 1853, when Governor La Trobe made a grant of the 'Police Paddock' to the Melbourne Cricket Club. Since then it has become the beloved 'G' to Melburnians and it is known throughout the sporting world. The stadium hosted the 1956 Olympic Games and the 2006 Commonwealth Games. After many refurbishments over the years, the 'G' now has a capacity of just over 100,000 people.

11 **Australian Sports Museum.** More than 2500 objects related to the greatest moments in Australia's sporting history are on display, including Olympic history, Australian football, cricket and an array of other sports. The collection embraces the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame, the Melbourne Cricket Club Museum and the Champions Thoroughbred Racing Gallery. Put a visit to this museum on your list once the lock-down restrictions are lifted!

Return to the CBD from gate 2, via the William Barak pedestrian bridge and Birrarung Marr, from which you get an aerial view of Margaret Court Arena and the outdoor tennis courts.

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What Australia's tallest tower means for Southbank

Continued from page 1.

provided unanimous endorsement of Beulah's plans, chair of planning Cr Nicholas Reece spoke to the project's significant community benefits.

"We sometimes hear people in this city say, 'Melbourne has never seen anything like it'. That is often said with a little bit of exaggeration but I think we can confidently say 'Melbourne has never seen anything like Beulah,'" he said.

"It's not just about the height - so much thought and effort has gone into the design and the green space. The apartments will provide a high level of amenity for residents along with services such as bike and car parking, a child-care centre, retail, hotel and office space."

The City of Melbourne should be excited by the project when it looks at what it will deliver to the overall vision of Southbank. As well as contributing directly to Southbank Boulevard upgrades, the development will also benefit a number of the council's other plans to upgrade the "harsh" City Rd streetscape, as well as Southbank Promenade.

Strategically, the project helps tie a number of central components of the council's 2010 Southbank Structure Plan together by contributing to the public realm, and providing a sustainable design complete with an abundance of public amenities onsite.

Southbank News spoke with Beulah International executive director Adelene Teh following the state government's announcement on April 24, which included the establishment of a dedicated building and development taskforce to help the industry through COVID-19.

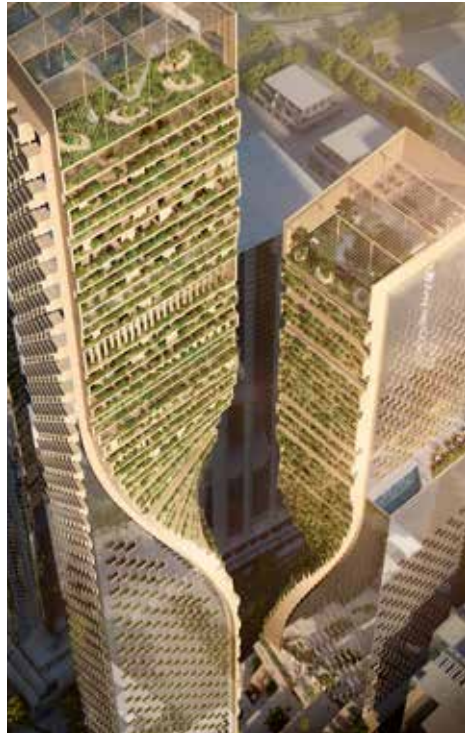
She said that from the beginning, Beulah International wanted to use its opportunity to address a number of shortcomings in Southbank. And having previously worked for renowned locally-based architect Fender Katsalidis as a student, she knows the area well.

"When we received the leaflet from CBRE when the site was on sale, there were some team members who said Southbank was not that great at the moment. I worked in that area myself and one of the key things I really thought was lacking in the area was public amenities," she said.

"As I looked into the site in further detail you recognise that it's a huge site for the city, it's in such a central, strategic location and we could really do something special here."

With this project, it has sought to do just that. Described as a "vertical mini-metropolis", it will comprise apartments, public and green spaces throughout the building, rooftop gardens, a town hall, offices, a five-star urban resort, child-care centre, health and wellness precinct, arts and cultural facilities and extensive retail.

Adelene Teh said the outcome, drawn through its architecture competition, had



▲ A render highlighting the project's greenery.

reinforced important lessons in collaboration in urban planning.

"I think just being open and transparent and collaborative with all stakeholders is such a key part of doing such a good project," she said. "We engaged the public, we did a lot of documentation to bring the public on a journey."

"Even the symposium wasn't about presenting a design but it was about having a conversation with people who are passionate about their city. Even when we put the pavilion at Queensbridge Square we had Beulah team members rotating and being there talking to people asking their thoughts. Those insights are really valuable for what we deliver, it actually informs our brief."

While many were shocked at the speed in which Minister for Planning Richard Wynne issued his approval last month, Ms Teh said that the project was "90 per cent unchanged" from what was originally submitted. A decision had been pending, and the assessment was already complete.

Fencing is already up around the site as geotechnical investigations are conducted to understand soil conditions, while height is still subject to Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) clearance.

Adelene Teh said Beulah hoped to commence construction next year, subject to market conditions ●

news@southbanklocalnews.com.au

Impromptu balcony party erupts

WORDS BY *David Schout*
LOCAL NEWS

Hundreds of Southbank apartment residents broke out into song and dance on Good Friday as locals showed social distancing wouldn't break their partying spirit.

Perhaps inspired by apartment dwellers in Spain and Italy finding creative ways to interact under quarantine, the ad hoc party quickly brought many locals out to their balconies.

And best of all, no one really knows how it started.

"I don't actually know," Balston St resident *Claire said when asked how the celebrations began.

"I was just sitting in my room and then I started hearing some yelling outside. So, I went out onto my balcony and everyone was just having a good time and I thought 'oh this is fun'. I thought I'd participate in the best way I know how, and got my horn out."

That "horn" was her saxophone and the final year bachelor of music student soon joined in the fun.

With lasers shining from some balconies and cow bells being banged on others, the mayhem was a welcome relief to the quiet many have become accustomed to in recent months.

"I don't actually know if it was organised or if people just started yelling out at each other. I think people were a bit bummed they couldn't go out so thought they'd bring the party to us," she said.

Residents quickly took to Facebook to post their videos of the party.

"Most excitement we have had for a couple of weeks!" Joanne McMillan wrote on the Southbank Residents Association (SRA) Facebook page.

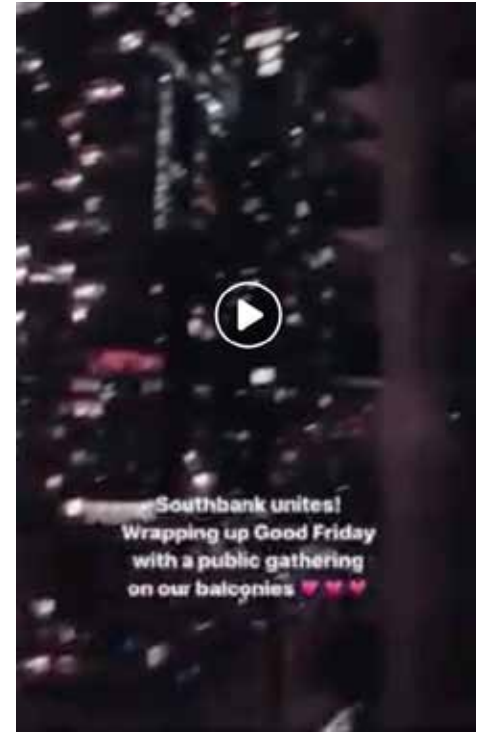
"I agree, it was such an amazing experience to be part of," resident Tracey Allen said.

Yarra Condos resident and SRA committee member Marcus de Rijk was, like many residents, confused at first.

"Initially what we started to hear was what sounded like some drunken shouts, which you can hear on any given Friday or Saturday night given the number of short-stay apartments around here. I thought 'here we go, people aren't adhering to the rules,'" he said with a laugh.

"But then it became a cacophony. And when someone decided to play music and everyone started to come into sync, it became something else entirely. It was really nice to hear the music and an obvious sense that people were enjoying that. This idea of coming together and being able to be part of a community; as odd and as unusual as it was, it was actually really nice."

Mr de Rijk especially sympathised with those living by themselves during this period, and hoped the impromptu party gave a sense that



▲ Image from a video posted online capturing the event.

locals were in this together.

He also wanted to thank his neighbour for spinning some great tracks!

"Whoever was the nearest person to me certainly selected music that I enjoyed," he said.

While the government's "stay at home" directive has made Southbank a far quieter neighbourhood than usual, there were signs in the final weeks of April that things were slowly coming back to life.

"I feel like the foot traffic is starting to pick up compared to when isolation started to hit," Claire said. "Back at the start things were very, very quiet but now I think more people are getting out, walking to get a coffee and that sort of thing. It was really weird at the start; walking to Flinders St and hardly seeing any cars. It was such an eerie feeling."

She said, like many, she was leaning on those close to her.

"It's not too bad. I live with my two best friends so they're keeping me sane and I'm still getting out for work and stuff like that, so it could be a lot worse."

*Wished to withhold her real name ●



David Schout

JOURNALIST

DAVID@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

— LA CAMERA —
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La Camera returns *for takeaway!*

Led by the return of its matriarch Nonna out of retirement, the La Camera family will reopen for business on Monday, June 1, offering its favourite Italian specialty meals for takeaway.

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New leaf for Tea House building

Continued from page 1.

heritage significance of the place and on the setting and views of the Robur Tea Building,” a letter from HV to RJ International said.

“It has been determined that refusal would not prevent the reasonable or economic use of the registered place; also, that viable economic use of the Robur Tea Building does not require the level of change proposed.”

The City of Melbourne’s heritage portfolio chair Cr Rohan Leppert said at the time that Heritage Victoria’s decision acknowledged that the proposed new building would have overwhelmed the Tea House.

“I think the site is able to be developed, but like Heritage Victoria, council will be considering whether the Tea House is being given enough room to ensure its integrity as a building of state significance stays intact.”

Southbank Residents’ Association (SRA) president Tony Penna said, “we acknowledge the recent sale of Southbank’s historic tea house by CBRE with trepidation.”



▲ The Tea House has been sold.

“Only recently SRA fought hard to have this building preserved after a development was proposed on the car park adjoining which would have truly impacted on the heritage of the site, which was also the view of Heritage Victoria.”

“Fortunately, owing to those heritage issues, that development was

not able to proceed. Southbank’s Tea House is one of the few remaining heritage sites left in Southbank. We would certainly welcome any preservation or enhancement of the sight by the new owner.”

The Tea House’s southern lift shaft, which was added onto the original building, is not heritage listed and could be demolished as part of any development plans on the adjoining site.

Built in 1887, the heritage-listed property is one of the most prominent examples of a 19th century warehouse in Melbourne. The building was designed by Nahum Barnet and built by James Moore and John Grainger for printers and manufacturing stationers, Fergusson & Mitchell. For many years the former factory and warehouse was one of the tallest buildings outside the CBD, with its height and character establishing it as a Southbank landmark. The building, which has been largely vacant for several years, has a net lettable area of 3250 sqm and occupies a large 2948 sqm site ●



Keeping faith in Southbank

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Tamara Clark*

LOCAL NEWS

Although Southbank’s Arts Precinct is looking like a ghost town, one corner of the community has remained open with a touching message.

Pourya Sadr, owner of Café Godot at the Guild on Sturt St has always had a connection with art.

Be it photography, film or as of right now, drawing, he always has his hands in something creative.

Sadr opened his café with the challenging art student budget in mind.

“I remember my art student friends struggling in art school and struggling afterwards,” he said.

“And then I started working in the hospitality industry and I had that soft spot because I would see my art student friends have to work for free here and there and they would rarely have any income. So, I reached for that market so they could get a sandwich, lunch and a coffee for \$15.”

Like so many others during this pandemic, the café has faced some adversity. Customers are fewer, and freshly-made perishable dishes became less viable. So, the menu has changed significantly.

“When it was a normal day, we were very busy and running out of food every day,” Sadr said.

However, Godot seized the opportunity to add staple grocery items like milk, meat and coffee to the menu to support the community.

“Anything that will make it easier for our customers,” he said.

“You can come and pick up fresh, fresh bread and we keep our prices a little bit lower than the supplier.”

Pourya said he had received a hand-written letter from the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) detailing how the university was setting up a break-off room to replicate his café.

“They pretend they’re really here. Students stand around and joke they are waiting for their soy milk latte,” he said. “It is just beautiful to hear.”

Café Godot has plans to start delivering to the university.

Pourya outlined some roses in an otherwise thorny situation.

Ironically, the café was named after a word which references small talk; the niceties of generic coffee shop conversation; “Hi. How are you? How’s the weather?”

But over the three years of Godot living at the base of the Guild building, conversations have become longer and more “emotionally open”.

“What we’re going through at the moment is something similar to those silent meditation retreats you hear of,” he said. “The silence makes you think of all the conversations you could be having but aren’t.”

“At the moment, we are locked down and thinking of all the opportunities we are given to connect and to know our neighbours. We are all thinking about how we want to connect when this is all over,” he said.

Café Godot is located at 152 Sturt Street, Southbank ●

A local’s shout out

WORDS BY *Sean Car*

LOCAL NEWS

Southbank resident and software entrepreneur Mark Murphy has turned his regular online ticketing service into a social enterprise project to support struggling live music and hospitality venues across Melbourne during COVID-19.

Until recently, the Kings Domain resident and his business partner had run a small event technology business that worked with some of Melbourne’s most renowned live music venues to provide online ticketing and marketing services.

As the impacts of COVID-19 took effect on the hospitality and creative industries in March, he said that many of his customers were some of the first businesses to shut their doors, resulting in influxes of refunds to ticket-holders.

However, he said that as they began reaching out to offer refunds, many customers had asked whether it was possible to donate or keep their ticket for a future event and from this goodwill, a new initiative was born.

Shout Your Local! is a “pay it forward” not-for-profit project helping Melbourne’s local restaurants, pubs, cafes and live music venues get through the COVID-19 lockdown.



Launching in April, businesses are able to sign up and sell gift vouchers to unlock cash flow today and future customers of tomorrow.

“Our clients are really heartened by it. They really care but they often don’t really know technology, everything is sort of under the hood at the point of sale at the venue so they’ve really appreciated the support,” Mark said.

With all voucher management and sales taken care of by the Shout Your Local! platform, which has partnered with payment service Stripe and voucher service GiftUp!, the system pays out to clients everyday while helping build their customer bases.

“We’re currently volunteering our time for this project but think Shout Your Local! could be a great opportunity for the right local business or corporate partners and welcome conversation with potential sponsors who are in a position to support this initiative,” Mark said.

For more information visit shoutyourlocal.com ●

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Supporting our city businesses

COUNCIL ADVERTORIAL

Melbourne businesses are the lifeblood of the city, and the City of Melbourne is offering services to help support businesses affected by COVID-19.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp is encouraging businesses to take up the offers of support from the City of Melbourne.

“Our COVID-19 Business Concierge Hotline is a useful and practical resource for small businesses during this difficult time,” the Lord Mayor said.

“We’ve launched this dedicated phone line so small businesses can call in and find out important information about what support is available and how to access our services.” “It is staffed by a team of people here at the City of Melbourne who can speak with small business owners directly, offer mentoring and help people through the process to apply for support.”

