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Boyd Library is back!
Photo by John Tadigiri

The City of Melbourne's knowledge portfolio chair Cr Jackie Watts (centre) joined librarians Cos Ambrose (left) and Melita Boschma (right) at Boyd Library on June 9 to celebrate the facility's reopening following COVID-19 restrictions easing. *Continued on page 11.*

Council restores hope to veteran art dream at 310 St Kilda Rd

The City of Melbourne is understood to be interested in acquiring the former repatriation clinic building at 310 St Kilda Rd in Southbank.

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
PROPERTY

The historic art-deco building at Victoria Barracks, which has been vacant for more than 20 years, has long been the subject of a proposal by the Australian National Veteran Arts Museum (ANVAM) to house an arts and wellbeing hub for veterans recovering from trauma.

The not-for-profit group, which is still seeking to be appointed as a trustee of the site, has been at the centre of the long-running saga for many years as it has sought clarity on the building's future from all levels of government.

However, the site's current owner the Commonwealth Department of Defence has long considered the site surplus to requirements and has unsuccessfully sought to offload it to the state government in the past.

Under Commonwealth Property Disposal Policy (CPDP), the building can be transferred between any state, territory and local government at a peppercorn rate before being put on the open market.

While previous negotiations between the federal and state governments failed, the City of Melbourne threw ANVAM's dream a lifeline in March last year when it agreed to explore options for a potential off-market sale.

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

"The land fronts Coventry St and St Kilda Rd and is the site of the

former Repatriation Commission Outpatient Clinic. The building has been vacant for 20 years and is in a state of disrepair," Mr Hanney said.

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

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

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

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

"At present, there are safety and building compliance matters that prevent occupation of the building. To protect the heritage values of the site, and address work health and safety obligations, a future owner must have a financially viable strategy to maintain the heritage values and reduce the safety risks."

Constructed in 1937, the clinic was important for the rehabilitation of veterans and provided a wide range of services to support injured soldiers with recovery and reintegration into civilian life.

Continued on page 5.

New Southgate vision revealed

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
PLANNING

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

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

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

With the redevelopment seeking to "better connect the site to its Southbank neighbours", the Fender

Katsalidis-designed project would also provide a new 2000 sqm elevated park, as well as a further 4000 sqm of additional open space throughout the development.

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

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

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

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

Currently including the two Herald Weekly Times *Continued on page 3.*

ARTS & CULTURE, PAGE 07

A Street art unites in a time of isolation



BUSINESS, PAGE 09

B Businesses innovate with council grants



COMMUNITY, PAGE 10

C High-risers return to ground level



BUSINESS, PAGE 11

D A love affair with education



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Move to simplify apartment rules

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
STRATA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Lord Mayor said many issues became clear during the pandemic but had existed beforehand.

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

“As the motion confirms, managing jointly-owned private community spaces without specific guidelines or directions from the authorities has been challenging and has, as a result, left owners’ corporation committees



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



at the risk of failure of meeting some of their duties and obligations,” she said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Local vertical living webinar

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

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



Meg Hill
JOURNALIST
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The Yarra River Business Association presents this third 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, in the rowing precinct. The sight of a rowing scull emerging through an early morning mist and the sound of rowing coaches cycling along the banks with megaphones in hand is quintessentially Melbourne.

1 **Alexandra Gardens** is a charming retreat hidden behind the boathouses. It was created between 1896 and 1900 by river widening and straightening to alleviate flooding. The spoil was used to raise the height of the banks and to fill the lagoons. The ornamental design was the work of Carlo Catani, Chief Engineer of the Public Works Department. The five hectares of parkland feature mature trees set in spacious lawns and are filled with ornamental gardens, with distinctive Canary Island palms and shrub borders.

2 **Queen Victoria Gardens** is a five hectare oasis of emerald lawns, peppered with floral displays, ponds, and sculpture. It was established in the early 1900s as a memorial to Queen Victoria (marble statue 1907). Roses are a feature of the gardens. The **Janet Lady Clarke Rotunda** (1913) provides shelter and a place to sit and contemplate. The **floral clock** on St Kilda Road comprises 7,000 flowering and bedding plants, which are changed twice yearly. Swiss watchmakers donated this decorative timepiece to the city in 1966.

Supported by



3 **Kings Domain** is an elegant 36 hectare patchwork of gardens and reserves. To celebrate Melbourne’s centenary, 17 hectares of the Government House grounds were transferred to public parkland in 1935. Hugh Linaker’s design for the new park was carried out by sustenance workers to provide employment during the Great Depression. The shrubs and flower gardens between Government House Reserve and Kings Domain are in bloom most of the year. They contrast with the rest of the Domain, which is characterised by sweeping lawns, planted with both Australian and exotic trees in the 19th century. Within the reserve sits the **Sidney Myer Music Bowl** (1959), the **Pioneer Womens’ Memorial Garden** (1934), **Government House** (1876), the **Shrine of Remembrance** (1934), and **La Trobe’s Cottage** (1839). Memorials, statuary and commemorative trees punctuate the lawns.

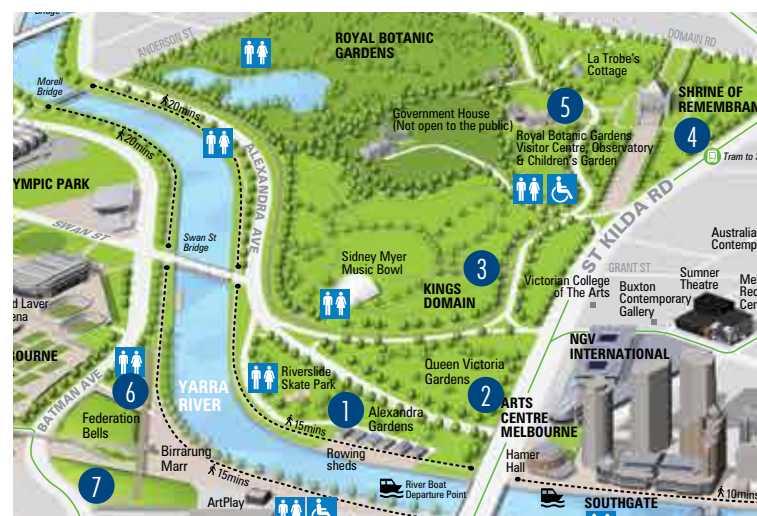
4 **Shrine of Remembrance Reserve**. The symmetrical layout of paths radiating from the **Shrine** into the 13 hectares of landscaped reserve is balanced by trees arranged informally on the spacious lawns. The trees are a mixture of Australian and exotic species and most carry commemorative plaques representing the various sections of the Armed Services. The **Garden of Appreciation** marks the main entrance from Birdwood Avenue into the reserve and a picturesque **Garden of Remembrance** sits on the eastern slopes of the Shrine, commemorating post-WW2 conflicts. The imposing **MacPherson Robertson Fountain** in the south-west corner of the reserve was a gift to mark Melbourne’s centenary in 1934.

5 The splendour of **Melbourne’s Royal Botanic Gardens** began in 1846 when the site was chosen in response to petitions from early settlers. Victoria’s first government botanist, Ferdinand von Mueller, laid out the gardens along scientific principles. William Guilfoyle, director 1873-1909, redesigned the gardens, relocating some 2000 of the original trees and creating the ornamental lake as the central feature. The landscape of sweeping lawns, gently curving paths and trees grouped to spectacular views is from the Guilfoyle period. Over 12,000 plant species from around the world are represented in the gardens, including specialist collections of exotic and Australian plants. Cafes and tea rooms, a gift and book shop, the **National Herbarium**, the **Ian Potter Children’s Garden** and **Old Melbourne Observatory** (1863) are part of Melbourne’s botanic wonderland.