Business owners can call the COVID-19 Business Concierge Hotline on 9658 9658 between 7.30am and 6pm Monday to Friday and between 10am and 4pm on weekends.

The Lord Mayor said there are more than 16,500 businesses in the City of Melbourne, with 80 per cent of these sole operators, family operations and small firms with just a few employees. “Real people are being severely impacted. So, we’re doing everything we can to help businesses stay open and keep Melburnians in jobs,” she said.

The City of Melbourne is offering a number of relief and support measures to help local businesses through the coming weeks and months. The support package includes waiving certain fees, reducing rent for tenants in Council-owned buildings and developing a rates hardship policy.

“The speed and strength of the city’s economic recovery will depend on how well we can sustain and save businesses through this period,” the Lord Mayor said. “We want to

“

Real people are being severely impacted. So, we’re doing everything we can to help businesses stay open and keep Melburnians in jobs.

”

understand the needs of businesses. We want to know how we can help. Listening to them is the best way we can effectively respond to this uncertainty together.”

“And when the health crisis is over, we will find a momentous way to celebrate, to welcome people back to our city, but most importantly to acknowledge and appreciate our city businesses and organisations, they are the heartbeat of our city and community, they make Melbourne impactful, interesting and iconic.” ●

For more information:
melbourne.vic.gov.au/business



▲ City businesses are encouraged to find out what relief and support is available from the City of Melbourne.



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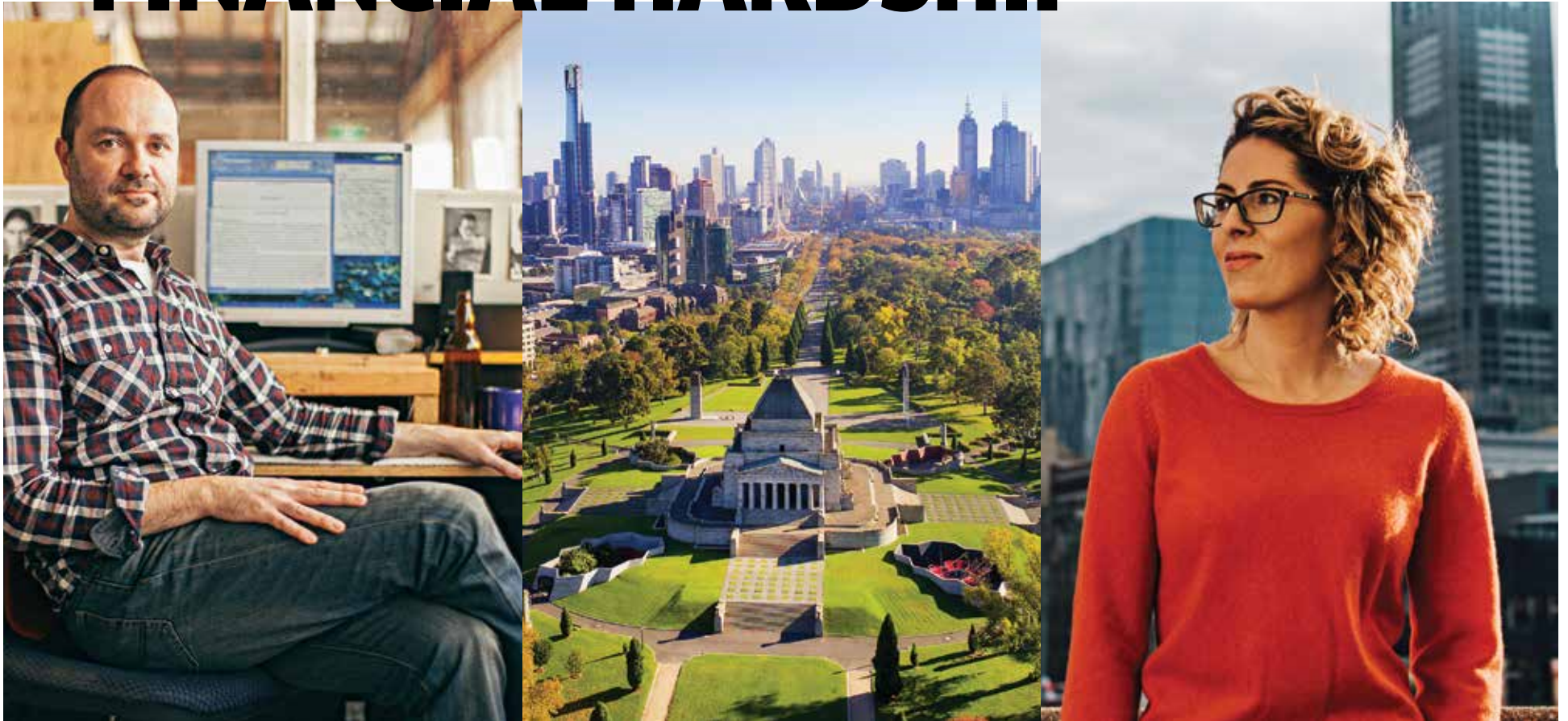
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HELP FOR BUSINESSES FACING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP



If your business is experiencing financial hardship, the City of Melbourne may be able to help.

City of Melbourne's COVID-19 Business Concierge Hotline is now available to help small businesses and organisations access support services and important business information.

The newly-expanded Business Concierge service is a dedicated team of people who can speak to small business owners directly, offer mentoring and help people through the process to apply for support.

To find out how we can assist you, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au or call our Business Concierge Hotline on 9658 9658 (press 1 for business).

melbourne.vic.gov.au



Short-stay “apocalypse”

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
PROPERTY

The rental market in Southbank and surrounds is flooded due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic related collapse of the short-stay market, according to real estate agents and short stay operators.

Reports from apartment-based markets in the CBD, Southbank and Docklands all show a similar trend, with a rush to move short-stay apartments into the rental market.

Ray White Southbank principal and director Andrew Salvo said there had been a flood into the rental market.

“It’s mainly the larger short-stay accommodation companies. We had one hotel operator that had about 500 short stay apartments they were subletting arrangements on and they pretty much just closed their doors,” he said.

“We had about 50 on our books and the operators just left the furniture and everything in them. We managed to rent them out pretty quickly, but it required rent reductions around 10 to 20 per cent.”

Mr Salvo said Ray White Southbank had actually experienced a record leasing month with the rise in supply, even though demand had sunk.

“We don’t have borders open, we don’t have interstate migration and we really benefit from that in this area in normal times,” he said.

“The people moving are people in the area looking to upsize, to take advantage of the change in the market, and we’ve actually been able to lease about 65 properties this month.”

“That’s not because there’s a high number of tenants looking, there’s a high supply. We usually run off an average list of 30 properties up for rent and that’s pretty much quadrupled in the space of a few weeks.”

Tony Penna, a short-stay operator in Southbank, said he had 30 empty properties he was trying to move into the rental market.

“There’s literally no revenue, every booking I



▲ Apartment furniture and other rubbish dumped behind The Summit off Power St last month.

had for the next three months is cancelled. I’m absolutely trying my best to put medium- to long-term tenants in them as fully furnished apartments,” Mr Penna said.

“When you look online for two-bedroom apartments in Southbank there’s around 800 already available.”

“There’s definitely a saturation of rental properties going onto the market, and many are fully-furnished so you’d guess they’re likely from short-stay.”

Mr Penna said another possible sign of the collapse of the short-stay market was a significant increase in hard waste around the city.

“There’s hard waste flooded with furniture that appears to be from short-stays all around Southbank,” he said.

“The test will be how many short-stay operators can sustain themselves for this period, and what the market will look like on the other side.”

Real estate agents have reported the same trend in the CBD.

Belle Property’s Carlton and Melbourne business development and leasing manager Suzie Inglis said the CBD market was “absolutely flooded mostly with furnished properties that would usually be on Airbnb and other short term stay platforms”.

Ms Inglis said on April 21 there were over 2200 apartments online in the CBD alone.

“In our busiest period this number will usually never exceed 1200, so you can clearly see the huge and rapid increase happening,” she said.

“The 1000 extra properties are all furnished and have all come online in the last two to three weeks which is simply unheard of.”

“This heavy competition teamed with the fact there are hardly any prospective tenants in the market anyway has forced owners to significantly drop prices in order to be competitive.”

Rus Littleton, a representative of property owners and long-term resident advocacy group We Live Here, said COVID-19 was an “apocalypse for the whole short-stay industry”.

“We have residents telling us that short-stay operators are collapsing throughout the city,” he said.

“Short-stay companies that have been around for more than a decade have not been immune - they’re crumbling under the pressure of paying above-market rents with near-zero income.”

“We Live Here is hearing that short-stay operators are invoking the small print in their rental agreements and bailing out, abandoning their apartment owners in the long-term rental market.” ●



Theft of vintage car

CRIME

Police are investigating after a vintage vehicle was stolen from a Southbank carpark in March.

The incident occurred on March 9, when the owner parked his vehicle in a Whiteman St carpark about 11.30am and returned about 3.30pm to find the car missing.

The vehicle is described as a 1974 Holden Torana SL/R 5000 registered with club number plates 0899-H4.

Investigators wish to speak with a man seen in the area at the time, as they believe he may be able to assist with their enquiries.

He is perceived to be Caucasian in appearance and aged in his 50s.

He was wearing dark coloured pants, a red/salmon coloured top, a blue jacket, a navy cap and a grey jumper tied around his shoulders.

Investigators have released images of a man who they believe can assist with their enquiries.

Police are appealing for anyone who may have seen the vehicle or who recognises the man to come forward ●

Crime Stoppers:
1800 333 000 or
crimestoppers.vic.gov.au

DRIVE THIEVES AWAY

Police are urging motorists to take precautions with their vehicles and valuables.

- Ensure your vehicle is locked, including all windows and doors
- Remove all valuables from your vehicle, or put them out of sight
- Park in a well-lit and secure area - a garage or carport where possible
- Keep your car keys secure at all times

If you are a victim of theft, call the Police Assistance Line on 131 444 to make a report. Call Triple Zero (000) for immediate police attendance.

CR 08.04.20

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▲ People line up for food relief at Planetshakers in Southbank last month. Photo: The Age.

Increase in homeless despite government measures

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
LOCAL NEWS

Despite almost unprecedented expansion of Australia's welfare system there has been an influx of those in need of homelessness support, according to the Salvation Army.

Major Brendan Nottle told *Southbank News* last month the increase in demand was even greater than what the Salvation Army had expected.

"The influx played out almost exactly as we expected it, but I think the demand has actually outweighed what we expected there," he said.

"We knew there would be an increase but not to this extent. Before the crisis we serviced around 25 to 30 people a day in emergency relief support with food parcels, now it's 90 to 95 a day."

"Life was pretty certain for a lot of people and when this crisis hit I think their lives became uncertain a lot of ways – will they have a job in the short term and long term, will the company they work for still be standing, how are they going to pay for medication, food and rent. A lot of this started before the JobKeeper payment was announced but there are still lots of people, we're seeing who aren't sure if they're eligible."

One demographic rendered uniquely vulnerable has been international students, who like other groups have lost employment but remain ineligible for unemployment benefits even with the now expanded safety net.

Further, many international students can't return home due to border restrictions.

Queues at a Southbank foodbank run by the Planetshakers Pentecostal church stretched 200 metres in April, and was largely composed of international students, according to *The Age*.

The charity's weekly intake has skyrocketed from 200 people a week to more than 1300.

The Victorian Government announced on April 29 that international students would receive a relief payment of up to \$1100 as part of a \$45 million *International Student Emergency Relief Fund* (read more on this page, page 8).

In March the Salvation Army overhauled its local operations to deal with an impending catastrophe for the homeless. Australia has so far dodged many of those disastrous health care projections, but Major Nottle has warned to stay diligent.

"I think we should pay kudos to governments both state and federal for the action they've taken, but the reality is we haven't entered the flu season and the people the Salvation Army works with are high-risk," Major Nottle said.

"Diligence is really critical now. It's easy to say the numbers are really small compared to what we thought, and I'm not a medical professional but I'm not convinced we're through it yet."

The Salvation Army centre on Bourke St had significantly restructured and expanded its café services and was deemed an essential service but soon received direction from the Department of Health and Human Services

(DHHS) that operations would have to be even more significantly altered.

The night café was forced to shut just when it was supporting around 150 to 180 people a night who had nowhere to go. Major Nottle said people were sleeping on the floor.

"We've worked with that cohort, and with people sleeping around the city, and we've got 203 people off the streets and into short-term accommodation," Major Nottle said.

"It's a really good short-term measure but it's certainly not a solution to homelessness, and many of them are in hotels that don't supply meals, cooking or heating facilities."

Major Nottle said a solution had been found utilising the kitchen at Parliament House and donations of tonnes of food produce from places like Crown which were forced to shut for the lockdown.

"The kitchen at Parliament House is pumping out around 4000 meals a day to a range of charities and we're distributing a lot into hotels where people are staying for emergency accommodation," Brendan said.

On April 10, the state government announced it would repurpose aged-care sites to provide self-isolation facilities for the homeless.

Minister for Housing Richard Wynne announced \$8.8 million for four pop-up facilities that would provide healthcare and support accommodation for more than 200 rough sleepers over the next six months.

The accommodation will be located at four sites in inner Melbourne and will be operated by Anglicare Victoria, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Launch Housing, Sacred Heart Mission and VincentCare Victoria.

"People without secure accommodation are at greater risk of contracting coronavirus because they can't self-isolate or quarantine – this will help keep them safe and slow the spread of the virus," Minister Wynne said.

The state government also announced \$3 million for women experiencing, or at risk of, family violence on April 17.

On April 29, the City of Melbourne announced that it was providing \$200,000 in grants for organisations that supported vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

People City portfolio chair Cr Beverley Pinder called for applications for projects to help residents and communities that had been affected by COVID-19 maintain good mental health and quality of life, in spite of the challenging times.

"We know that COVID-19 has created real hardship in many communities, but particularly so for people who already face disadvantage," Cr Pinder said.

Applications are now open at melbourne.smartygrants.com.au ●



Meg Hill
JOURNALIST
MEG@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

Support arrives for international students

WORDS BY *David Schout and Sean Car*
EDUCATION

On April 29, the state government announced that international students would receive a relief payment of up to \$1100 as part of a \$45 million emergency support package in response to COVID-19.

The fund will provide a one-off payment to students in need while expanding emergency provisions for those experiencing exceptional circumstances.

"It's important that we back the people who have made such a strong commitment to our state, and we will make sure that our education providers can emerge from the other side of this crisis in a position to quickly rebuild," Minister for Education James Merlino said.

It comes after the City of Melbourne urged greater support for the 52,000 international students who live or study within the city amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

With many students now jobless and unable to fly home or access federal income support, the council recognised the "urgent" need for a national hardship fund.

And as student fees and living costs continue to mount, Lord Mayor Sally Capp said Town Hall needed to take a stand.

"At this time when we keep saying 'we're in this together', then we need to show that we really are, not just to those who are the most important or prevalent but to those who need care," she said.

"For every international student, for all their parents and families, we need to be saying very clearly that we feel a responsibility to them in our city... you belong, you are deserving and we do care."