Walk through the Botanic Gardens and cross Swan St Bridge.

6 The grassy expanse and raised rocks of **Speakers Corner** is a little known, colourful piece of Melbourne history. Well into the 1960s, prime ministers, communists, evangelists, suffragettes and ordinary citizens gathered here to state their case to the gathered crowds.

7 **Birrarung Marr** is Melbourne’s first major new parkland in more than 100 years. The eight hectare park was opened in 2002 and its wide open spaces and large sculptured terraces host festivals and events throughout the year. On the middle terrace, the 39 bell **Federation Field of Bells** rings twice daily. **Redgum Gully** is planted with the type of trees that once lined the Yarra and the billabong beside the river symbolises the lagoons that once dotted the area. ‘Birrarung’ means ‘river of mists’ in the language of the Wurundjeri people and ‘Marr’ means the side of the river. The tops of the terraces provide expansive views of the city, Southbank, the Domain and Yarra River, while children love rolling down the grassy slopes.





▲ An aerial view of the proposed four-level structure complete with an elevated park and (right) a render of the 21-storey office tower fronting Southbank Promenade.

New Southgate vision revealed

Continued from page 1.

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

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

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

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

"Our tenants have been aware of the master planning investigations for some time and each tenant has been contacted by an ARA representative via phone to inform them of our intention

to lodge the application. Moving forward we'll be providing regular updates and sharing new information as it becomes available."

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

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

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

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

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

Mr Neville said.

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

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

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

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

"It's an exciting transformation of a space that is now 30 years old," Mr Forman said.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Sean Car

EDITOR

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

This Facebook group is owned by **Southbank News**.

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

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▲ A visual by ARM Architecture showing a restored 310 St Kilda Rd.

Council restores hope to veteran art dream at 310 St Kilda Rd

Continued from page 1.

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

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

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

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

strategies relating to the creative industries and mental health.

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

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

"On behalf of the veteran community we are grateful to the Melbourne City Council for its interest, leadership and commitment to supporting ANVAM preserve this building," he said.

"Pending the council's further consideration, we look forward to a long partnership that will create a new destination in Melbourne's Arts Precinct." ●

For more information:
anvam.org.au

"Complicated" process ends positively for Arts Precinct

WORDS BY *David Schout*

PLANNING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cr Leppert said Minister for Planning Richard Wynne had handballed planning authority status to the council after implementing interim controls in March 2018 responding to a number of building

The council and Creative Victoria then held two separate panel hearings for what Cr Leppert called a "very straightforward amendment" and by its conclusion, the outcome was almost identical.

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

Beyond the process, Cr Leppert said it was a "really interesting precedent" set and was surprised there wasn't more push-back from private developers

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

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



David Schout

JOURNALIST

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- \$260,000 towards three new courts at Royal Park Tennis Club.
- \$1 million for designs for Kensington Recreation Centre, featuring a new two-level facility plus refurbished pool, change facilities, café and more.



CITY OF MELBOURNE

Street art unites in time of isolation

WORDS BY *Marco Holden Jeffery*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *John Tadigiri*
ARTS & CULTURE

For many Southbank residents, finding a sense of community and connection during the lockdown has been difficult.

But street artist Peter Seaton hopes his new mural on City Rd can bring locals together, whether out for a walk or looking on from their apartment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



▲ (Left) Street artist Peter “CTO” Seaton and (right) his artwork looking east on City Rd.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Street art, graffiti and urban art culture are

really meshed into the fabric of its tourism and its iconography,” he said.

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

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

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



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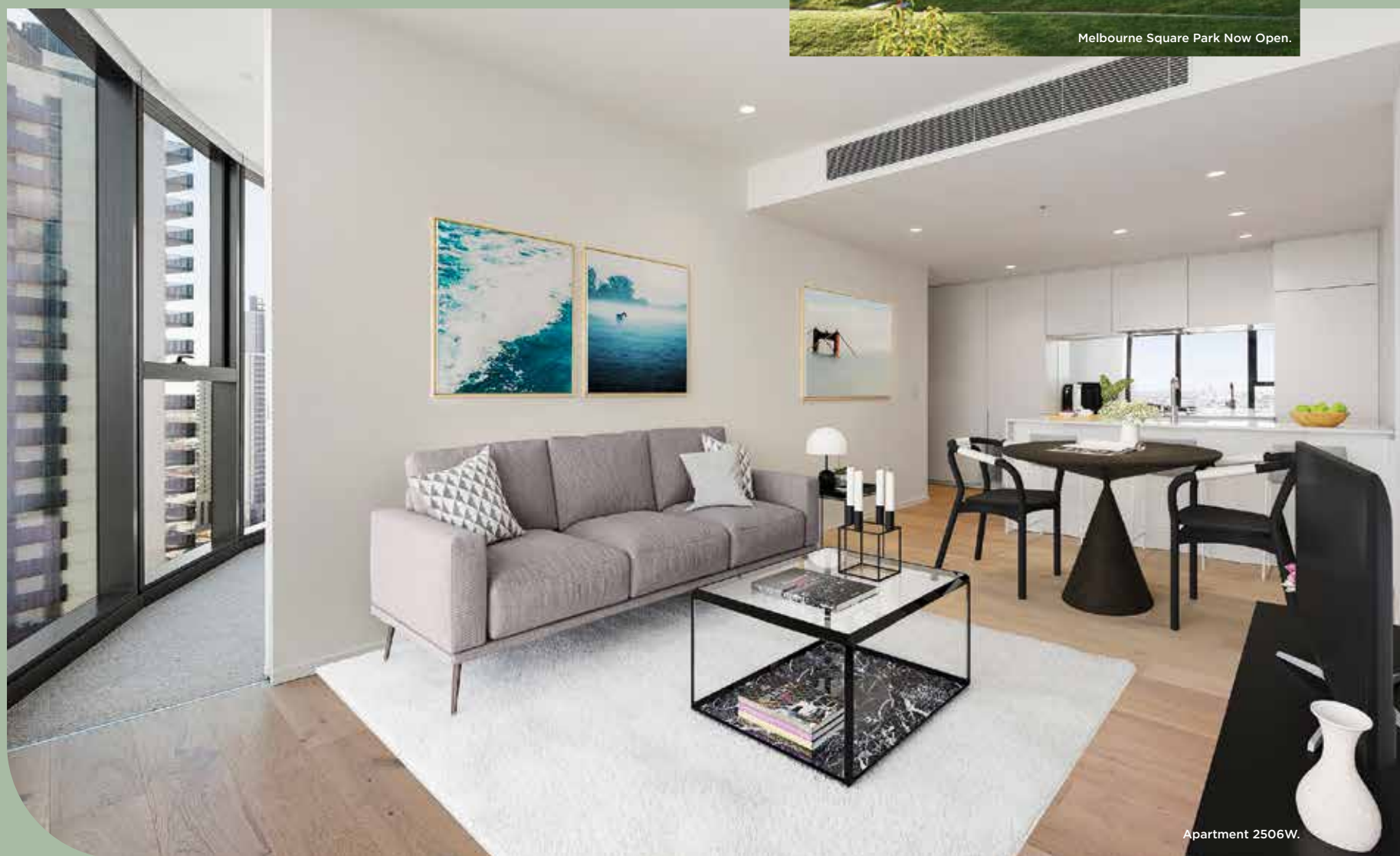
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Southbank businesses innovate with council's COVID grants

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*
BUSINESS

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

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

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

"We received \$4545 from the grant which we used to pay back the cost of updating our website to enable online, take-away orders," Mr Burke said.

"If that grant wasn't available there's no way we could have taken the chance to convert our website. We simply wouldn't have done it and potentially would've had to close our doors."

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

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

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

"We've been at capacity every night since,



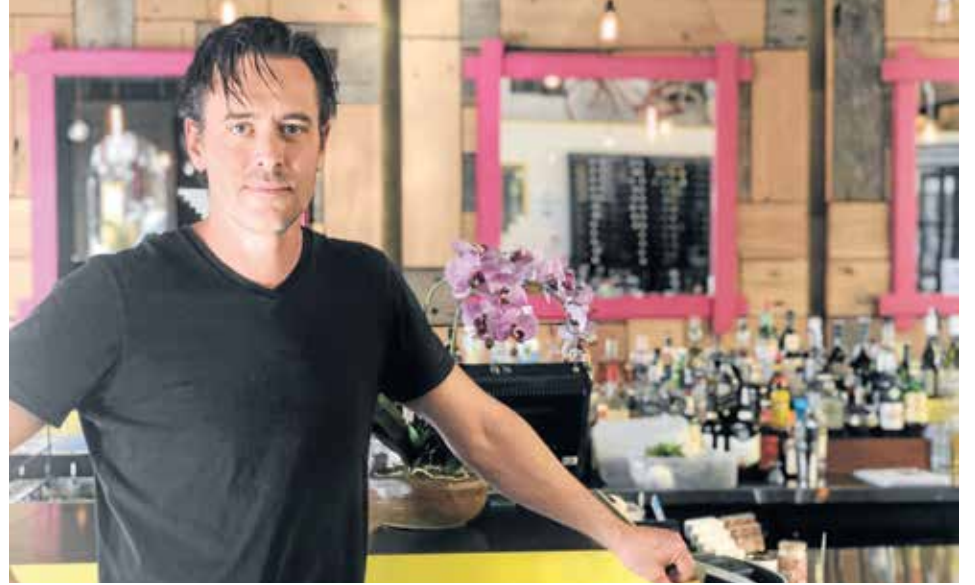
▲ Belgian Beer Café owner Michael Burke.

which is obviously a lot lower than normal. But even though it's not what it was like pre-COVID-19 we can see an ever-so-faint light at the end of the tunnel," Mr Burke said

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

After receiving \$4500 in the same round of grants, area manager Sam Shaw said BangPop was able to re-vamp its cooking classes to allow customers to learn online.

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



▲ BangPop area manager Sam Shaw.

really well," Mr Shaw said

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

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

As more Southbank businesses continue to be approved for the council's COVID-19 business grant, venues like BangPop and Belgian Beer

Café are shining examples of how local business can thrive during difficult circumstances.

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

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

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

Rate freeze marks economic rebuild

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
ECONOMY

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

Having lost more than \$100 million since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March, the release of the council's draft annual plan and budget on May 19 was unfortunately marred by a significant \$57.4 million deficit.

Despite the financial setbacks of COVID-19, however, years of strong fiscal management and economic growth has meant the council's finances are in good shape as it forecasts a return to surplus by the 2022-23 financial year.

The \$632 million draft budget is underpinned by a substantial \$168.5 million capital works program, \$41 million investment in transport infrastructure as well as a \$50 million COVID-19 recovery package to assist small businesses and precincts.

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

"This year, for the first time in more than 30 years, the budget will have a deficit. We are deliberately investing in our community

now so we can support businesses and deliver infrastructure and stimulus as a platform for recovery."

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

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

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

The \$41 million towards transport will also see car parks replaced with footpaths and 12 kilometres of pop-up cycling lanes to cater for social distancing as part of its COVID-19 recovery strategy.

The impacts of COVID-19 could likely see the council draw on its five-year \$75 million line of credit from ANZ Bank for the first time, however Mr Hanney said it would only be used on a "needs basis" to meet capital works requirements.

"The loan expires on June 30, 2021 but there are options to extend if required," Mr Hanney

said. "The interest rate is 0.74 per cent and is very competitive."

The City of Melbourne's 1425 staff, 30 fewer full-time than last year, are the best-paid in the country and are expected to cost the council \$165.9 million during the 2020-21 financial year.

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

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

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

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

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

year. Naturally, parking fine revenue is also budgeted down at \$16 million.

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

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

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

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

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

Public submissions on the draft annual plan and budget 2020-21 are open until 5pm on June 17 ●

For more information:
participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au



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Australia 108 tops out

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

June 9 marked the official “topping out” of Melbourne’s new tallest building Australia 108 on City Rd in Southbank.

Spanning 319 metres or 100 levels, the building is officially the tallest residential building in the Southern Hemisphere.

While Australia 108 takes the gong for Australia’s highest floorplate, Q1 on the Gold Coast still holds the title for tallest structure thanks to its 97.7-metre spire.

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

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

“Over the past five years, Australia 108 has steadily been growing on Melbourne’s skyline. Now, we are immensely proud to announce the project has officially gone where none of its neighbours have been before - we have completed the structure,” Mr Ng said ●

High-risers return to ground level

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
COMMUNITY

Life was slowly returning to the community of high-rise dwellers around Boyd Park this month as authorities managed the “cov-exit” by easing regulations around gatherings.

A mums’ group was meeting on the grass, gym sessions were underway, kids were on swings and the library chute was open.

The number of people who could meet in public was increased on June 1 to 20.

Caitlyn Gerecke, an instructor with the nearby F45 gym, was quick to take advantage of the new regulations.

She was in the park with a cart full of yoga mats and weights to run a session. “We’ve been running boot camps for two weeks now,” she said.

Kalpna Suraj, a seventh-floor resident of the Imagine Marco building, had been hanging out for the playground to re-open and was down at the park for a play date.

“It’s actually good because kids can play with the swings,” she said. “We got an email. I’ve kept checking on the library and the public area.”

The library chute opened on Wednesday and she had already taken back books. “I was here this morning,” she said.

As organisations adjust and re-open, the library will have to deal with a stockpile of books on loan.

Librarians reported that there were 20 books in the chute by noon on Thursday. The books are cleared daily and go into quarantine for three days then returned to the shelves.

Leigh Dwyer said he had coped with the closure of the library because they had plenty of books but the opening of the sandpit was big news for his three-year-old son Spencer.

The Dwyers live in Platinum Tower and are regular visitors to the park. Spencer has perfected his scooting during the lockdown.

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



▲ Kalpna (left) and Khushy (right): back in the swing of the playground.



▲ Mums gather in Boyd Park.



▲ Leigh (left) and Spencer (right) after a session in the sandpit at Boyd Park.

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

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

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

“There’ll be a spike in COVID cases,” she said. “All the people downstairs in the park are young.” ●

A look at how COVID-19 is changing design

WORDS BY *Jack Hayes*
DEVELOPMENT

With life after a once-in-a-generation pandemic still uncertain, Melbourne Square developer OSK Property has made the first steps to what work in a post COVID-19 era can look like. Connectivity with the outdoors, limited shared spaces and a greater “technological backbone” to allow for remote working are just some of the new hallmarks its recently released 38,000 sqm 29-level office tower. In a move that will set a likely precedent for future development in Southbank, Melbourne Square Commercial will look to reduce contact in close quarters such as lifts, and limit cross-over between different businesses in communal facilities.

COX Architecture director Paul Curry said its design principles were representative of how offices would likely change in the post COVID-19 era.

“COVID-19 has accelerated workplace trends towards remote working and it has raised the question as to what the office of the future will look like. Long-term outcomes will likely lead to a greater need from workers to enjoy fresh air and light, with access to open space and a connection back to nature,” Mr Curry said.

“Layouts will be more flexible than ever and common areas and spaces more humanising in their materials and textures. Buildings will need to offer more than just a place to work – people will work to make a life, not just a living.”