In asking for a response from higher levels of government, the council too has pledged financial assistance, although that amount (at the time of publishing) was still yet to be determined.

Cr Capp said foreign students defined Melbourne's brand and identity, and especially paid tribute to those playing important roles in the fight against COVID-19 as researchers, student nurses, intern doctors and volunteers in hospitals.

The Lord Mayor called out the racist attack on two students at the Queen Victoria Market in April as "completely unacceptable" and something that "does not reflect the values that Melburnians stand for".

More than 200,000 international students from 170 countries live in Melbourne, including 52,000 international students who live or study in the central city and Southbank.

The sector generated nearly \$12 billion for Victoria in 2019 - by far the state's biggest export.

Shortly after the council called for greater student support at the April 7 council meeting, the Andrews Government announced international students would be eligible to register for the Working for Victoria program, which assists those who have lost work due to the pandemic.

International students currently living in Victoria are also eligible for the state government's rent relief program, including subsidies of up to \$2000.

Cr Nicholas Reece, a Principal Fellow at the University of Melbourne, underlined the importance of work to support studies.

"As we have rapidly learned, it (COVID-19) is hitting some groups - in particular international students - particularly hard. Many students who come to Australia to study take up work to support themselves and their studies, but with the collapse in the employment market at the moment, many international students are finding themselves without work, without income, and at the same time unable to access the social welfare safety net."

In April, Prime Minister Scott Morrison suggested students in this situation should "return home".

Cr Reece likened the comments, irrespective of their intention, to "a punch on a bruise" while Cr Cathy Oke - another University of Melbourne employee - said they had caused "concern and alarm" among colleagues at the University of Melbourne.

The Council of International Students Australia (CISA) said the comments were disheartening.

"Due to lockdown enforcement in many countries, lots of international students are not able to (go home) at the moment, leaving them struggling every day," it said in a statement.

"It is disappointing to see international students being disregarded. There is a lot beyond monetary matters that needs to be considered and addressed which should not be shrugged away."

The City of Melbourne said it would continue to work with Study Melbourne, the lead agency in delivering online support for international students.

It also pledged to investigate setting up:

- free resume-checking;
- increased opportunities for students to connect online;
- expanding communications with international students; and
- delivering a special edition of the NexStar internship program.

Speaking at the City of Melbourne's virtual business summit on April 16, vice-chancellor at the University of Melbourne Duncan Maskell outlined how severe the impact of COVID-19 had been on universities.

"We have a unique model in that we totally rely on student enrolment as our main revenue source," he said. "Over the last few years, that has gone into international students in a big way. So, the current travel restrictions are hitting us very hard."

"It is likely to have a long-term effect on us. In fact, the prediction is that, nationally, there will be a decline in reversal revenues of between 3.5-\$4 billion over the rest of the year. A significant amount of money."

City of Melbourne CEO Justin Hanney said council would continue to work with the university sector to support international students.

"The city has set out a number of task forces to do with issues such as the welfare of the elderly, the most at risk," he said.

"We know we have got an increase in international students using the food relief services and there are more things to work on there."



Local café does its bit for students

Southbank café Frankie Walter Peta at Freshwater Place is supporting international students through COVID-19 by offering them free and discounted toasted sandwiches during the pandemic.

To help support this initiative, the cafe owners Bridget and Shane Fernando have organised a GoFundMe campaign where anyone who wishes to contribute can donate and essentially buy an international student some lunch and support the café.

With some of her staff members international students themselves, Bridget told *Southbank News* they were happy to do anything they could to support struggling students who had been some of the worst impacted by the virus ●

To donate visit:

gofundme.com/f/toasties-for-international-students-in-melb



Dorcas St development continues

PLANNING

The owner of a Dorcas St office building located near the Melbourne Metro Rail Project's new ANZAC Station tunnel, has submitted plans for a new mixed-use development in Southbank.

The Age reported last month investors Han Biao Liu and Jing Li Yang, who purchased the eight-level office building at 10-16 Dorcas St for \$37 million in 2017, had submitted redevelopment plans for the site.

They have lodged plans with the City of Melbourne for a new 19,536 sqm building on the site, which includes 36 dwellings on the upper floors, ranging from one- to three-bedroom, a residential hotel with 172 rooms and 2293 sqm of office space.

The news follows a string of new developments along Dorcas St, which include the recently completed Kings Domain and The Evermore twin-tower project, which is currently under construction.

As the border between Southbank and the Domain Precinct, the area continues to attract strong developer interest as it transitions from a commercially-zoned precinct to mixed-use urban renewal.

The City of Port Phillip last year adopted a new masterplan for Domain, which sets out a vision for managing growth in the precinct. With the Melbourne Metro Tunnel to be completed in 2025, the precinct and adjoining Southbank Village will have direct access to the new public transport services ●



▲ 10-16 Dorcas St, Southbank. ●

COVID-19 and what it means for Fishermans Bend

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

The economic impacts of COVID-19 are being felt far and wide. But for Australia's largest-ever urban renewal project in Fishermans Bend, the pandemic could prove the major catalyst in determining how the state government's vision plays out.

Since the state government adopted its recast vision for Fishermans Bend in 2018, physical progress, while prevalent, has been slower than what some had expected given its forecasts of 80,000 new residents and 80,000 new workers by 2050.

While the University of Melbourne's investment in the Employment Precinct, which will be centred around advanced manufacturing and innovation, has provided cause for optimism, the all-important question around public transport looms large.

Leading up to the outbreak of COVID-19, the state government's growing debt crisis was well understood following a record investment in new infrastructure across the state.

It's a situation that has now only intensified, with last month's Department of Treasury and Finance modelling signalling an unprecedented 14 per cent decline in Gross State Product (GSP) in the June quarter.

In response, the state government has borrowed \$24.5 billion in emergency funding to help see us through the crisis; a debt that many economists say will take a generation of tax-payers' money to settle.

However, while the situation appears grim, Fishermans Bend, as some are predicting, could form a major part of the road to economic recovery in the post-COVID-19 world. With the state government's modelling predicting that Victoria's economic output will drop by \$32 billion in the next six months, putting 270,000 Victorians out of work, boosting major road and rail projects could help to stimulate the revival.

Included on a long list of major Victorian projects currently being considered for early delivery by the state government is public transport for Fishermans Bend. Namely, a new tram bridge via Collins St over the Yarra River through Docklands and the Lorimer Precinct.

While it budgeted \$5 million in last year's budget to assess options and fund a business case for the project, the need to link the city with the Employment Precinct,

While the situation appears grim, Fishermans Bend, as some are predicting, could form a major part of the road to economic recovery in the post-COVID-19 world.



including Melbourne University's new campus, is critical. RMIT University is also interested in Fishermans Bend, but its investment weighs heavily on the delivery of public transport.

Yet despite the tram link being crucial for achieving the overall vision on schedule and restoring development confidence in the area, the cost of delivering it, totalling north of a billion dollars, could just as likely see it slip down the government's priority list. Who's to know?

Amid the uncertainty, Fishermans Bend Development Board chair Meredith Sussex said that the Board had met in April to "set its course in the new environment."

"Of course, a number of the people who support the Board are diverted to coronavirus duties - as is completely appropriate. However, the Board is now taking the time to think through how Fishermans Bend can best contribute to the post-COVID recovery in a way that is consistent with the vision for the area," she said.

"Construction in Montague in particular is proceeding, and work on the new secondary school in Wirraway is also underway. The Board will now be providing advice to Government on which other projects, both public and private, could get underway quickly and what work needs to be finalised to assist those projects."

"The Board is also redoubling its efforts on the development of the advanced manufacturing innovation precinct. One of the things we have learnt from the crisis is that we can, and must, keep making things, and that our adaptability and innovation will be central to the jobs and economic activity of the future."

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it's that our need to adapt and adapt quickly is going to be just as important in the recovery efforts as it has been in stopping the spread of the virus.

The response to this crisis has already produced incredible innovations in technology and the ways in which we conduct our everyday lives. As Meredith Sussex pointed out, the need to further explore these spaces and create the jobs of tomorrow is going to be critical when this is all over.

We've seen what investment in medical research can deliver. The output from the cluster of medical institutions in the Parkville Precinct has proven powerful in both the Australian and international efforts to combat the virus.

As we begin the economic rebuild, soon should come the time for the state government to place the same emphasis on job creation, investment and development in Fishermans Bend. It all starts with public transport ●

Connect with your local community

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/



Virtual business summit provides important boost

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
BUSINESS

The City of Melbourne's online virtual business summit on April 16 has provided valuable support to many of the city's businesses struggling due to the coronavirus.

With many businesses in lockdown and foot traffic plummeting in the central city, the council staged the online summit to provide business owners and workers with direct access to a range of experts and advice that could help them during the crisis.

More than 600 people tuned into the live-streamed summit, an initiative spearheaded by Deputy Lord Mayor and finance and governance portfolio chair Arron Wood. Thousands more have since viewed the summit online.

"This morning is really about connecting you with some of the experts to hear latest information. But also, to hear, critically, from you as our business community," Cr Wood said.

"You might be a cafe owner who is asking what sort of support is available to you at this critical time. You might be a retail store or an important service and asking, 'how long might these restrictions last?' That's the million-dollar question. Rents, rates, fees, keeping staff employed – these are the sorts of questions we get to today."

"Today we have invited leaders from the business community, industry, health and government to really connect you to leading experts and hear from you as we work through this summit."

Assembling an impressive range of guest speakers and panel of experts, the two-and-a-half-hour summit began with addresses from the Lord Mayor Sally Capp, Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg and state government Upper House member Jane Garrett, who each provided updates on the support available from all levels of government.

The expert panel featured Victorian Chief Health Officer Prof. Brett Sutton, director of the Doherty Institute Prof. Sharon Lewin, Deloitte



▲ Clockwise from top: Cr Arron Wood, Dr Prudeep Phillip, Paul Geurra, Prof. Sharon Lewin and Prof. Brett Sutton.

Australia's Dr Prudeep Phillip and Victorian Chamber of Commerce CEO Paul Guerra.

Participants were able to write questions and submit comments through council's virtual platform, which were read out to respective experts by Cr Wood as the summit progressed.

Both Prof. Sutton and Prof. Lewin provided heartening insights into the work being done by the nation's medical community to combat the virus, with Australia now among some of the best countries in the world in terms of low case numbers.

"I want to emphasise that this is not a case of economy and health being in opposition," Prof. Sutton said. "They are not opposing forces."

"Where we are at in terms of our health status and in terms of having prevented a huge epidemic, is that we are in the very best position to bring back online some of the business and economic activity."

"Simply by virtue of the fact that we have driven transmission down I think it is a matter for our own congratulation, and I hope that by virtue of where we are at today, we can be in

a position to step up to resume activity earlier than a number of countries that will really need to be in lockdown because of the terrible situation they are in right now."

Prof. Sharon Lewin said, "We have only known about this virus since January 1. We've been able to generate an incredible response in Australia through a globalising resources innovation and we are now one of the leading countries in the world."

"[There are] a lot of brilliant minds being turned to this problem and I am very optimistic that there will be a number of solutions that will allow us to buy even more time if we take 12 to 18 months to get a vaccine."

The panel discussion was followed by an "industry deep-dive" into some of the industries worst-hit by COVID-19, including tourism, hospitality, retail and education, which heard from the likes of University of Melbourne vice-chancellor Duncan Maskell and Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) CEO Felicia Mariani.

City of Melbourne CEO Justin Hanney

provided a summary statement detailing all the support packages available from all levels of government, and encouraged local businesses to make the most of it.

"There is a really good summary of this information in the Victorian chamber and Paul Guerra mentioned victorianchamber.com.au and the VicGov website is important as well," he said.

"We have developed a concierge service and reallocated staff from libraries and staff who are good at communication and research and we have ramped up the business concierge service. All 20,000 small businesses that are in the City of Melbourne will receive a phone call over the coming weeks from the business concierge service."

The summit was closed with a message from Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harmann, who urged people to "stay connected" and to "reach for support if you need it".

The City of Melbourne has set up a dedicated business support web page (melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/Pages/economic-support-businesses-covid19.aspx), as well as a Business Concierge Hotline, which can be contacted on 9658 9658 ●

To view the summit visit:
melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/grow-business/business-events/Pages/virtual-business-support-summit.aspx



Sean Car
EDITOR
SEAN@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

There for you

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Rhonda Dredge*
LOCAL NEWS

Cam Dusting is stuck five hours a day behind a desk in Southbank trying to help people through the COVID-19 crisis.

He's studying psychology but that isn't what his customers crave.

They're after a distraction from the constant stream of news.

Cam works in Mary Martin Bookshop at Southgate and he has a shelf full of recommendations for customers.

For those going stir crazy he recommends *Boy Swallows Universe*, a novel set in Queensland about a boy who grew up in a drug-dealing family.

For those who are depressed, he suggests an amusing and heart-warming novel imported from the United States.

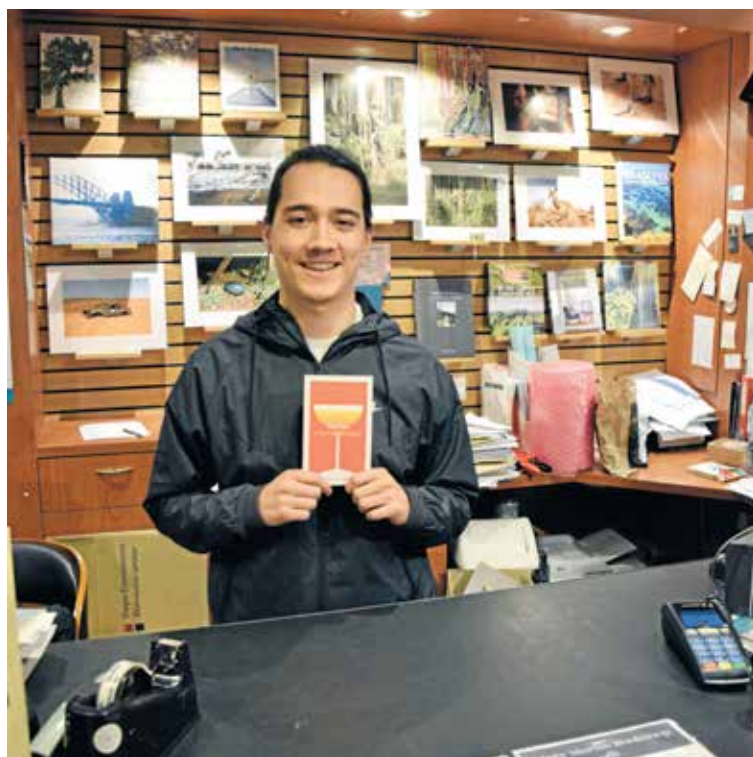
But what he reads himself is *Parties*, a book of excerpts from novels by F. Scott Fitzgerald who was considered to be an expert on the topic.

"I've only read one," Cam said, but that hasn't stopped him from forming an opinion, like all budding fiction writers.

"Most protagonists are introverts," he said. "They shy away from people." But the protagonist of *The Great Gatsby* begins his narrative at a party.

"He's invited as a neighbour. He walks around trying to find someone to talk to. He meets a woman who is like a guide."