“People are going to be a lot more mindful of being in confined spaces with others. So, it has come down to how office towers adapt to that across all aspects of the building.”

Mr Curry said the new tower’s north-facing orientation and design, which maximised its relationship to Melbourne Square’s one-acre

park, would provide a unique connection to the outdoors for workers.

With the recent approval of Beulah International’s plans to build Australia’s tallest building in Southbank, another COX Architecture project, Mr Curry said there was more to design than adding to the suburb’s skyline.

“Something we get really excited with is public life and our ability to change cities. When we are starting each of our projects, we have to look at the context of the suburb and how we can use them to improve the fabric in which we are working in; Southbank is no different,” Mr Curry said.

“Very early on with Melbourne Square we took into account all sorts of things ranging from retail amenity to green open space, to help make Southbank more liveable.”

Melbourne Square Commercial is located in the award-winning \$2.8 billion Melbourne Square precinct which will include 2000 apartments, cafes, restaurants, Southbank’s first full line supermarket, childcare centre, Hilton Hotel and rooftop bar ●

For more information:
msqcommercial.com.au



Jack Hayes
BUSINESS EDITOR
JACK@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU





New hotel

WORDS BY *Janelle Warner*
PLANNING

Developer BEKL has announced its chosen operator to manage its future hotel at 10-16 Dorcas St, Southbank.

InterContinental Hotels Group's (IHG) new upscale brand voco has been selected to manage the new hotel, which will feature 171 rooms, a restaurant, bar, four meeting spaces and a gym when it opens in 2023.

Located at the northern end of St Kilda Rd on Dorcas St, the hotel will offer a premium experience for hotel guests in an area historically limited to serviced apartments.

BEKL managing director Katherine Liu said she was looking forward to working with the international brand due to its "shared passion for innovative design and lifestyle."

The hotel will form part of a proposed larger, mixed-use project for the site comprising 36 apartments and 2293 sqm of office space ●

Calls heighten to support struggling precinct

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
PLANNING

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

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

Also home to the 109 tram depot, which travels directly through Southbank, an abandoned building and a series of struggling cafes and restaurants are what some 700,000 annual passengers are met with upon arrival.

President of the Beacon Cove Neighbourhood Association (BCNA) Eddie Micallef said the relocation of *Spirit of Tasmania* and the demise of the cruise ship industry as a result of COVID-19 meant the precinct required urgent attention.

"Now is the time for the Victorian Government to step-up and take the lead in the redevelopment of the precinct," he said.

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

Member for Albert Park Martin Foley said the future of Station Pier was a "critical part" of Victoria's tourism and visitor economy and that



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



now was the time to take a renewed look at the broader precinct.

"The precinct has had many 'visions', 'structure plans' and other plans - rather than look to the past I am concerned to plan a new future for the new reality the precinct faces," he said.

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

While the City of Port Phillip (CoPP) developed the Port Melbourne Waterfront Urban Design Framework back in 2013, which focuses on the area from Bay St through to Princes Pier,

the BCNA say a more coordinated, state government-led plan is required.

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

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

"As the cruise ship industry faces global challenges due to the COVID-19 health crisis, we are expecting a much smaller cruise season and fewer ships docking at Station Pier," Cr Voss said. "We expect this to continue for the next few years until the industry recovers, which may have a flow-on affect for some local businesses."

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

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

VicPorts did not respond to *Southbank News* for comment ●



▲ Cheng Liu shows off his new campus beer garden.

A love affair with education

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
BUSINESS

The grounds of the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) are still wrapped up in "iso-ribbon" with students not expected back until the end of the month.

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

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

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

"On the first day we took \$86," Cheng said, after investing almost \$1 million in the year-long fit-out.

"We're now taking ten times that," he said.

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

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

A miso Bolognese sauce is one invention by the chef, available for \$15, as Betwixt tests out the menu on locals.

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

"We have a good relationship," Cheng said, having

moved to the new site even though renovations had been difficult and expensive.

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

"Study is very hard in China. He was working until 10pm every night on homework. It was much more relaxed here. He jumped two levels."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Boyd Library is back!

COUNCIL AFFAIRS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"For people unable to return to our branches, I certainly encourage them to continue using our digital library services."

"Since COVID-19 restrictions began, we've experienced a huge surge in demand for e-library services, including a 76 per cent increase in eBook loans and a 59 per cent increase in eAudio-book usage. Evidence shows that Libraries are well understood as a fundamental resource to our community." ●

▼ Southbank librarians Cos Ambrose (left) and Melita Boschma return to Boyd.



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Your City of Melbourne Community Update

REBUILDING MELBOURNE'S ECONOMY WITH STIMULUS AND RATES RELIEF

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Melbourne hard. Business and retail have been severely impacted, tourist visitation has plummeted and international students are doing it tough.

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









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

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



DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN AND BUDGET 2020-21 SNAPSHOT

Major investment

-  Rates freeze for commercial and residential properties
-  Infrastructure: **\$168.5 million**
-  COVID-19 Recovery Package: **\$50 million**
-  Transport: **\$41 million**
-  Climate action: **\$32 million**
-  Major events: **\$19 million**
-  Arts: **\$17 million**
-  Community facilities: **\$12.5 million**

Infrastructure

The City of Melbourne will invest \$168.5 million in infrastructure for our local community and economy, including getting on with the Queen Victoria Market precinct renewal, restoring Melbourne Town Hall and delivering women's sporting facilities. In addition, a package of infrastructure projects are being prepared to present to the Victorian and Australian governments. These shovel-ready projects will create jobs, stimulate Melbourne's economy and protect the city's liveability.

Major events

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

Protecting arts and culture

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



Supporting the Queen Victoria Market precinct renewal

Combatting social isolation and supporting rough sleepers

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

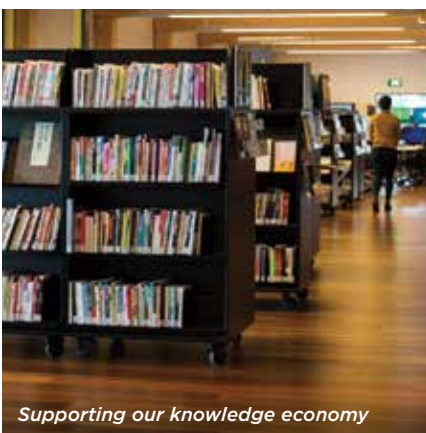
Supporting our knowledge economy

The City of Melbourne will invest \$1 million in renewing and maintaining

its traditional and digital library collections, and a further \$180,000 to upgrade Southbank Library. As part of this, \$200,000 will be invested in the Startup Action Plan. This plan is designed to boost the skills of local startups and promote Melbourne as a great place to start, grow and go global with a business.

Supporting international students

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



Supporting our knowledge economy

HAVE YOUR SAY

Public submissions on the draft Annual Plan and Budget 2020-21 are open until 5pm Wednesday 17 June 2020. Visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au



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Your City of Melbourne Community Update



COVID-19 RECOVERY PACKAGE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND RETAIL

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

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

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

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

RATES RELIEF FOR BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS

Since the pandemic hit, the City of Melbourne has continued to focus on fixed costs for businesses and residents. To support struggling ratepayers, rates will be frozen in 2020-21.

Fees and charges for community services such as recreation centres, children's services and libraries, will not be increased this year.



Supporting businesses and residents



YOUR COUNCIL




◀ Melbourne City Council (from left):

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

Council's vision

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

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The Arts Precinct

Arts bodies look to the future

With restrictions easing, art lovers and theatregoers are waiting with bated breath to see how Melbourne's Arts Precinct bounces back.

WORDS BY *Marco Holden Jeffery*

There won't be any crowded galleries or sold-out theatre halls, but Melburnians will soon have the opportunity to experience the city's vibrant arts scene - just not in a way they might have imagined.

Arts Centre Melbourne will reopen its doors on June 27, offering self-guided tours of the Theatres Building, an exhibition at the Australian Music Vault and a production of *Ghostly Machines* - a 2014 performance that showcases Hamer Hall's lighting rigging.

Arts Centre Melbourne CEO Claire Spencer said while she was "excited" to see the venue reopen after a three-month closure, conventional events and performances would be some time off.

"We desperately want to reopen our theatres to the many incredibly talented performers and artists who call our stages home," she said.

"The reality is how we present performances in the coming months may look very different. But we are a creative industry and I'm confident we'll come up with a very creative solution."

The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) will also reopen both its international site and the Ian Potter Centre on June 27, implementing timed ticketing and queue management to ensure physical distancing.



NGV has been offering a range of online experiences throughout the lockdown and will continue to do so once the gallery has reopened.

Although theatres will be allowed to reopen on June 22, the 50-person limit on audience members means putting on a production would be prohibitively expensive.

Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC) artistic director Brett Sheehy said the venue already got by "on a financial knife-edge" and presenting shows to such small crowds would not be possible.

"The cost of presenting the simplest one-per-

son show to these requirements would see us losing even more than our current 2020 projected box office loss of \$9.5 million, given the running costs of the show and venue versus box office income," he said.

MTC's neighbours at the Malthouse Theatre are in a similar position, flagging November as the earliest possible reopening date if restrictions aren't relaxed further.

"We're looking at potentially sourcing some funding to help prepare and build an outdoor stage that could be used throughout summer, from November to March," Malthouse spokes-

person Tatia Sloley said.

As an alternative to in-person performances, the Malthouse will host three free live-streamed performances of monologues inspired by the experiences of Melburnians in lockdown.

The first of the performances, titled *The Lockdown Monologues*, streamed successfully on June 3.

"People are hungry to connect at the moment and we hope that *The Lockdown Monologues* will give audiences the sense of community that we're all lacking right now," Malthouse director in residence Bridget Balodis said ●

\$17 million for local art

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
ARTS & CULTURE

The City of Melbourne will invest \$17 million in the arts to keep Melburnians connected to our creative sector as the city responds to COVID-19.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the City of Melbourne's draft Budget for 2020-21 invested significantly in our arts and cultural sectors.

"Melbourne is Australia's undisputed arts and cultural capital, but these sectors need to be supported due to the severe downturn from COVID-19," the Lord Mayor said.

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

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

Arts, Culture and Heritage portfolio Chair Councillor Rohan Leppert said the funding would enable creatives to continue to work through the shutdown by developing new works and online projects.

"We will invest \$4.6 million for arts programming and artist support across our ArtPlay children's space at Birrarung Marr, the Signal creative studio for young people along Flinders Walk and our Arts House contemporary performance space in North Melbourne," Cr Leppert said.

"An injection of \$1.5 million will boost public art projects to make our city streets and open spaces more interesting and vibrant for the benefit of everyone who enjoys our public spaces."

"Our Test Sites public art program is now open for expressions of interest with a pool of \$125,000 available. Grants of up to \$5000 will be made to 25 artists to participate in this online public art project."

"In collaboration with Testing Grounds, we hope the artists will be able to come together and share their projects once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted."

Testing Grounds program director and curator Arie Rain Glorie said the public art program was a rare opportunity for artists.

"Testing Grounds has been a partner with the City of Melbourne on this program since the beginning of last year. Normally artists would get the opportunity to come to Testing Grounds and get advice on doing public art and go through ideas," he said.

"Because the site is closed due to COVID-19 the City of Melbourne has approached us to do it as a virtual program, where people get paid to research and develop an idea."



▲ A previous Test Site workshop held by Testing Grounds program director Arie Rain-Glorie (with hands in the air) at Federation Square.

"[It's] a rare opportunity for artists to do research and development without the pressure of presentation."



"It's open to all types of creative practice, and at all different levels of experience. In previous years artists had to test a physical public artwork, whereas now we will help them get pitch ready."

This takes much of the pressure out of the program, while the financial support has been raised significantly.

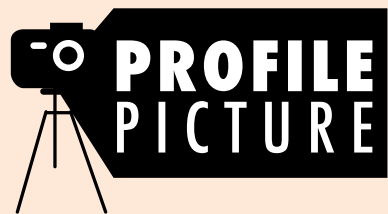
"It's a really great opportunity that can only be beneficial to artists particularly in that it's not so outcome focused, a rare opportunity for artists to do research and development without the pressure of presentation," he said.

Cr Leppert said the council was also providing funding for multi-year grants.

"We're also providing \$4.2 million in annual and multi-year arts grants. We have lifted our annual arts grants pool to \$850,000 and will recommence indexation of multi-year grants to support small, medium and independent arts organisations," he said.

"We are thrilled to be delivering YIRRAMBOI in 2021, showcasing outstanding First Nations artists. Our arts grants framework will include \$125,000 in support for artists with a focus on contemporary Aboriginal works to deliver as part of YIRRAMBOI."

Expressions of interest for the Test Sites 2020 closed on May 31 ●



AIMEE LIPSCOMBE



▲ An image from Aimee's Night series.

An emerging talent

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

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The children might be completely safe or there might be something sinister going on—so it's up to the viewer's own perception," she said.

Surprisingly enough, Aimée began her studies at PSC with the intention of being an architectur-

al photographer. But after a tutor pointed out her flair for portraits, she changed her focus.

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

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

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

"They're always open and curious about the story. And they have fun with it."

As a former producer for ABC's *The Drum*, Aimée had considerable experience with cameras before studying. But despite her passion for photography, she had never pursued it seriously.

Her decision to study part-time at PSC allowed her to continue her freelance media work while also working towards her photography goals.

"Going back to study was a way to re-focus my energy and invest time in myself after investing in my kids for a few years," Aimée said.

"This was important for me because I found it quite hard, as a woman, being successful on a particular path and then having children. Because it derails everything and you feel quite lost."

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

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

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

For more information:
aimeelipscombe

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Image by María Gabriela Leon Paez PSC Graduate



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SOUTHBANKER

Taking age seriously

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is exhausting just hearing about all of her

activities, including the regular but restricted half-hour visits to her husband in aged care. "My life is big but it has become bigger over COVID-19," she said.

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

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

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

He didn't reveal that he had tested positive. So had his wife and son. "Are you going into lock-down?" he asked.

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

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

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

▼ Anne Fairhall: safe in her Southbank apartment.



a nose swab.

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

"We in Australia don't know very much," she said. "My son was very sick."

The new Melbourne Bearbrass Probus Club contact is: Secretary – Sue, 0419 134 206. Email: bearbrassprobus@gmail.com ●



Rhonda Dredge
JOURNALIST
RHONDA@CBDNEWS.COM.AU

ST JOHNS SOUTHGATE

Shutting down is easy. Opening up is hard

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

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

We, like many places of worship, are going to have to do things very differently in the interests of public health and safety – things like limiting the number of worshippers per service; insisting on hand sanitising upon entrance; disallowing handshaking and hugging; keeping an attendance register for contact

tracing; arranging socially-distant worship seating, cancelling our much-loved morning teas, and so on.

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

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

if this ritual is performed at a distance, and administered by a pastor wearing gloves and a mask, one has to ask if it's really communion at all?

The ways in which Christian worship will change have the potential to leave churchgoers feeling empty, unsatisfied, demoralised – like a once arranged bunch of flowers plucked from the sustaining waters of their vase and flung to the various corners of the room to fade, separately but in unison, on the floor.