In the COVID-19 era of social isolation, Cam recommended *Parties* as an antidote for feeling lonely. "It's great, feeling immersed at being in a



▲ Cam Dusting at the Mary Martin counter with his favourite book.

party."

The bookseller has tried Zoom but said that reading came closer to the original feeling. "It's a better copy of the real thing," he said.

Mary Martin Bookshop has remained open even though custom has dropped at the Southbank store.

"There's usually huge traffic from tourists," Cam said. "It's weird. I'm actually still happy to work. The fact that I can stand here makes it less painful. I'm lucky I'm still able to go to work. Otherwise I'd be suffering more." He catches the bus from Kew into work. "Often I'm the only person on the bus for the entire trip. There's no

peak hour."

A customer arrived and bought four books, including (not surprisingly) *The Great Gatsby* and *Scar Tissue*, the autobiography of Red Hot Chili Peppers vocalist Anthony Kiedis.

Before the crisis, customers used to spend an hour browsing. Now they've got their shopping expeditions down to half an hour.

It's a brave act staying open when other bookshops have closed but customers are loyal and all those under stress will remember that Mary Martin's was there for them when they needed it most ●

City of online literature

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The city and surrounds is defined in part by its public libraries, with Melbourne listed as a UNESCO City of Literature. There is something iconic, and unique, about the State Library of Victoria, the City Library and Boyd Community Hub.

As our readers know, those libraries were all shut in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. But the City of Melbourne has seen a major spike in demand for its online library services as Melburnians practice social distancing and stay indoors.

Thousands of free eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, online newspapers, films, videos and learning resources have been accessed in the past month.

The Lord Mayor Sally Capp said there had been a 23 per cent surge in eLibrary usage compared to this time last year, with eAudiobooks the most popular service.

"Now more than ever people are taking advantage of our incredibly large and free library resources, even when they can't physically come into our libraries," the Lord Mayor said.

"We've recorded our highest ever online loans for a single month with 19,182 loans; this includes 8837 eBook loans and 10,345 eAudiobook loans."

"Our children's librarians are also delivering online story time sessions through our YouTube channel."

The Lord Mayor said the municipality's libraries were some of the best resourced in the country.

In partnership with Beamafilm and Kanopy, City of Melbourne library



members can access free TV shows, educational videos, art house films and documentaries. Members can also download free music through Freegal.

Film streaming through City of Melbourne library services jumped 54 per cent last month. Beamafilm has doubled its average streams per month, while Kanopy usage has spiked with 3666 films streamed in March, the highest ever usage in one month.

Chair of the Knowledge City portfolio Councillor Dr Jackie Watts said that, even before the pandemic, the City of Melbourne's libraries were experiencing a resurgence.

"We are all adjusting our lives to cope with COVID-19 and many of us may be looking for new activities. I encourage everyone to take a good look at the City of Melbourne's website to explore the impressive range of services and resources our libraries have to offer – for free."

Library book chutes across the City of Melbourne's libraries are currently closed for the health and safety of staff and the community. Those who need to return an item have been encouraged to do so when libraries reopen. Fines for this period will be waived ●



▲ Adrian Rokman makes a Zoom call to one of KidsCo's students.

KidsCo wins council grant

WORDS BY *Jack Hayes*
BUSINESS

The City of Melbourne has awarded the first round of grants as part of its financial support package to help businesses adapt to COVID-19 restrictions.

Among the first successful applicants is Southbank's KidsCo, which will share in the initial \$166,000 of funding, with the remaining \$4.83 million still to be allocated.

KidsCo works with employers to help increase the productivity of working parents during the school holiday period by providing school holiday programs in the workplace across the nation.

Now, with the majority of Australia's corporate workforce working from home, founder and managing director, Adrian Rokman, has pivoted KidsCo's business model to provide a "virtual after school care" program for busy parents.

"After the second stage of restrictions we immediately lost our biggest corporate partner and by 5pm later that day we had lost 80 to 90 per cent of our client base," Mr Rokman said.

"We've taken everything we are known for; next-level, dynamic educational activities, combined with qualified teachers and put it all online, in the space of nine days."

According to Mr Rokman, KidsCo which employs 300 teachers nationally, will see over 10,000 children each school holiday period. That number slashed to just a meagre, but promising, 3000 kids during the latest school holidays.

The council's \$5 million grants program provides financial support for businesses to invest in online and e-commerce capabilities, take part in training and professional development and undertake capital works.

"To take everything online, we needed a platform that would enable us to do so. We ended up getting a Zoom educational platform," Mr Rokman said. "What it allows us to do is break the children down into classrooms and age groups."

"With everyone in lockdown, there's been no socialisation. The best part of this online pivot has been our ability to facilitate social interactions between children."

"I jumped on during lunchtime when they have a break and found six who were all showing each other their pet dogs and doing pen pals on the screen to each other. It has been such an incredible win that we hadn't anticipated – these children now have friends they would never have had before this."

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said this was just the beginning of the council's investment in Melbourne's business community.



We've taken everything we are known for; next level, dynamic educational activities, combined with qualified teachers and put it all online, in the space of nine days.



On May 1, the council announced a further 55 successful grant recipients sharing in \$264,000, with more to be announced soon.

"Small businesses make up about 80 per cent of the total number of businesses in the City of Melbourne and are run by people and families who have turned an idea or a passion into an enterprise," the Lord Mayor said. "These businesses play a major role in providing jobs for Melburnians, and right now, they urgently need our support."

"We have received an overwhelming response to this grants program with thousands of small and medium-sized businesses applying for financial support."

"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." ●



Jack Hayes
BUSINESS EDITOR
JACK@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

For more information:
kidsco.net.au

Fighting the virus with laughter

HEALTH

▼ Local laughter guy Merv Neal.

We all know that laughter is the best medicine, but can it help us with the COVID-19 virus? According to Australia's leading laughter expert and Southbanker, Merv Neal, the answer is, "yes!"

Best known locally from his weekly laughter yoga classes at the Boyd Community Hub, which have moved online due to COVID-19, the CEO of Laughter Yoga Australia is determined to keep spreading his message of laughter health during the pandemic.

We are more likely to become ill when our immune system is not at full strength. While many of the people who are dying from the present virus are elderly, or experiencing a current chronic illness, the common circumstance for both of these groups is a compromised immune system.

Working as a laughter therapist and holistic health practitioner, Merv said he had seen firsthand how laughter could assist the sick, as well as prevent illness by promoting better health.

"Our immune system becomes weaker when we're stressed. Loss of income, changed working conditions, and life in lockdown will only make the situation worse unless we adopt some coping mechanisms. Laughter is an aerobic workout that can be done anywhere and anytime," he said.

Merv provided five ways that sustained and unconditional laughter could help fight illness:



- Boosts the immune system: When we laugh from our belly, the movement of the diaphragm moves the lymph around our bodies. It increases lymphocytes and killer cells to help fight disease, and in particular cancer;
- Reduces stress: Laughter produces serotonin that helps to reduce

cortisol levels. It relaxes the muscles in the body to allow the blood to deliver oxygen to the body cells to provide energy, and the brain to provide clarity of thoughts;

- Expels air more efficiently from the lungs: Laughter is similar to prolonged meditation and deep breathing exercises. The dynamic exertion of the diaphragm expels more stale air and fluids from the bottom of our lungs. The COVID-19 virus attacks the respiratory system;
- Provides a positive mindset: Laughter puts us into the present moment. We can't be anxious or depressed when we laugh. Anxiety levels are up at present but depression may result in the longer term;
- Develops a sense of humour: As critical as our other five senses are, a sense of humour can get us through tough times. Being able to laugh in spite of situations can help us to achieve a sense of control and ability to cope better.

The Southbank Laughter Club has gone online until the Boyd Community Hub reopens. It runs every Tuesday night from 6pm to 7pm ●

For more information:
mervneal.com



La Camera returns for takeaway

BUSINESS

Following the sad news of its temporary closure last month, the family team at La Camera Southgate will reopen for takeaway on June 1.

With 45 years of history in Melbourne and having operated from Southgate for 21 years, owner Lino Scidone said the restaurant's forced closure last month due to the impacts of COVID-19 was a day that nearly "scarred him for life."

After being forced to stand down all of his staff on March 22, many of whom are overseas nationals, he said he was relieved to be able to call them back for the reopening as a "one-stop food store" on June 1.

And in a very special return out of retirement, the La Camera family's matriarch Nonna Chiara, will join the revival to prepare some of her signature dishes for locals to enjoy while in isolation.

Mr Scidone said La Camera would also offer a range of dinner and grocery packs to assist Southbankers during the crisis.

"We will reopen in first week in June with everyone working behind the scenes preparing new menus for takeaway," Mr Scidone said.

"Pasta and pizza are a given, but food prepared from our kitchen, to be taken home frozen or fresh picked up or delivered contact-free by our own staff and a special drive through service, will be also be available. Pre-orders, deli options, bread, milk, everything is on the table for what will be a long recovery back, but we hope Mr [Scott] Morrison will get us all back to work in the restaurant by June or July, with some social distancing rules in place."

"It's been such a buzz to see everyone so keen to get back to work, nervous yes, but this team has made me feel 20 again. Thanks guys, let's put this institution back on the map!"

La Camera will also team up with its sister venue Waterslide Bar, which will be offering take-home cocktails and beverages, as well as online cocktail courses from June 1 #june1strelaunch.

For more information visit lacamerasouthgate.com or call 9699 3600 ●

Advertisement

CITY OF MELBOURNE FACILITIES AND SERVICES WHAT'S STILL OPEN, AND WHAT'S ON HOLD

At the City of Melbourne we are here to help. The safety of our communities, customers and staff is our top priority as we work to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

A taskforce has been established at Town Hall to implement the advice and actions from the Victorian Government and the National Cabinet for COVID-19 across our operations.

We've acted promptly on government advice to close certain facilities and services, and will continue to deliver essential services, while following the latest health and safety guidelines.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said many of Council's services perform an essential public health function so it is important they continue.

'Melbourne must remain a caring city that lends a helping hand during tough times. We know that this is a stressful time – so ensuring we continue to deliver for the community and look after those most at risk has never been more important,' the Lord Mayor said.

'Our organisation has done a significant amount of planning to ensure crucial services to the community are not severely impacted by this pandemic.

'We will do everything possible to continue to deliver essential services such as waste and recycling, services to older people, children's services, homelessness services and animal management.'

A number of Council's non-essential services have been closed temporarily to help reduce the spread of the virus in the community.

'Our libraries, recreation and cultural centres are important community meeting places so this is not a decision we take lightly,' the Lord Mayor said.

IMPORTANT

The following information about suspended services and closed facilities is correct at time of print, but things are changing quickly.

For an up-to-date list of frequently asked questions, including closures and adjustments to services, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/coronavirus



Our libraries offer many online services



Aged care services are continuing



Rubbish collection will continue as normal

WHICH CITY OF MELBOURNE FACILITIES AND SERVICES REMAIN OPEN?

Planning, building, waste and recycling and animal management will continue to operate as normal.

Aged care support services, meals and community groups

In-home services including domestic assistance, home maintenance, meals, personal care, respite, and individual social support are continuing.

Our teams are asking COVID-19 screening questions to ensure the health and safety of our clients, community and staff.

Childcare facilities

All Council's childcare facilities will continue to operate as usual at this time. Childcare is considered an essential community service. Advice from the Victorian Government is that all essential services remain operational for now.

The City of Melbourne will continue to heed the advice of the Chief Health Officer and the Department of Health and Human Services as the situation evolves.

Queen Victoria Market

Queen Victoria Market remains open for fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and fish, deli items, dairy, bread, eggs and other key essentials.

The market is open on Tuesdays and Thursday to Sunday.

Those who can shop safely at the market, directly from stallholders, should continue to do so whilst adhering to safe social distancing and practicing good hygiene.

For those who are unable to shop in-person, the market has launched a new pre-order and pickup service allowing people to shop from the comfort of their homes and cars.

Orders can be collected from 8am on market days (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday) from the pickup zone on Queen Street, opposite D Shed.

For more information, visit qvm.com.au



Queen Victoria Market remains open

WHICH CITY OF MELBOURNE FACILITIES HAVE CLOSED FOR NOW?

Melbourne Town Hall and other Council buildings will be closed to the general public until further notice.

Arts and cultural venues

Meat Market, Signal, ArtPlay and Arts House are closed until further notice.

Libraries

City Library in Flinders Lane, Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre in Carlton, Library at The Dock in Docklands, East Melbourne, North Melbourne and Southbank libraries are closed until further notice.

You can continue to access library collections online, using your library membership number. This includes thousands of free e-books, audiobooks, e-magazines and learning resources.

If you don't have a library membership you can sign up at

melbourne.vic.gov.au/libraries

You will not be fined for books due back during the closure, and reservations will be held until our libraries re-open.

Maternal and child health

All our maternal and child health centres are closed to the public. We will replace face-to-face home visits and centre appointments with telephone or electronic consultations.

If you have an existing appointment, maternal and child health staff will contact you to offer and consultation via phone, FaceTime or Skype. Please phone 9340 1444 or email mchbookings@melbourne.vic.gov.au if you have any questions.

Neighbourhood houses

All neighbourhood centres and neighbourhood houses are temporarily closed to the public, though some programs and services usually run at neighbourhood houses will run remotely.

Connect with your local neighbourhood house by phone, email or social media for more information.

Parks, gardens, basketball courts, playgrounds and equipment

All playgrounds, basketball courts and skate parks are closed for now. Our 480 hectares of parks and gardens are still open for essential daily exercise, but all outdoor fitness equipment is closed.

Please remember to maintain 1.5 metres distance from other people when exercising and avoid gathering in groups.

Pools and recreation centres

Melbourne City Baths, Kensington Recreation Centre, Carlton Baths, North Melbourne Recreation Centre and The Venny are now closed until further notice.

Your membership will automatically be placed on free suspension during this time that we are closed, so you won't be charged.

Visitor services

All City of Melbourne visitor centres are closed, and the visitor services offered by our red coat ambassadors have been suspended, until further notice.



More information and the latest updates on City of Melbourne services can be found at melbourne.vic.gov.au/coronavirus



Childcare facilities are operating as normal at this time

The Arts Precinct

Changes in the arts: an interview with Claire Spencer

WORDS BY Meg Hill

The arts sector could be very different in a post-COVID-19 world. It's too early to trace the exact contours of that future, but its possibilities are being explored at Arts Centre Melbourne.

Its CEO Claire Spencer AM spoke to *Southbank News* about the organisation's experience of the lockdown, the impact on employment, the logistics of opening back up and potential changes in arts creation and consumption.

"Our work during the lockdown has changed a lot over the seven weeks," she said.

"The first three to four weeks was very much about the crisis and people, cancelling performances, refunding tickets, it was very intense, and we have 1000 people who work at the Arts Centre and up until very recently we were communicating with them every day."

"It was a very intense period, utterly relentless and exhausting. We were constantly having to think about big decisions and while not having perfect information."

"But now we're very much thinking about the future and not just about reopening the venues but about how this is going to change us as an organisation and how it's going to change our audiences."

Of the 1000 employees, 600 are casuals. This is typical in the sector, even for big state-funded institutions.