For the faithful, this is more than a matter of hygiene and safety. These matters strike at the heart of our very identity. Jesus, in his earthly ministry, was someone who touched lepers, and who used his own spit, believe it or not, in acts of compassionate healing! Being disciples of Jesus has never been a sanitary endeavour. It is supposed to be about opening the door to the stranger, breaking bread together, crying on one another's shoulders and holding the hands of the sick and dying. But in this moment, we have to acknowledge that the compassionate and loving thing to do is to maintain distance and sterility. What we can and must do, is to retain some sense of welcome, warmth and community – even if our communion feels less

than holy for a time.

Yes, closing down was the easy part. Opening up will be the real challenge. It will be difficult for members of our congregation who will need to recalibrate their expectations of how their spiritual lives are expressed. And I expect it will be a little awkward for visitors walking into a church of the new normal. But as we do open up, be assured that not just our doors, but our hearts and minds will be open to you, even if our worship might initially look unwelcoming compared to what one might have previously expected from St Johns. Our communion, and community will look changed, but it will retain its holiness, because the promise of Jesus's presence remains. That we can be certain of, even in uncertain times ●



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



St Johns
Southgate

Search for the St Johns Southgate channel on YouTube for our 10am Sunday morning live streams

Connect with us on Facebook during these challenging times

Stay safe and well and may God bless you!

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Tunnelling in full swing

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

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

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

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

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

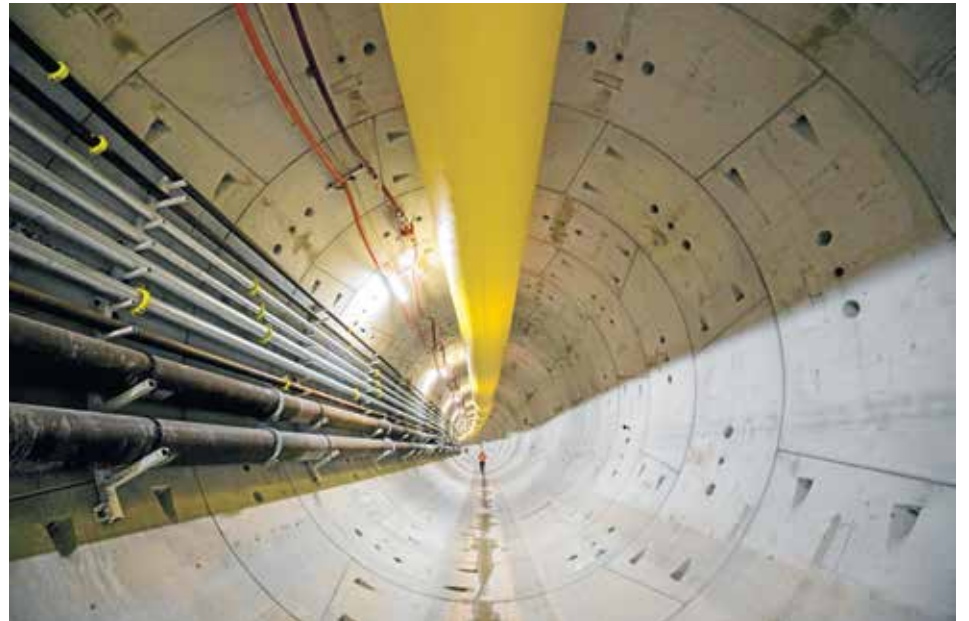
Pieces from the 1000-tonne TBMs were then returned to Arden Station by trucks with the rest of the TBMs pulled back through the tunnels and reassembled. Tunnelling experts then conducted the routine tests on electrical, hydraulic and mechanical systems required before relaunch.



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

Anzac Station update

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



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

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

worksite.

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

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

OWNERS' CORPORATION LAW

Communicating to your communities during COVID-19

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

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

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

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

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

These contractors need to be discussing cleaning practices, cashflow issues, and safety and security issues every day, and they need

to be reporting to the committee about these issues every day and every week.

Let me break this down further:

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

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

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

A weekly or fortnightly newsletter to residents about these issues needs to be circulated. Whether it's on the noticeboard or the lifts, or is sent out by email or via a portal or Facebook page, it is going to be of vital importance to get the message out.

Effective and regular communication will reassure your community that they are in good hands. Talk the talk, and walk the walk. It's not going to be easy, but you'll all get through it together over the next few months ●



Tom Bacon

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Coffee break

Vince was looking for someone to spot him a latte

Victorian College of the Arts

Reopened for business

Flora Indian Restaurant: 238 Flinders Street

As coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions start to ease, Flora is excited to welcome you back for an authentic Indian dining experience. Flora will continue to operate between 10am – 8pm in cooperation with social distancing protocols without sacrificing on their ever popular over-the-counter service style.

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



More trains, more often

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





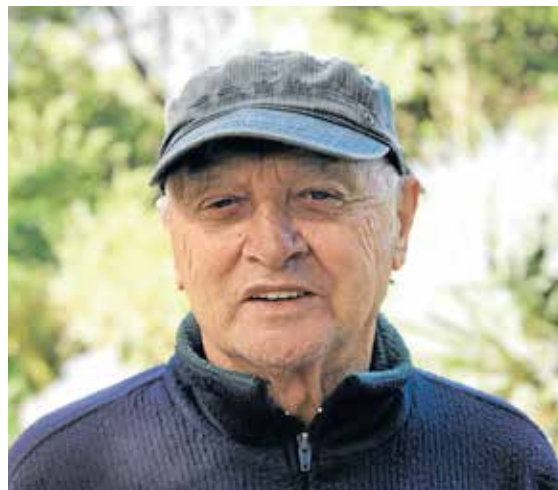
DAVE, CAFÉ OWNER

I've got twin girls and have been a stay-at-home dad for the past few weeks. I taught one of my girls how to play piano and also learnt how to make raisin bread.



JODIE, DOG WALKER

I had six weeks off work and during that time I got really good at making collages from vintage magazines.



BARRY, RETIRED

You don't learn many new things at my age but my cooking has definitely improved. I've been making soups, casseroles and pies.



WOODY, PUBLISHER

I've learnt to communicate better. That's the weird paradox of isolation because I think we've become better at connecting.

Faces of Southbank

Question:

What's a new skill you've learnt during isolation?

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Adaptability in a time of great change

We cannot avoid the unexpected events in life that produce the need for change, the events that force us to step out of our comfort zone.

What we can do instead is modify our relationship with change so that we can learn to accept the parts of change that scare us and use it to continually grow. If we do not grow from these unexpected events and rise to the challenges, we are denying ourselves that opportunity to learn.

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

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

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

- What opportunities does this change offer? Change means that things are different from

before, with new doors being opened. What will you do to take advantage of those new doors? By sitting down and evaluating what new fascinating opportunities there are after the lockdown finishes you may find it being remembered as a growth opportunity rather than dark times.

- What is beyond my control, and why is this okay? Of course, some things we can't change, like how other people react to their return to society, or the eventual change of the schedule you're so used to. We need to understand that some things are going to happen without our choosing, and that we do what we can to adapt to this.
- How can I help others in their return to society? It can be as simple as listening to your significant other about their day, striking up conversations with your colleagues or even just saying "thank you" to the barista making your coffee.
- How can I grow from this change? Whether its setting new goals, letting go of regrets, finding new meaning in life, or writing a list of scary things - and doing them, The key is that you commit to activities that enable you to be resilient, optimistic, physically and mentally fit to successfully work through the impact that change can bring to your life.

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



Rajna Bogdanovic
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST
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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 SOUTH BANK replacing numbers.

The rules are the same as regular Sudoku, each line must contain the letters "SOUTH BANK" 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	



A concierge's perspective on vertical living

Many vertical villages count their concierge as among their most valued feature, but how do these "keepers of the keys" view our vertical lifestyle?

Often the first person encountered when starting your vertical living journey is the building concierge.

It was for me.

And I really liked the idea that I wasn't entering an anonymous building - that there was someone readily contactable and knowledgeable in the ways of this apartment building.

At that time, I wasn't quite sure what to expect from a vertical village concierge.

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

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

But what could I expect from a vertical village concierge?

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

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

For this I turned to James Naidu - my building's concierge who introduced me into the

world of vertical living.

Originally from the corporate sector, James is a five-and-a-half-year concierge veteran. Currently based in Victoria Point in Docklands, James is very well known to the more than 1000 residents who dwell there, as well as the many service providers and delivery staff who frequent our building.

I first asked this keeper of the keys what he had observed as the best feature of vertical living.

"Safety" was James's ready reply - "without a doubt, it's safety".

Digging a little deeper, I asked what form this safety took.

James noted the visible security measures that are now common across our buildings as well as the growing monitoring services. But more than this, James said that residents felt safe in vertical villages as they did not have to deal with every issue on their own.

"Compare that to living in a house. If something happens, it's all up to you."

This means that if you are living solo, or are new to the country or are not very physically active, if you live in a vertical village, you have a known first port of call. And this, according to James, is a great benefit of vertical living.

Turning next to key challenges confronting our sector, James's view is that the biggest issue on our horizon is designing new ways to live with COVID-19.

And he emphasises "with".

In his opinion, it's not really going to be "post-COVID-19" anytime soon.

Rather, James muses, it will be more "how can we live safely and comfortably while this virus is still around?" And with restrictions slowly lifting, the challenge (and perhaps opportunity) is for each building to comprehensively review how can we live together, balancing safety with comfort.

This led nicely onto our third question about

his biggest challenge as concierge and James then spoke about the issues which consumed a great deal of his time.

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

For our final topic, I asked James about what innovations he saw for our sector.

Perhaps drawing upon his corporate background, James nominated the trend towards better systems integration, especially the ability for residents to access information in the way they wanted.

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

Regarding the demand for better and brighter amenities, James's view is that flashy facilities are exciting when people move in, but as time goes on, most don't utilise these. In his opinion, it is what is inside a resident's apartment that is more important - along with the face that greets you as you enter your vertical village! ●



Janette Corcoran

JANETTE CORCORAN IS ANAPARTMENT LIVING EXPERT.

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WE LIVE HERE

Cladding: are you on the funding list?

Does your building qualify for support from the state government's cladding rectification fund?

It's a common question and we were delighted to be approached recently by Cladding Safety Victoria (CSV) with an offer to explain the process in detail.

CSV was established last year to work with individual owners, identified by the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) as having extreme- or high-risk cladding, on the appropriate solution for their building.

CSV has been tasked with providing advice on how to reduce fire risk, helping owners to find qualified project managers and other professionals. In higher risk situations, CSV is responsible for funding approved works.

Despite the ravages of COVID-19, We Live Here was able to meet virtually with CSV to delve into the details.

Now we have a great deal of information to share with you ...

Meet your new Municipal Building Surveyor!

The Minister for Planning Richard Wynne has appointed the VBA as the Municipal Building Surveyor (MBS) for more than 400 buildings assessed as having the highest risk from cladding.

In these cases, the VBA has assumed the functions of the MBS from the relevant local government. This means that affected buildings in inner Melbourne will be dealing with the VBA rather than the City of Melbourne.

The audit

Through the state-wide cladding audit, the VBA has been working with owners' corporations (OCs) to identify buildings with combustible cladding to assess the relative risks for these buildings.

About 2200 buildings have been inspected and assessed through the VBA audit.

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

If your building is to be inspected as part of the audit, you should receive a letter from the VBA. Building managers and OCs should also be contacted by the VBA prior to any inspection (We Live Here does know that notices have not always been received - if you have experienced this, please let us know). The inspection usually involves cutting out a piece of each different type cladding, each about the size of a CD. The holes will be plugged and sealed by the inspectors.

VBA sends the samples off for chemical and fire resistance testing. The inspection entails much more than samples. The extent, location and fire risk of all instances of cladding will be examined in detail. The inspectors will require access to as-built drawings and other documentation.

Four stages to determine eligibility for funding

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

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

To date, 487 buildings have been referred to the CSV. These buildings are now being

"prioritised". CSV says that it is reviewing 60 buildings a month.

Just before going to press we asked CSV how many buildings have already been approved for funding. We will update you in the next column.

Don't call us, we'll call you

If CSV determines that your building is eligible, they will contact your OC to invite participation in the funding program. That would be a day to celebrate!

The buildings that qualify will receive a great deal of assistance from CSV - much more than just the funds.

Understandably CSV wants to make sure that its money is being well spent, and it takes high-level oversight of the appointment of the quantity surveyor and project manager and builders - all from the state government accredited vendor panels.

Knowing that your project team has been accredited by the state government will be a great comfort for OCs.

One big question we put to CSV is what happens if the rectification is urgent and the building has to proceed with rectification without the government funding - could eligible buildings be reimbursed for costs already incurred? Good news - according to CSV, if the works are exclusively for cladding and due process has been followed, such costs could well be eligible for funding.

If you have any questions about the cladding rectification program or you have an experience you wish to share, please let us know. We will stay in close contact with CSV so that we can keep you up to date with developments.

Short-term operators crunched

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

COVID-19 and apartment living

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

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

Your stories

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

Campaign donations

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

Barbara Francis & Rus Littleton

EMAIL: CAMPAIN@WELIVEHERE.NET

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Pet's Corner

The gift that keeps on giving

“

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

”



▼ Priscilla and Mina with their ferret Kanela.



WORDS BY *Tamara Clark*

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

The couple describe their furry little companion as a cheeky little devil.

Kanela's favourite activity in the world is stealing socks (but only the dirty ones). In fact, she loves to steal whatever she can get her tiny paws on, with her shifty missions often going unnoticed for a significant period of time!

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

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What's behind the lights?

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

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

Many buildings were lit in blue to honour the four police members tragically killed in that terrible traffic accident a few weeks ago.

I found a website for the Bolte Bridge but haven't been able to identify a single unifying source of information.

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

Tracey Allen



▲ Arts Centre Melbourne lights up in April in memory of the four police officers killed on the Eastern Freeway.



SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:
NEWS@SOUTHBANKLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

SOUTHBANK SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

Slowly starting up again

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

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

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

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



or even hug our friends and neighbours when we meet again after all this time, but a warm smile and a lovely conversation while gardening will have to do instead.

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

Beyond gardening, there is plenty of good news for our neighbourhood to share. All the paperwork is now done, and we have received the two council grant funds our group had won. One for free community educational days, and the other for the long-awaited composting hub. The first educational workshop we had pre-COVID-19 on the topic "A Melbourne Practical Guide to Zero Waste Living", exceeded our expectations with 46 participants

and some wonderful feedback on the value and usefulness of the workshop. Upcoming topics will include "Apartment Gardening 101", "Conscious Consumerism and Fast Fashion" and "Sustainable Xmas" to name a few. Some will be moved online, while some we will do outdoors at Boyd. Keep an eye on our Facebook page or email us for more details.

We are also still accepting volunteers for delivering the community composting hub at Boyd Park. A very exciting project, a Southbank first, with lots of educational opportunities!

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 ●

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



Artemis Pattichi
SOUTHBANK SUSTAINABILITY GROUP
SOUTHBANKSUSTAINABILITY@GMAIL.COM

Time flies in a pandemic



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



Despite the expected reduced tempo from the lockdown, I still seem to be as busy as ever. Last month was certainly no exception.

A few points to note from last month ...