"When we closed obviously their work dried up because they're very much attached to those events and audiences," Claire said.

"When we closed on that Sunday night, we committed to paying them for the roster period of two weeks."

"We held out a lot of hope about the JobKeeper payments, but it was a blow when it was made clear that State-owned organisations wouldn't be supported, that was a big kick in the guts for us and our casuals."

Claire said the Arts Centre was assisting those



casuals with JobSeeker and Work for Victoria and had staffed someone to help those employees navigating Centrelink – knowing that many of those now reliant on welfare had never been before.

"The last thing we're trying to do to help those casuals is get them redeployment somewhere else in the public service," Claire said.

As for the other 400 employees, Claire said those with jobs that could be managed from home were working remotely, and those who couldn't were being paid salary maintenance – one lifeline the Arts Centre has been able to grasp due to its public service stature.

But Claire also told *Southbank News* that the impact of the pandemic extended far beyond the logistics of lockdown. Like most parts of our society, the arts industry will not be returning unchanged from this experience, both logistically and creatively.

"We are watching with great interest the research coming out of the US about audience

preparedness to return to venues so there's a practical side of what we will need to do to make that safe."

"In terms of the actual work I think the whole digital space which has been so crucial in this time will become a real feature of our organisation from now on."

During the pandemic Arts Centre Melbourne has introduced *Together With You*, a new digital initiative aimed at uplifting, comforting, educating and entertaining while the venues' doors are closed.

The program includes free performance broadcasts, family activities, podcast and long-form articles and features never before seen items from the Australian Performing Arts Collection and the Australian Music Vault.

"We'd done a bit of this stuff before, but not on this scale, and I think it will be part of everything we do from now on," Claire said.

"We don't know for sure how everything will change but I also think there's an element

around how artists are perceived by the broader community."

"I'm hoping everyone will reflect on what an artist actually is and how those working in the creative sector have sustained people's mental health through books or Netflix series or whatever it is you used to keep entertained in isolation."

On April 26, the state government announced a \$16.8 million survival package providing immediate support to Victoria's creative industries to sustain employment, develop new works and provide opportunities for creative community participation.

The package includes support for non-government arts and cultural organisations, as well as grants for independent creatives and micro-organisations with at least five years of professional experience. ●

artscentremelbourne.com.au

CRITIC

The art of being alone

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge

Artists are spending a lot more time by themselves as Victoria's State of Emergency continues.

Some art students have deferred their studies during the lockdown period.

Others are continuing their work but with a strong digital presence.

Many have reverted to the kind of introverted practices that were once a feature of the past.

Michael Mccafferty, an Honours student at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), listens to lectures while he's working in his dispatch job.

"I'm listening to my lectures and sitting in on tutes while packing boxes at work," he said. "It's very efficient and very draining."

Group critical sessions are done by Zoom and he's surprised how well the system has worked.

"I thought you would absolutely need to be in the room but I was wrong," he said. "I think that our cohort is pretty on the ball and maybe they are used to seeing images on the net so they respond and contribute pretty meaningfully actually."

He said that he felt sorry for teachers. "Personally, I'm just sticking my head in the sand and bulldozing through. If I were to dwell I wouldn't get anything done."

The online approach is being promoted by major arts funders such as Australian Centre for



Contemporary Art (ACCA), the City of Melbourne and Australian Book Review (ABR).

The City of Melbourne awarded \$727,000 in COVID-19 quick response arts grants to 226 artists last month and has another \$1 million to allocate.

The grants are to help artists shift their work online or develop it during the lockdown period.

Applications closed at the end of April for \$8000 grants from ACCA for innovative, big idea digital proposals to be assisted by curators



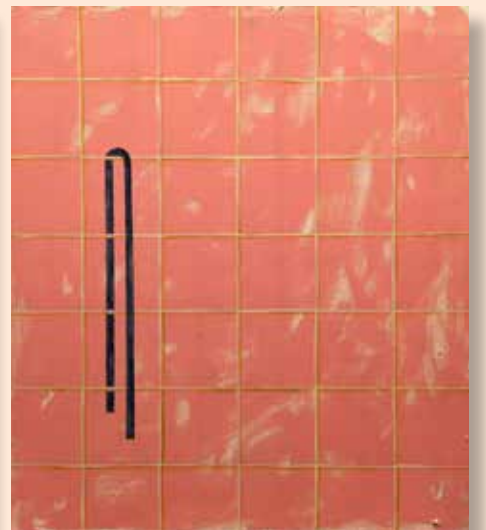
under its new digital commissions program *ACCA Open*.

And a podcast of poetry and critical reviews is being released each Wednesday by ABR through Google.

Editor Peter Rose said last week's podcast *More Poetry for Troubled Times*, read by 16 local poets, was for us as we "hunker down and live more privately".

The poems deal with such issues as quarantine, death, landscape, bombings, the Blitz in

▼ Paintings by Michael Mccafferty in the kitchen sink style.



London, the terror of everyday objects and being more attuned to elements of the natural world.

Perhaps the most moving was *The Simple Truth* by Philip Levine about a man who bought some red potatoes, walked and listened to the birds.

The woman who sold him the potatoes was wearing a pink-spangled sweater.

"Some things you know all your life," she said. "They must be laid on the table. They must stand for themselves." ●



Photography in a time of pandemic

Photography has a role to play in our experience of lockdown and isolation.

Southbank's Photography Studies College (PSC) is capturing and documenting stories of Melbourne's lockdown with a virtual gallery.

PSC students, alumni and teachers as well as the broader photography community are invited to share stories, projects and photographs in the virtual gallery, with a real-life print gallery show to be held post-pandemic.

Jamie Morey, a student at PSC, said to begin with lockdown had been a struggle for many students.

"Lockdown for me was pretty hard to start with just because a lot of us were wanting to do a lot of these grand big ideas for our portfolios that were almost due, and the kind of activities they required were banned," he said.

"It was hard as well not having a teacher with you while taking photos. It was a struggle for a lot of us."

"But last week I found out that we were allowed out for education purposes and we could take photos for our portfolios. I arranged a photoshoot and while I was at the Brighton Beach boxes waiting for the model to arrive I thought I'd just take some photos – which is how I ended up with my photos in the virtual gallery."

"It was busy there actually and there were groups of dozens swimming together. The photo shows a different view of those beach boxes with the city and industrial landscape in the background, and it also shows social distancing as well as the people who weren't taking it as

seriously."

Vicki Bell, a teacher at PSC, said she saw possibilities for the role photography could play from the start of the lockdown.

"I've been a photographer for 30 years. I embraced the challenge because I've always been used to change. We went from analogue to digital and I embraced that, dark room to Photoshop and I embraced that," she said.

"It kind of excites me."

Vicki has two photos in the virtual gallery – a self-portrait and a photo of her neighbours from over the fence.

"As part of my teaching I create examples of what a self-portrait might look like, literally and metaphorically," she said.

"My two passions are photography and karate, so in my self-portrait I'm in a karate stance holding a kind of weapon we use in training."

"My other photo I decided to do just as a little gesture and gift back to my neighbourhood, to capture some neighbours in isolation."

"It was purely as a gift from me to them and to put a smile on their faces." ●

Check out the virtual gallery:
psc.edu.au/covid-photo-gallery.html



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IMAGE BY PSC GRADUATE MARIA GABRIELA LEON PAEZ



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SOUTHBANKER

Putting in to get something back

WORDS BY David Schout

For many Melburnians, work has come to a grinding halt during the coronavirus pandemic but for a small portion of the population, it has only ramped up.

Southbank resident and RMIT University's Marcus de Rijk is firmly in the latter category.

Working to help students navigate a different and challenging learning environment, Marcus has been kept busy while working from home in the Yarra Condos apartment he shares with his wife.

The enormity of the job started to surface back in February, when students from China could not return to Australia for the start of the university year, and his team were tasked with helping the move to online learning.

Soon after as tertiary institutions closed altogether, that job became even bigger.

While some classes could move relatively seamlessly online, others - like those that must take place in the lab - could not.

"It's kind of a double-edged sword," he told *Southbank News*.

"You feel a pressure to try and help people but you're keenly aware you can't help everyone."

Marcus, a Southbank Residents Association (SRA) committee member, said he was dealing okay with working from home, ensuring he remained strict on setting boundaries on work and leisure in the apartment.



In periods of downtime, he's a keen drummer and is president of the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums band.

On recent ANZAC Day commemorations, he live-streamed a rendition of *Amazing Grace* on his balcony to members of the SRA Facebook page, an experience he described as "emotionally moving".

Unable to march towards the Shrine of Remembrance on April 25 as usual, other members of the band completed their own renditions at home.

Marcus' passion for drumming was handed down from his father while living in his Netherlands.

As a young boy during Queen's Day celebrations (a national holiday in the Netherlands),



his Dad played the snare in a national brass band, and Marcus was hooked.

"He came around the corner with his band and, to me as a young kid, it was so impressive. The sound of the pipes and the drummers coming from behind just fascinated me."

In 1982, at the age of 13, he migrated to Australia like many other "Dutchies" in the preceding decades.

In the '90s he responded to an advertisement looking for members of the band, and shortly after became a drummer.

While his experience with music is as a hobby, his wife's is professional and as such, Southbank remains their ideal location.

"It's great," he said of postcode 3006, where he moved to in 2016.

"It always has been great. In particular for my wife being a full-time musician, some of her gigs are at Melbourne Recital Centre, so it's very convenient. Leading the life that we do, being closely connected to music, it's fantastic."

Shortly after moving in permanently to the apartment (owned by his wife's family), Marcus joined the SRA.

"One of the experiences that we've had previously is a sense of loss around community. And sometimes, if you want to get something out of it, a great way to do that is to put in."

And while he spoke highly of his community, he acknowledged it wasn't without distinct challenges.

"I think the ever-expanding population is going to place more pressure on parking and traffic," he said. "They're just some of the issues that places pressure on the amenity for residents. For residents to feel a sense of wellbeing and a sense of connection to community here, those are just two areas that place pressure on everyone's ability to feel connected, and a place they can be seen - not just living in a little box."

He said this sense of place, and community, was being challenged right now.

But instances like the spontaneous balcony party in Southbank at Easter showed there's a community of people eager to connect and look after each other.

"I think with the coronavirus crisis, the sense of isolation has been obviously exacerbated and a question of how you deal with that as a community ... it was really nice to hear the music and an obvious sense that people were enjoying that. This idea of coming together and being able to be part of a community; as odd and as unusual as it was, it was actually really nice." ●

ST JOHNS SOUTHGATE

Livin' la vida lockdown

I turned and locked the front door. No way in or out. This was it. Isolate. Flatten the curve. Save lives. It was time to start living the lockdown life.

Walking back up the stairs I felt almost excited, I'm embarrassed to say. It seemed like our family of six, while sticking to ourselves, were going to be a part of something important - like we were participating in something that, paradoxically, branched out beyond our four walls. But, of course, that feeling didn't last long. I might have started riding high among the waves, but waves tend to come crashing down, don't they?

Once reality set in - that of working from home while two of the kids home schooled and the other two pre-schoolers ran riot - things started to sour. I knew the temperature was rising to cabin fever levels when my wife found me leaning against the kitchen bench eating hot mango pickle from the jar - which, incidentally, in isolation I've decided is the only condiment and needs to be eaten with everything! "Is there something wrong?" she said, looking from the jar to the spoon entering my mouth. "Of course, there is!" I said with that crazed, exhausted laugh known to any parent.

I know my experience isn't unique (except, perhaps, for the mango pickle part), but that's precisely the point. Lockdown, while it is, at its core, a loving separation - something that we're doing out of concern for each other - it's doing funny things to us.

Now, I am lost, I'm no guide. But what I can do - at least in spirit and via technology - is assure you that I'm by your side in solitary solidarity. I'm prepared to admit that (like many of you, I suspect) I've been sneaking chocolate from the pantry when the kids aren't looking, and that my exasperated parental mutterings are becoming a little too audible for my, or anyone else's, liking. Are these things that need to be overcome? Are they things that even can be overcome in these uniquely challenging times? I think I would rather keep shovelling chocolate into my mouth than try swallowing poison until I grow immune to COVID-19 as Donald Trump might have me do. My self-preserving conclusion is that we're all just doing the best we can - and that our messy best, even if it feels like the worst, might have to do for a little while. That being said, as a Christian, one neat

and tidy thing I am sure of is that Jesus is with us in the messiness.

We're currently in the Easter season of the Christian calendar, and in this period, one of the stories that we're drawn to is of the risen Jesus appearing to the apostles while they were out on a lake fishing. It's quite a comical scene, because Jesus - with more than a touch of tease - asks them, "Haven't you caught any fish?" To which they eye-rollingly had to reply, "No." Jesus saw their ineptitude, he saw their failings but he was able to give a wry smile about them, and perhaps even let out a chuckle. But at the same time, he didn't leave it there. Graciously accepting the fact they didn't know what they were doing, he helped them out. He showed them the way and made for the currents to shift so that a huge haul of fish could be caught and dragged to shore.

A big part of the Easter message is that Jesus meets us in the place between death and life, between failure and victory. He meets us in the uncertainty and insecurity between the nervous now and whatever's next. When I'm halfway through a jar of hot mango pickle, he's shaking his head, smiling and saying, "Come on! I've got some proper food for you." That's Jesus!

Finally, you don't need my advice. That would be like trying to give you a raincoat when you're already wet! You know the drill. Like I do, you at least know what you should be doing: Get exercise; eat properly; look out for each other; do the right thing and all that jazz!

What you won't hear from every other person, though, is that even in isolation - even if you're completely alone or you're together alone, there's someone who rose from the dead just so he can come to you, look at you in your all-day-pyjamas, give you that wry smile and a chuckle and pull you into his loving, eternal embrace ●



Tom Hoffmann

TOM HOFFMANN IS THE PASTOR AT ST JOHNS SOUTHGATE CHURCH.
STJOHNSOUTHGATE.COM.AU



ST JOHNS
SOUTHGATE

OWNERS' CORPORATION LAW

Performance-based alternative solutions the key to cheaper cladding replacement costs

Owners' corporations (OC) need not despair when served with an Order or Notice from the Municipal Building Surveyor or from the Victorian Building Authority (VBA).

There may literally be a "deemed to satisfy" solution available for some buildings, meaning that not all of the cladding installed on the façade of a building might need to be removed.

In November last year, a mixed-use building in Docklands was approved by the Building Appeals Board (BAB) to implement an alternative solution designed by their consultant fire engineer, which would have the effect of permitting some of the combustible material installed on the façade to remain on the building, provided that sufficient non-combustible material could be installed around the façade to act as a fire break, together with the installation of sprinklers on the façade.

This caused the repair costs to drop by over 80 per cent, which is a great outcome for the OC.

This decision was followed up by another case in March of this year for an apartment complex of 21 units in Carnegie.

The BAB ruled that the prescriptive deemed to satisfy test for compliance of combustible cladding, such as expanded polystyrene (EPS) panelling, could be sidestepped if the performance requirements in CP2 and CP4 of the Building Code were satisfied, and if the holistic fire safety situation of the overall building otherwise resulted in a satisfactory level of safety.

In April 2019, the OC lodged an application with the BAB seeking a determination under s160A of the *Building Act 1993*. The determination sought was that the design or construction of the building complied with the performance requirements CP2 and CP4 of the Building Code, as an alternative path to compliance.

Combustible EPS cladding had been installed only on the upper two levels of the building and on external walls on balconies, but with no combustible cladding on the ground level. In addition, there was an eyebrow/canopy on the top-most level consisting of combustible aluminium composite panelling (ACP), set back some distance from the edge of the building.

With regards to other fire safety features at the premises, there was sprinkler protection that covered the entire building including the basement. Also, each level containing residential units was supplied with an internal fire hydrant set in an enclosed fire isolated cupboard, plus an external fire hydrant set back from any flammable cladding by a distance of more than three metres.

Instead, the Board stated that the assessment of fire risk for a building is "an integrated assessment which is not automatically determined from a single variable." Therefore, the probability of ignition was just one factor to consider when deciding the level of risk for the building as a whole.

Furthermore, the Board found the ACP lining on the eave to the top storey "to be of minor consequence to the level of fire safety in the building", and did not rule that any of it had to be removed.

In summary, the Board determined that the EPS panels and ACP installed as external cladding complied with performance requirements CP2 and CP4 of the Building Code and ordered the owners to complete some further remedial work measures recommended by the building's fire engineer to further improve the building's overall safety.

In my view, any OC served with a Notice or Order for the removal of cladding should first engage a well-regarded fire safety engineer to get a second opinion as to whether all of the combustible cladding material needs to be removed, or whether there are "holistic" alternatives that can still comply with the BCA ●



Tom Bacon

TOM BACON IS THE PRINCIPAL LAWYER OF STRATA TITLE LAWYERS.
TOM@STRATATITLELAWYERS.COM.AU

MONTAGUE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

▼ Single family home, another two storeys to be built, Gladstone St.



▼ 25 townhouses on corner of Thistlethwaite and Boundary streets.



▼ Towers in Thistlethwaite St under construction



▼ Completed low level tower at the corner of Thistlethwaite and Ferrars streets, other corner to Montague Square.



▼ Montague Square, multiple towers, corner of Thistlethwaite and Ferrars streets opposite South Melbourne Primary School.



Is Montague the Toorak of Fishermans Bend?

How are you all managing? Well I hope you are all socially distancing while you are getting out and about in Montague. It has certainly been a very interesting time for all of us.

The hard-working Fishermans Bend Development Board, met a few weeks ago and concluded that it was content that construction was continuing during the time of coronavirus in Montague with many new towers of all sizes about to begin.

The Board's role is to sell Fishermans Bend and to ensure that developers are attracted to build those apartments, offices, shops and

amenities to make Fishermans Bend an attractive place to live and work.

And to remind you why ... well according to those who decide these things, we need homes and offices for 80,000 residents and 80,000 workers. And the received wisdom is that these towers/constructions need to have affordable homes as a percentage of the stock, to ensure a community-focused liveable area.

As Montague is the first of the precincts to be built up, it is interesting to identify how those properties being constructed are fitting into this philosophical description of a mixed- and community-focused area.

The photos that follow are demonstrations of what is currently being built. As a community group, we want to highlight that the entry level to the townhouses is \$1.9 million and there is a single family (four people) home that is being built over five levels with a swimming pool and more than 1600 sqm in size. That clearly is not affordable!

We just want to ask the question: are we designing Montague to be a community, or to be a precinct for the wealthy – the inner-urban Toorak?

The Montague Community Alliance (MCA) has been told for more than seven years that, yes, there is a design and that purposeful decisions about diversity and community are being

made about the precinct. We have continually asked for more information but to no avail. We still don't know.

Therefore, our question for you all, dear readers, is: are we going to be a suburb for the wealthy, i.e. those that can afford to buy up a couple of terraces and build a "McMansion" or buy luxury townhouses? Or are we planning a connected, engaged and street-level diverse community that works for all. You decide ... ●



Trisha Avery
TRISHA AVERY IS THE CONVENER OF THE MONTAGUE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE.
TRISHAVERY@ME.COM



METRO TUNNEL

Third tunnel boring machine launched

Another exciting milestone has been achieved on the Metro Tunnel Project with the launch of tunnel boring machine (TBM) Millie from the site of the new ANZAC Station.



TBM *Millie* – named after Victoria's first female MP, Millie Peacock – is digging the first 1.7km tunnel between ANZAC Station and the Metro Tunnel's eastern entrance at South Yarra.

TBM *Alice*, named after wartime medical hero Alice Appleford, is due to begin work on a parallel tunnel from the St Kilda Rd site in coming weeks.

Once both TBMs arrive at the eastern tunnel entrance later this year, the larger components including the cutterheads and shields will be dismantled and trucked back to ANZAC Station.

TBMs *Millie* and *Alice* will then be

reassembled from inside the ANZAC Station box and relaunched towards the CBD.

Elsewhere on site, construction of ANZAC Station's first entrance is also underway near the Shrine of Remembrance.

The yellow bentonite plant that was installed as part of diaphragm wall construction has been decommissioned and removed from the site, with the team now removing the concrete slab before excavating the area.



TBM blessing

Construction is continuing across all Metro Tunnel Project sites, with many significant milestones being achieved.

While we continue to build the twin tunnels and five new stations, strict protocols are in place to protect the health and safety of construction workers and the community during the coronavirus pandemic.

Construction activities have been modified

to adhere to social distancing requirements, where workers maintain a safe distance of 1.5 metres from other people.

This included the recent blessing ceremonies held at ANZAC Station before TBM *Millie* was launched.

A local parish priest conducted a traditional ceremony to bless a statue of St Barbara, the patron saint of tunnelling, before it was placed in her custom-made housing to watch over the TBM crews. The blessing of the St Barbara statue is a long-standing tunnelling tradition.

Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Ron Jones also conducted a traditional Aboriginal smoking ceremony to bless TBM *Millie* and the team. Since major construction started in 2018, indigenous smoking ceremonies have been held at all Metro Tunnel sites before work starts.

The strict health and safety protocols in place across the project help to protect our construction workers and the community and enable our sites to remain operational ●

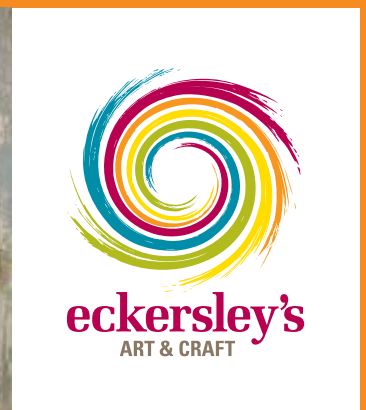
For more information visit:
metrotunnel.vic.gov.au

Open for business

Eckersley's Art & Craft: 463 Swanston Street

Eckersley's Art & Craft have all the art and design essentials you need to keep you busy and creative. Whether you're a dabbler in art and craft, a student specialising in art and design, a teacher looking to find new and innovative ways to inspire students or a fine artist, Eckersley's have everything you need. Shop online at eckersleys.com.au or in-store today.

For more information visit metrotunnel.vic.gov.au



**More trains,
more often**





TODD PIERCE
My go-to is getting some walking in by the Yarra.



SHARON BURKE
I've been doing a lot of bear crawls up the hill.

Faces of Southbank

Question:

What's your favourite way to exercise during isolation?



LUKE GROUND
You can't go past yogi push ups. They're a lot of fun.



KELLY SWIFT
I've been doing heaps of walking and my partner and I actually made up our own work out. It's a circuit of things like planking, sit ups and leg raises.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

What our loneliness can teach us in times of social distancing

With many of us confined to our homes, one of the biggest impacts of COVID-19 is social.

Whether you're alone, with family, or in a share house, being unable to spend time with loved ones or even meet new people outside our bubble is hard - especially if you're single or if you and a partner have been separated.

As humans we are hardwired for connection. Physical touch and quality time with loved ones helps to calm our nervous system which brings down our stress levels. Without this we may find ourselves feeling scared, anxious, struggling to sleep and on high alert.

The ways we have learned to deal with this can vary, some healthier than others. This time can be a great opportunity to learn new ways to help the body and mind through feelings of isolation, loneliness and panic. While we can reach out to loved ones online, we are still missing a physical aspect, one that we can develop ourselves while we wait to be reunited.

Here are some ways you can identify and meet your needs for intimacy and connection during social distancing:

- Use this time wisely. Use this time to identify your needs and values. This is a great skill to learn even for when social distancing does end; and we are able to make healthier and clearer choices about who we let into our lives.
- Confront unmet needs. Write down or say out loud what it is that you are missing about your interactions with other people. This can provide great insight into what you value in your relationships, what you would like to foster more of in your future relationships, as well as which of your current needs are not

being met.

- Verbal affirmations. Often what we seek in relationships is to be loved, seen, and heard. If you could have a loved one close to you, what would you like to hear them say? Try saying these things to yourself out loud. (I love you, I'm here for you, I hear you, I see you).

- Self-touch. Stress and anxiety are controlled by the part of our brain that can be best accessed by calming our bodies. Self-massage and self-hugging can make a huge impact on calming our nervous system. Try this a couple of times a week as part of your daily routine, recommended before bed to aid sleep.

Release tension around your chest. Notice your body - often in times of fear and loneliness we tend to hunch our shoulders, protecting our hearts and vital organs. Research shows that opening up the chest can release some of the tension caused by fear and anxiety and improve your confidence, mood, and motivation. Spend a few minutes a day laying down on your back with your hands clasped behind your head, or with a towel rolled up and placed underneath your upper back.

Please take care of yourself at this time, stay connected to others as best as you can, and of course, nurture your connection with yourself, so that you can come out of this period with self-compassion and renewed vigour ●



Rajna Bogdanovic
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST
BODGDANOVICRAJNA@GMAIL.COM

Southbank Sudoku

Last month's Sudoku solution

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | S | B | T | U | N | K | O | A |
| N | K | O | S | A | B | U | T | H |
| T | A | U | H | O | K | B | S | N |
| K | H | S | B | T | O | A | N | U |
| U | O | N | K | H | A | T | B | S |
| B | T | A | U | N | S | H | K | O |
| S | U | K | O | B | H | N | A | T |
| O | N | H | A | K | T | S | U | B |
| A | B | T | N | S | U | O | H | K |

A variation of Sudoku, with the letters SOUTHBA NK replacing numbers.

The rules are the same as regular Sudoku, each line must contain the letters "SOUTHBA NK" as must each 9-square box. This Sudoku is MEDIUM, good luck!

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | H | | A | | | | |
| | U | S | | | | | K | T |
| | | | | | T | | A | H |
| | | A | | O | | | | |
| K | | | B | | A | | | O |
| | | | | N | | K | | |
| B | K | | T | | | | | |
| H | S | | | | | T | U | |
| | | | | B | | H | O | |

When we know better, we do better. It's time we do better.

Information leads to knowledge which leads to learning which leads to wisdom, progress, and adaptive growth. At least that's how the flow should go.

While we are still collecting information about this virus and with the transmission curve flattening, decision makers are - rightly so - looking at how to best come out of lockdowns and back to our "normal" way of lives, of doing business, commerce, etc. as quickly as possible. Even though a lot of us are looking to go back to a routine that is comfortingly familiar, we need to take in the information that's pushing us to do better, to grow, to adapt and act for our collective survival and quality of life.

In short, while the narrative right now is focused on containing and steering out of this pandemic with the least amount of harm possible, we need to add a stronger voice in the conversation about the root cause of the problem: long-term environmental destruction. Instead of trying to salvage old foundations that are no longer serving our collective best interest, we should talk about how we build the right foundations so we stop creating the ideal environment and conditions for another pandemic to happen. That is, while we're getting out of this stage and working on rebuilding, our individual and collective decisions should always ask, "what will the environmental impact be?" and act from there.

Leading global experts and scientists have established that pandemics like COVID-19 are a direct result of a collapsing environment and ecosystem due to our overexploitation of natural resources and our consumption habits. More and more scientists and experts, like Dr Peter Daszak and his team from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), are ringing the alarm and backing it up with exhaustive studies. In a recent article published in *The Guardian* discussing their published

work on the "most comprehensive planetary health check ever", Dr Daszak and his team clearly demonstrated the causation between destructive pandemic outbreaks and our "rampant destruction of the natural world ... [driven by] global financial and economic systems that prize economic growth at any cost". "Recent pandemics are a direct consequence of human activity [...] There is a single species responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic - us." They concluded that "human society is in jeopardy from the accelerating decline of the Earth's natural life-support systems". The report highlighted that the way out of this is by taking advantage of the small window of opportunity we have right now to make choices, change habits, shift systems and industries that are contributing heavily to the problem instead of backing them up "as is", and adopt a global "one health" approach. Where the health of people, wildlife, livestock and the environment are all intimately connected and seen as one health. While stimulus packages are rolling out, we also need to ensure environmental regulations and expectations are not relaxed to get to a quick, short term recovery.

Otherwise, we are not dealing with the underlying drivers and are highly likely to see future pandemics "happen more frequently, spread more rapidly, have a greater impact and kill more people if we are not extremely careful about the possible impacts of the choices we make today," as per the latest IPBES update.

We have centuries worth of information, knowledge, and learnings from our actions. Now is the time to confidently move into a space of wisdom, progress, and adaptive growth if we are to mitigate the consequences from our past actions and make sure we rebuild with solid foundations that will take us forward into the next few decades reducing the chances of a global pandemic repeating, while paving the way to thrive sustainably instead of following the existing paved way that's leading to our demise.

“

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”

So, right now, we need to build better, not go backwards. That is going to take all of us and it will mean doing some things differently. Whether we are making our voice count in collective decisions or deciding on what to buy for dinner or how stimulus funds are allocated, environmental impact should be in the centre of those decisions. And it may feel daunting, or overwhelming to even figure out where to start, but sometimes we just need to start anywhere and go from there. There are many environmentally-friendly solutions, choices, and/or systems already available. We just need to get better at supporting and developing them. There are many ways to get involved, too. If you are looking for existing communities to help guide you or keep you motivated, you can

always join a sustainability group like ours or find an online community that works for you.

This next phase will need to put into good use the collective sense of community and camaradery this pandemic helped create. Especially if we are to follow the recommended solutions from our foremost experts and scientific minds. We all helped create this mess, no matter our level of contribution. Now we all need to help clean it.

As Maya Angelou said, "when we know better, we do better." Now it's time we do better.

About the group: A solutions-focused group of Southbank residents working to bring positive change in sustainability practices and education to our neighbourhood, while building a wonderful community of like-minded people. 2019 Environment Melbourne Award winner.

While we are not meeting fortnightly during these times, there's still opportunities to help with organising or the community garden, where you can exercise while engaging with nature. Reach out if you're interested in getting involved •

Reach us at:

southbanksustainability@gmail.com or [facebook.com/SouthbankSustainabilityGroup](https://www.facebook.com/SouthbankSustainabilityGroup)



Artemis Pattichi
SOUTHBANK SUSTAINABILITY GROUP
SOUTHBANKSUSTAINABILITY@GMAIL.COM

WE LIVE HERE

Microorganism dismantles Airbnb - will it ever recover?

A big story to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic has been its impact on the Airbnb juggernaut.

Airbnb has been valued at more than \$US30 billion and this year it was preparing to be listed as a public company. Now the impact of the coronavirus has delayed its plans.

Since the news of the rapidly spreading infectious and deadly disease caused by COVID-19, a shocked and grieving world has watched many industries approach collapse. Tourism-related operations have, understandably, been the worst hit - the accommodation industry among the foremost economic casualties.

The freeze on tourism and movement in general imposed by affected countries trying to control the spread of the virus has seen Airbnb bookings in COVID-19 hotspots crash. Since January, Beijing has seen a drop of 96 per cent, Seoul, South Korea 46 per cent, and Rome 41 per cent.

In many countries Airbnb's website has now been shut down, and vacant houses have been used to accommodate stranded travellers caught up in the world-wide lockdowns.

Already suspicious neighbours are up in arms over the potential that short-term renters may spread the deadly virus.

In Australia, Airbnb properties are flooding back onto the long-term rental market, as short-term visitors dry up due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The Airbnb hosts who have become reliant on income-generating properties to pay their bills are being bled dry by a lack of business.

Globally, Airbnb has favoured travellers by allowing refunds, outside its own published guidelines. In doing so, the company has angered its hosts who have been left bearing the brunt of the cancellations.

“

Airbnb has launched a relief fund for hosts struggling to make ends meet. A total of \$US17 million has been contributed to the fund by employees, investors and founders; and grants of up to \$5000 will be made to hosts most in need and who also satisfy eligibility criteria.

”

One of the eligibility criteria published by Airbnb says the host must "Only share their primary or secondary residence - no more than two active listings"

This criterion will exclude all apartment-based short-term letting operators who have more than one rental listing. That business model seems to be doomed by both the pandemic and Airbnb's lack of financial support - a loss not mourned by long-suffering permanent residents.

If Airbnb had also considered the wear and tear caused to common property by short-term letting in residential apartment buildings - many no doubt managed by some of their hosts

- We Live Here might not have been so opposed to its activities.

So where to now for Airbnb?

It will be many months, if not years before we know the full toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry and the long-term impact it will have on "disruptors" such as Airbnb. However, if Airbnb and other short-term letting platforms do survive, we hope that the review of the *Owners' Corporation Amendment (Short-stay Accommodation Bill) 2006*, due in 2021, will lead to proper regulation of the industry, which hitherto has been so sadly lacking Victoria.

Short-term operators bail out

Earlier this year we reported on the first successful case against a short-stay operator who was issued consent orders by VCAT and required to pay compensation to the resident who complained.

We have now been advised that Experience Hotel Apartments which was involved in the VCAT action, has pulled out all together from the building, and the 90 apartments it managed are being converted into normal long-term rentals.

Other smaller operators are also pulling out from this building.

This is very welcome news and a clear indication of the impact COVID-19 is having on the short-term rental market.

For years the short-term letting industry has been a nightmare for residents in residential apartment buildings. Now fortunes have changed and the short-term operators are suffering from the incubator that is COVID-19.

If any other readers have observed long-term rentals replacing short-term letting please let us know.

COVID-19 and apartment living

Is your building taking extra precautions to prevent the risk of COVID-19?

For example:

- Frequent sanitising of high touch point such as intercom and lifts buttons.
- Hand sanitiser dispensers on each floor.
- Signage about washing hands.
- A limit on the number of people in each lift.
- Closing of some common areas.

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 •



Barbara Francis & Rus Littleton

EMAIL: CAMPAIGN@WELIVEHERE.NET

LEARN MORE AT WELIVEHERE.NET



Southbank comes together

It would seem that Australia is progressing well with our response to COVID-19, but sadly we have not been saved from attributed deaths. Any death is a tragedy. But it also has a toll on our health, especially our mental health.

While no doubt our community, as a whole, seems to be managing with the restrictions, it was great to see residents in our community embrace the lockdown in good spirit with a small musical "jam" from their balconies on one night over the Easter weekend.

From my Kavanagh St balcony, I could see a number of buildings engaging in the spirit by flashing their lights and cheering on those playing their music, which was not exclusively from one building. It was a community effort that seemed to be going viral from building to building. It was certainly a delight to see and if it lifted people's spirits, then I hope to see it again.

The Lord Mayor Sally Capp reached out again to see how our community was faring last month, this time via a Zoom video call meeting. The main items I put onto her agenda that were affecting the wider community were construction noise from the amended construction hours and the quantity of hard waste on our streets. Whether they are programmed hard waste collections or illegally dumped, there are significantly larger amounts that usual and I have noted the contractors have not been able to clear it as efficiently as usual, among a few other items. Not long after this meeting I received a response from the Lord Mayor acknowledging these items.

Of particular note, there are an additional 20 compliance officers assigned to the monitoring of construction sites, so let's hope we will see some better compliance there. If you need to report any issues with a construction site, please call 9658 9658.

Of significant interest to Southbank, was the approval of the 360-metre Beulah development on the BMW site. At the time of approval, it was only five weeks prior that this was being considered by the Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) for endorsement by council. Our members will be aware that we, Southbank Residents' Association (SRA), made a submission to the committee in relation to this application.

In principle we endorsed the application as it complied with the planning scheme. Prior to our submission, the developer engaged with our committee to discuss its proposal and to give us a brief on what was to be expected. For a developer to reach out to the community during its deliberations for a new development is unprecedented and we certainly thank Beulah for considering the community. We hope this is just the start of a long relationship as construction begins.

I was shocked by how soon after the council's FMC meeting this was endorsed by the Minister for Planning Richard Wynne. In my eight years as the president of SRA, I have never seen any application be approved within two months, as this one was. Notwithstanding, I am sure the developer would probably feel that overall the process was long and drawn-out as I know that has been in the works for quite some time. If the

haste in the Minister's approval is anything to go by, then it certainly highlights the concern the government has with the economy going forward owing to the COVID-19 problem.

However, I was saddened with the position of one of our television news networks. On the same day the announcement of the approval hit the media, I received a call from one of the mainstream TV news stations asking for a live cross for two of their news bulletins regarding this development and Southbank. After some prodding by the journalist, or maybe their assistant, they realised I was not against the development and that I had very little to object to. I was speaking highly of the proposal and what benefits there will be to the community, the impact the space will have on the public realm, its compliance with Council's new (but yet to be endorsed by the Minister) C305 urban design guidelines in Southbank planning scheme amendment, and the list goes on. The person I was talking to then advised that I am probably not who they are looking for as they were hoping to find a critic of the development, of which they acknowledged they were finding very difficult. I asked what the problem was with doing a good news story about a development, which by all accounts, will be a good addition to Southbank. Considering the current sombre mood of COVID-19, I thought a good news story would be a welcome position, but it seemed not, so you didn't get to see any live cross to myself representing Southbank and speaking about this new development. For the record, I did mention, that while there are a number of items that we would not have desired to see in the development, such as height (do we really need another 100-storey-plus high-rise?), it is not the developer that we can criticise and hold to account on this as they are merely working within the planning scheme that they have been told they must comply with. These are issues that need to be addressed with the Minister for Planning, which we have done in the past on numerous occasions, and not put onto a developer. But having said that, it is also rare to not see a developer push the boundaries of the planning scheme and ask for special consideration, which by all accounts, didn't happen here, so another tick for this developer.

Keep up your social distancing and hopefully my next column I will be able to talk about how good it is (or soon will be) to meet our family and friends again, whether in our homes or at a restaurant ●

More information:
southbankresidents.org.au



Tony Penna
TONY PENNA IS THE PRESIDENT OF SOUTHBANK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



Vale our fallen heroes

On Wednesday, April 22 at 5.40pm, Victoria Police lost four members of our blue family.

The outpouring of support for our fallen colleagues Leading Senior Constable Lynette Taylor, Senior Constable Kevin King, Constable Joshua Prestney, and Constable Glen Humphris and their families has been overwhelming.

Southbank Police Station has received flowers, cards, emails, food and phone calls from our community of Southbank to express their sorrow at the loss of our colleagues.

The members at Southbank Police and ultimately Victoria Police are grateful for this support, which highlights the incredible level of community appreciation for the service of police, and the sacrifice made each time we put on the blue uniform and go to work. It has been a very difficult time for everyone at the station. It reinforces to each and every one of us that we face many dangers while protecting our community.

There have been many calls received at Southbank Police Station from the public who wish to donate following this tragic incident. Victoria Police Legacy has established the Victoria Police Remembrance Fund, a dedicated fund through Westpac to collect donations on behalf of the families.

Visit: policelegacyvic.org.au
or use the details below:
Victoria Police Legacy Remembrance Fund
Westpac BSB: 033 178
Account: 299178
Vale Leading Senior Constable Taylor, Senior Constable King, Constable Prestney and Constable Humphris.

Crime at residential apartment buildings

There has been a spate of burglaries at Southbank residential apartments in recent months. Thieves have been targeting storage cages in basements/carparks, and letterboxes. Help keep yourselves and other residents safe and secure by following these tips:

- Tailgaters: always ensure that only your car enters the carpark and wait for the security door to close after your vehicle upon entry and exit. Do not hold the entrance door open for a person to enter past a secure entry. This could be a thief intending to burgle apartments or steal from letterboxes.
- Storage cages: don't store expensive items in storage cages e.g. golf clubs or bicycles. Consider lining storage cages with fabric or other materials that conceal the contents of the storage cage.
- Letterboxes – always lock your mailbox and never leave any access fobs or keys to apartments locked in your letterbox. Locks on letterboxes are easily forced by thieves.
- Lock apartment doors – many residential burglaries have occurred where access has been gained through unlocked front doors – even when residents are home. Get in the habit of always locking your front door when leaving and also upon returning home.

Report suspicious behaviour to 000 or Southbank Police Station on 8635 0900 ●



Senior Sgt Alex O'Toole
STATION COMMANDER AT SOUTHBANK POLICE STATION
SOUTHBANK-UNI-OIC@POLICE.VIC.GOV.AU

Pet's Corner

Fletcher and Kelly



Fletcher's most frequented play area is the Eastern Reserve dog park.



His owner, Kelly takes him here because it is fenced off. That means "Fletch" can freely cause an appropriate amount of havoc, like the big dog he thinks he is, according to Kelly.

He is one slobbery Frenchie. But similarly, to his snoring and stubbornness, Kelly finds this feature adorable; "Fletch" is perfectly imperfect! ●



HISTORY

Shrine of Remembrance

On Anzac Day this year, the Shrine of Remembrance was eerily deserted due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Its form and structure have existed since 1934 and for most Melbourne citizens, it has always occupied a striking position in the landscape. But how did it come to be designed, constructed and occupied?

The form and site of the monument to those who served in the Great War became a major point of conjecture in Melbourne almost as soon as the final shots of the war were fired in 1918. It was a debate that raged across the country (and around the world) as governments, returned services groups, churches, civic groups and other organisations grappled with design, costs and usage.

Should memorials be commemorative or utilitarian? Should a large memorial (with sculptures) be constructed, or should the memorial be in the form of a structure that contributed to daily life, such as a hall, bridge, hospital, gardens, libraries or swimming pool? But as the years began to pass, discord continued among “stakeholders”, each convinced that their solution was the right one, and enthusiasm for the Shrine was starting to wane.

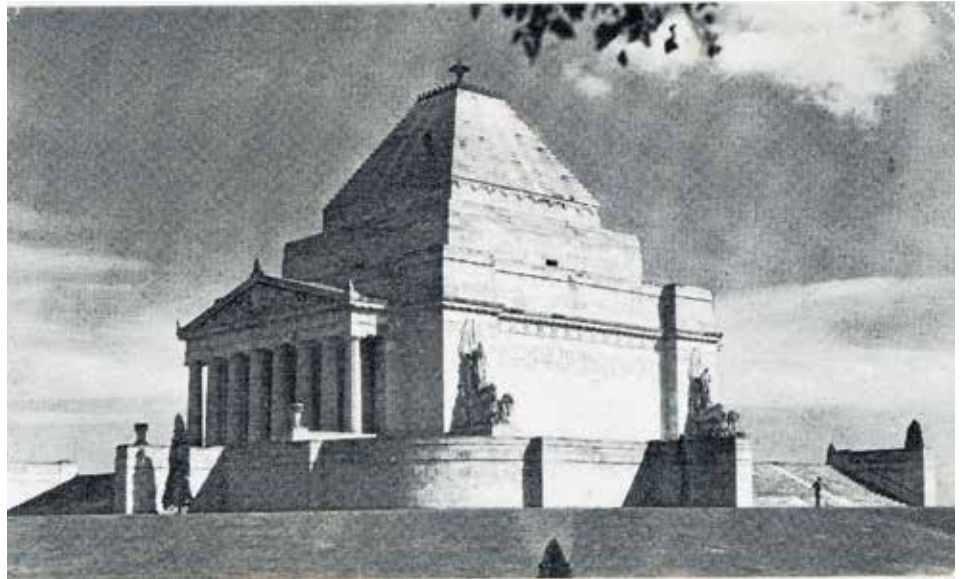
In 1922, a competition was announced for a

design for a National War Memorial, which was won by the young firm of Wardrop & Hudson. James Hastie Wardrop was later responsible for some of Victoria’s most dramatic Moderne/ Art Deco buildings (such as the former pub that became McDonald’s in Clifton Hill) but is probably best remembered for his work on the Shrine of Remembrance.

Born in 1891, he had seemed destined for a highly successful career until WWI intervened. In 1919, he returned to Australia and formed a partnership with another ex-serviceman, Phillip Hudson. Their design would be constructed on an elevated site in today’s Southbank, able to be seen from vantage points around the city.

Construction required a massive fundraising campaign. Enter the celebrated former army general, John Monash, who led a major effort in 1927 that raised the funds from ordinary citizens, local Councils, businessmen such as Sidney Myer, and school children. With money in the bank, construction began in 1927 and was completed in time for Victoria’s 1934 Centenary celebrations.

▼ The Shrine of remembrance, Melbourne.



It remains as a sombre building, finished in silver-grey granite and adorned with sculptural groups. Described as arguably Melbourne’s most important public monument, it owed much to classic Greek forms, leading to criticism of the design for looking backwards in time. But it is an enduring part of Melbourne’s built environment, zealously protected and highly regarded by the populace ●



Robin Grow

PRESIDENT - AUSTRALIAN ART DECO AND MODERNISM SOCIETY
ROBINGROW@OZEMAIL.COM.AU

BUSINESS

Patient Wolf is cleaning up Southbank

WORDS BY Jack Hayes

Southbank’s own gin distillery, Patient Wolf Distilling Co., has joined forces with an old friend in Wolf of the Willows Brewing to ease the current shortage of hand sanitiser by making their own.

No strangers to an “All-Wolf” collaboration, Patient Wolf co-founder, Dave Irwin, and Scott McKinnon from Wolf of the Willows, are working together again following two successful ventures, including the Tom Collins Sour winning third prize at the 2018 GABS festival, and the exclusive Rogue Barrel Gin.

“After a short discussion with Scotty, we knew we could do something to help our local communities. We’re both glad to help out, and the new malt smell in the distillery is fantastic,” Mr Irwin said.

“We knew there was a lack of sanitiser around. So, we thought we would distil it and come up with a sanitiser product.”

With stage three restrictions forcing the closure of pubs, bars and restaurants on March 30, Wolf of the Willows was able to put good use to their otherwise idle brewing equipment

and malt.

Palleted-in by the keg, the 220L German-made Patient Wolf still has given a new lease on life to the XPA malt beer wash and hope for two companies faced with the financial devastation of a global pandemic.

“It was interesting, but saddening to see how it [COVID-19] swept through the hospitality industry. Everyone around us shut down, a lot of them before government restrictions, and sadly some business won’t be coming back,” Mr Irwin said.

“We only had our full team together two weeks before the lockdown and were really starting to establish ourselves. I lost half my staff in the first week.”

With no clear end to COVID-19 in sight, Mr Irwin, along with co-founder Matt Argus, have been forced adapt their business model, firstly, to keep Patient Wolf alive, and their remaining staff with jobs.

“We’ve had to pivot the business. We have been more focused on our online presence and are now opening up the store for bottle sales,” Mr Irwin said. “We’ve also amended our licence so we can start selling wine and beer.”



“Wolf and the Willows will be selling their beer through here; we have a growing number of wines and spirits to choose from.”

In May, Patient Wolf will be launching a same day cocktail delivery service. A range of feature cocktails will be available for purchases before 3pm ●

To purchase a bottle of hand sanitiser or gin:
buy online at patientwolfgin.com or instore at 34-36 Market St, Southbank

Melbourne Square goes digital

With COVID-19 forcing many Southbank businesses to adapt the way they work, one developer is embracing the challenge and transforming the way it communicates with customers.

Melbourne Square developer OSK Property has shifted its typical property purchasing process by bringing many of the elements online.

The developer has launched a series of virtual tours of completed apartments in collaboration with CBRE and investor networks, as well as digitised the contracts process with e-contracts.

Along with its virtual tours, OSK Property will ferry brochures, floor plans and materials boards directly to buyers, in addition to hosting private one-to-one appointments.

OSK property sales and marketing director Scott Jessop said these offers catered to the changing preferences of customers, who were now much more digitally savvy, while also providing new options in the current climate.

“At the end of the day we are here to support our customers and what we are hearing is that people want more options when purchasing and enquiring about property – in the current environment and even before COVID-19,” he said.

“It is a simple fact that customers live their lives online more than ever and so, as a developer, we have sought to find ways to bring our apartments to them in new ways.”

It is an initiative that seems to be paying dividends.

Melbourne Square commenced its first round of settlements in early 2020 and has a range of settlements scheduled over the course of the year. While a small amount of apartments remain for sale, Mr Jessop said they were still receiving interest.



In March alone, the team made more than \$6.5 million in sales, with buyers still enquiring. CBRE director Andrew Leoncelli said Melbourne’s real estate market had a good track record of emerging from regular property cycles and even major economic events, such as the global financial crisis, intact.

“A mortgage has never been cheaper in Australia in living history and people with cash deposits are leveraging that and still purchasing property,” he said.

“Foreign buyers stand to save up to 30 per cent compared to what they would have paid two years ago given the fall in the Australian

dollar. The Australian property market is still open for business.”

Mr Jessop said Melbourne Square welcomed customer feedback on how else they could innovate and believed COVID-19 would drive greater innovation in digital marketing in the property industry.

“Australian consumers will emerge from COVID-19 with new habits, turning to digital first, more so than they ever have. People will come to expect the kind of access they are getting now via virtual tours, live streams and value-added content,” he said

“As an industry out, of COVID-19 we will need to innovate the customer experience at a scale we haven’t previously – particularly in relation to digital and content.”

“There will always be a place for beautiful display suites, but I think they will play a different role in the customer journey. It is impossible to say what will come, but digital content isn’t going anywhere.” ●

For more information:
melbournesquare.com.au

墨尔本市长工作寄语

随着我们正在适应截然不同的生活方式，墨尔本必须保持一个充满爱心的城市，在困难时期提供帮助。我们知道，对于大多数人来说，这是一个极其紧张的情况，照顾那些面临最大风险的人从未如此重要。

各级政府都在积极地抗击COVID-19病毒，墨尔本在封锁期间，继续为社区提供必要的服务，包括垃圾收集和回收利用、为老年人提供服务、家庭和儿童的服务以及对无家可归者支持服务，这些都是我们必要的公共卫生职能。

市政府正在向600多名老年居民和残疾居民提供膳食和家庭服务；家庭暴力和咨询服务正在增加；幼托中心依然开放；妇幼保健援助通过电话和视频会议提供。我们继续提供社区的疫苗接种服务，我们的日常支持团队正在帮助露宿街头的人们寻找避难住所，并且在全市范围内加强了清洁服务。

目前的这些情况也要求我们相互帮助，度过由于突然关闭而带来的创伤性经济冲击。州政府和联邦政府提供了数十亿澳元，支持商业和已经失业的工人。地方政府也在为咖啡馆、餐馆、艺术家，以及各种其他小商业尽自己的一份力量，这些都是我们社区的“心脏和灵魂”。

墨尔本市16500家企业中，约80%是小商业。他们是家庭经营商、个体经营商和小

公司，他们冒险将自己的想法转化为维持生计的生意，并为他人提供工作。这些人确实受到了影响，不仅仅是资产负债表上所显示的。

作为最接近基层民众的政府，我们地方市政议会与许多小商业经营者及其员工有直接和个人的联系。我们如何才能最好地支持他们，并确保他们在这场磨难中幸存下来？我们复苏的速度和力度将取决于我们在此期间所提供的道义支持和财政生命线的支持。

墨尔本市政最近宣布了一项500万澳元的配套支持计划，其中包括在三个月内免除某些许可证、注册和街头交易许可证的费用，为电子商务和在线活动特别拨款，将市政拥有的大楼租户的租金减半，以及制定一项市政费的困难政策。维多利亚女王市场提供基本的食品服务，其600名贸易商将在未来三个月获得100%的租金减免。

墨尔本还是艺术家和表演者之都，在这次疫情中他们受到的经济冲击最大。墨尔本市政府将提供200万澳元的专项拨款，用以帮助他们，包括那些规模较小的创意组织，计划和创作接下来的作品或者在网上展示其表演。这些文化艺术的创作和表演是我们这个城市文化生活的支柱。在平常时期，这些文化创作表演也促进了其他行业的发展，吸引了来自世界各地的游客，尤其是每



年的这个时候。

墨尔本市政已经建立了一个商务礼宾服务，提供一对一的咨询，为获得财务支持、服务及信息。针对企业和创意团体的配套支持计划已经产生了数百个查询和数千个申请。需要帮助的人是那么多，但是没有简单的方法可以让每个人能得以满足。

我们要求物业主考虑为当地企业提供临

时租金折扣，同时我们这些能够经受住这场风暴的人应该抓住机会，通过网络或电话与当地零售商和餐馆联系消费。组织最受欢迎的饭店那儿送餐上门，或者从当地书店订购书籍。尽管这些都是不起眼的行动，但将有助于我们社区的商业心脏继续跳动。

尽管我们的市中心出奇地安静，少了数百万行人通常会在街上穿行，但是安全和保障仍然是重中之重。

许多商店关了门，成千上万的居民居家。但是墨尔本市政的合规检查工作人员每天在大街上进行检查，并且与维多利亚警方密切合作。我们的清洁服务人员利用这个机会对城市进行大清扫、擦洗和消毒。我们市政府与州政府以及社区服务提供者共同协调工作，已经帮助大多数露宿者进入临时住所，使他们得到照顾。任何人都不应被抛弃，能看到墨尔本人对此有这么深刻的感受是令人鼓舞的。

我一点也不惊讶，在维多利亚州那个可怕的夏季森林大火危机期间，我们墨尔本人的慷慨大度得到了展示，我们当时几乎没有意识到更糟糕的事情即将到来。我们墨尔本是一个以人为本的关爱社区，没有比这更好的时机来强化这一理念了。

墨尔本市长
萨莉·卡普 (Sally Capp)



扶助市中心的商业

墨尔本的商业是这座城市的命脉。墨尔本市政正在提供服务来帮助支持受COVID-19疫情影响的商业。

市长萨莉·卡普 (Sally Capp) 鼓励商家来接受墨尔本市政的支持计划。

市长说：“我们的COVID-19商务礼宾接待热线是小型商业在困难时期的实用资源。”

“我们已经启动了这条专用电话线，这样小商业就可以致电了解我们提供什么支持，以及如何获得我们服务的有关重要信息。”

“该专用线的工作人员由墨尔本市政的团队组成，他们可以直接与小商业的业主对话，并在整个过程中提供指导帮助他们申请这个支持。”

业主可以在周一至周五的上午7:30至下午6点之间以及周末的上午10点至下午4点之间拨打9658 9658 这个商务礼宾热线。

市长说，墨尔本有超过16500家经营商，其中80%是个体经营者，家庭经营者和只有几个雇员的小商业。

她说：“确实需要帮助这些正在受到严重影响的人，因此，我们正在竭尽全力帮助商家保持经营，并保住墨尔本人的工作岗位。”

墨尔本市政正在提供许多救济和支持措施，以便在未来几周和几个月内帮助当地商业。

配套支持计划措施包括免除某些费用，减少市政拥有物业中租户的租金，制定市政费困难政策以及为艺术表演界提供200万澳元的专项资助。

中小型商业也可以申请高达500万澳元的快速响应专款，包括：

高达\$5000的投资在线和电子商务活动费用；

高达\$2000的培训和专业发展费用；

高达\$10000的基本工程项目(以一对一相应投入匹配)，以适应不断变化的条件。

各项资助现已开始申请，符合条件的商家和非营利组织可以在melbourne.vic.gov.au/business网上申请。

COVID-19商务礼宾热线

要了解您的商业活动可以获得哪些支持，请致电墨尔本市政的COVID-19商务礼宾热线9658 9658，商业咨询按1。

该热线电话拨打时间：周一至周五上午7:30至下午6:00，周末上午10:00至下午4:00。

也可点击：melbourne.vic.gov.au/business 上网了解。

网上文学之城

墨尔本市被联合国教科文组织列为文学之城，其特点之一是中央商务区(CBD)及周边的一些具有标志性和独特之处的公共图书馆，包括维多利亚州立图书馆、城市图书馆、博伊德 (Boyd) 图书馆和港区图书馆。

正如我们的读者所知，如今这些图书馆由于新冠病毒(COVID-19)疫情而关闭，但是墨尔本市的网上在线图书馆服务需求出现了大幅增长，因为墨尔本人都在执行社交距

离并待在家中。

在过去的一个月里，数以千计的免费电子书、电子有声读物、电子杂志、在线报纸、网上电影、视频和学习资源都被进入用过。

市长萨莉·卡普说，与去年同期相比，电子图书馆的使用率上升了23%，电子书是最受欢迎的服务。

市长说：“现在人们比以往任何时候都更多地利用我们巨大而免费的图书馆资源，由

于他们不能亲自进入我们的图书馆。”

“我们记录了有史以来单月最高的在线借书次数，共有19182次，这包括8837次的电子书籍和10345次的有声读物”。

“我们的儿童图书管理员也通过YouTube频道提供在线讲故事时段。”

市长说，墨尔本市的图书馆是我国资源最丰富的图书馆之一。

通过与Beamafilm和Kanopy的合作，墨尔本市图书馆会员可以观看免费电视节目，

教育视频，艺术电影和纪录片。会员还可以通过Freegal下载免费音乐。

上个月，通过墨尔本市图书馆服务的电影播出流量增长了54%。Beamafilm电影月平均流量增加了一倍，而Kanopy电影播出量在三月份达到了3666部，是一个月内最高的使用量。

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t 0433 930 484
e sean@hyperlocalnews.com.au
about how to customise your campaign to our audience every month.

vodafone

PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE VODAFONE MOBILE PHONE BASE STATION AT 1-5 Spencer Street Melbourne, Vic 3000 including 5G

- The proposed upgrade to the existing facility involves:
 - Installation of three new 5G panel antennas to be attached on new mounts;
 - Replacement of existing three panel antennas;
 - Installation and reconfiguration of ancillary equipment, including RRUs, GPS antenna, hybrid cables, and other items; and
 - Installation and reconfiguration of equipment within the existing equipment shelter.
- Vodafone regards the proposed installation as a Low-impact Facility under the Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 2018 ("The Determination") based on the description above.

In accordance with Section 7 of C564:2018 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code, we invite you to provide feedback about the proposal. Further information and/or comments should be directed to: Jodie Leeds at Nokia Solutions & Networks on 0420 310 857 or at Jodie.leeds.ext@nokia.com by Wednesday 27 May 2020. Further information may also be obtained from www.rfnsa.com.au/3029006

Covid-19 Lockdown Sales

Contact us for a Virtual Appraisal

RayWhite

These are some of our sales during stage 3 lockdown



13/19 Milton Street, Elwood
Above asking price Sold for \$700,000



264 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne
\$150K Over reserve price Sold for \$2,200,000



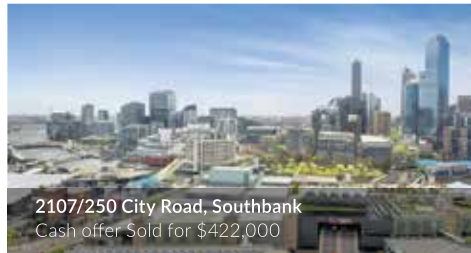
818/39 Coventry Street, Southbank
Off market Sold for \$413,000



6/91 Dodds Street, Southbank
More wanted Under offer



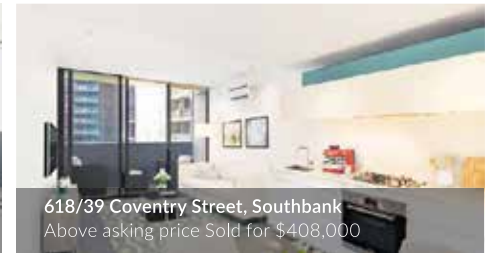
15/7 Manningham Street, Parkville
7 days on the market Sold for \$445,000



2107/250 City Road, Southbank
Cash offer Sold for \$422,000



1004/565 Flinders Street, Melbourne
Contact agent for sold price



618/39 Coventry Street, Southbank
Above asking price Sold for \$408,000



1004/63 Whiteman Street, Southbank
Sold for \$372,000



906/55 Queens Road, Melbourne
Sold for \$432,500



1511/283 City Road, Southbank
Sold for \$485,000

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3 1 1

- Boutique apartment building
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- High vaulted ceilings

Online Auction
Thursday May 8th at 7pm
Contact agent to attend

Michael Pastrikos
0404 282 864

Zara Ebadi
0410 871 367

raywhitesouthbank.com.au



RayWhite

3/1 Miles Street, Southbank

3 1 1

- Coventry Gardens - Boutique apartment complex
- Generous living and dining with City views
- North East facing with plenty of natural light throughout
- Spacious bedrooms with built-in robes

Online Auction
Wednesday May 27th at 6pm
Contact agent to attend

Michael Pastrikos
0404 282 864

Zara Ebadi
0410 871 367

raywhitesouthbank.com.au