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

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

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

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

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

Apparently 83 per cent of the municipality live in an apartment or high-density environment. These environments create their own challenges during mandatory isolation and can present greater risks to its residents. The Lord Mayor resides in a Docklands apartment, so she has experienced these complexities first-hand.

At the FMC meeting on June 2, Cr Capp moved a motion requesting the council to take a greater interest in the information that is promulgated and for council to be proactive with the formulation of information and its dissemination. The council is hoping to engage with many of our owners' corporations (OCs) to

ascertain where it can improve the information flow and indeed identify where it was deficient.

I commend the Lord Mayor for this initiative. As the convenor of the Southbank Owners' Corporation Network (SOCN), I personally found this confusion and uncertainty was evident across a number of our member buildings and as the restrictions have started to ease the confusion has once again entered the space. While the initiative could be one of those how far down the rabbit hole moments, the intent of the motion was certainly acknowledged and appreciated by all councillors and SRA and we look forward to assisting the council with this.

It is promising to see the restrictions are slowly easing, but we now need to be more alert than ever. While the government, and the community, has done a great job with flattening the curve, this has bought the government much needed time to prepare for this pandemic. They have now had two months to prepare our hospitals, manufacture ventilators, source PPE, prepare and train contract tracers and, most importantly, educate the public. It will now be accepted the virus will slowly move through the community, but if we continue to adhere to the social distancing policies and be mindful of our own safety, then this spread should be slow and manageable. The Australian public has thus far done a great job with pulling together and doing what we need to do. As the Prime Minister pointed out when quizzed why the modelling was so wrong, it didn't consider such

high community compliance. So, well done to us all so far. But this is still far from over.

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

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

Keep safe! ●



Tony Penna

TONY PENNA IS THE PRESIDENT OF SOUTHBANK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



MONTAGUE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

Kindness and communication: the route to the future

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

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

Frustration

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

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

The consequences are that there is a notable growth in people feeling frustration about the current restrictions, with the most minor things that the community would not normally even notice or mention ... some examples reported are: builders arriving too early, people not taking in the bins, dogs off leash on the streets,

and groups of cyclists, often families, using the footpaths rather than the bike paths. Really as a matter of normalcy these are inconsequential, but it seems that our neighbours are struggling with the small stuff.

Sadly ... racism

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

Sadly (and with my own sense of frustration) there has been a marked negative response towards certain members of our neighbourhood. We must do everything we can to be inclusive and welcoming especially as we are a precinct that is growing so quickly.

No communication

We have nothing to report regarding any meetings or contact with the City of Port Philip, Fishermans Bend Taskforce, or our local state member. We have tried ...

And a sad and salutary reminder that we have no third party rights in Montague, every weekend morning a group of residents from Southbank, Montague and Ferrars St in South Melbourne take our dogs to Kirrip Park - the only off-leash park in Montague or Southbank. We, the dog owners, are obsessively focused on cleaning up after ourselves as we collect litter from other users and we care about the park and our neighbourly connections.

Last Sunday, with NO warning, or communication to the community (yes, City of Port Philip ... there is one!) signs went up saying it was no longer leash-free. To say we were

shocked by the lack of communication or notice is somewhat of an understatement, as a community we are being ignored again.

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

Where is the communication?
Where is the kindness? ●



Trisha Avery

TRISHA AVERY IS THE CONVENER OF THE MONTAGUE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE.

TRISHAVERY@ME.COM



YARRA RIVER BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Support your locals

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

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

This is where you, as Southbankers, can really play your part. It was vital that we had the restrictions, but I now urge you to get out and support the precinct's cafes, bars and restaurants. Collectively, they are our lifeblood and create the colourful vibe of the area, which makes it such a great location in which to live. More than ever before, they will need local support to open their doors and to keep them open.

I have also urged our businesses to actively

reach out to the local community and perhaps really engage with them for the first time. Southbankers should be a constant and repeat source of business for them, but only if they look after you. Now is the time to really cement that link between our precinct businesses and residents. Basically, that means providing great customer service, but may also include special offers and perhaps special events.

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

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

This will not just be the biggest building in Melbourne, but I hope it will usher in a new era of sustainability and green credentials for high-rise buildings, not to mention community connections. The revised plans for the former convention centre site at the corner of Spencer and Flinders streets will radically change the look of that area behind Crowne Plaza. The Seafarers North Wharf development by Riverlee will also be an exciting "book-end" for the lower Yarra, plus a fitting development to sit opposite South Wharf.

They say that the world will not be the same again, but I am sure that the resilience of Southbank will see it re-emerge as strong as ever. There will be some casualties and many businesses will do things a bit differently, but the precinct's combination of local, greater Melbourne, Victorian and interstate patronage, and eventually international tourism again,

will underpin its recovery and see it reclaim its place as the vibrant hub of dining and tourism in Melbourne.

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



John Forman

JOHN FORMAN IS THE PRESIDENT OF YARRA RIVER BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

YARRARIVER.INFO



▲ An aerial view of the proposed four-level structure complete with an elevated park and (right) a render of the 21-storey office tower fronting Southbank Promenade.



Southgate新愿景揭晓

撰稿 Sean Car

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

经过两年多的“总体规划调查”，ARA 澳大利亚公司上个月向州规划厅长理查德·怀恩(Richard Wynne)提出了开发申请，寻

求重振南岸原先的购物和餐饮场所。

毫无疑问，在COVID-19疫情流行期间，州政府会对建筑许可进行快速跟踪，为此ARA利用了这一点，他们的提议是提供一个新的21层办公楼和超过1万平方米分四层的新零售空间。

为了寻求“更好地连接与其南岸周边建筑”，由Fender Katsalidis设计的这个重建

项目，还将提供一个新的2000平方米高架花园，以及整个开发范围4000平方米的额外开放空间。

该项目成立于1992年，目前早已超出其最初的设计，ARA 澳大利亚公司首席执行官大卫·布莱特(David Blight)说，Southgate应该“重新定位”。

他说：“作为资产业主和物业管理者，我们有责任确保Southgate对租户，现场工作人员以及本地和国际游客发挥其潜力。”“这个重新开发项目将标志着墨尔本地

标的回归，以及一个引人注目的新建筑的到来，以其大胆设计的办公大楼和重新想象的餐饮、娱乐和服务区形式而展现。”

“我们的计划目的是将Southgate重新确立为真正的地标，并将该地区恢复成为所有墨尔本人都引以为傲的地方。”

在新加坡上市的ARA 澳大利亚公司2016年从Dexus购买了Southgate，并于2018年接管，目前包括“先驱周刊”(HWT)和IBM的两个办公大楼、一个三层零售和酒店广场和一个地下停车场。

市政为退伍军人艺术梦想带来希望

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

这是个具有历史艺术装饰的建筑，在维多利亚军营里已经空置了20多年了，长期以来澳大 撰稿Sean Car

利亚国家退伍军人艺术博物馆(AN-VAM)一直有这样的提案，为创伤康复的退伍军人提供一个艺术和福利中心。

这家非营利组织仍在寻求被指定为该建筑的托管人，多年来一直处于讨论争取之中，因为一直在寻求各级政府对该建筑未来的明确表态。

该建筑地块目前的拥有者是联邦国防部，长期以来一直认为是超出需求的过剩建

筑，并试图在过去将其出售给州政府，但未获成功。

根据《联邦财产处置政策》(CPDP)，在将建筑物投入公开市场之前，可以在任何州，领地和地方政府之间以象征性价格进行转让。

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

墨尔本市政的首席执行官贾斯汀·汉尼(Justin Hanney)本月表示，市政仍在完



▲ A visual by ARM Architecture showing a restored 310 St Kilda Rd.

成土地转让的“尽职调查”后才能完全考虑ANVAM的提议。

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

“在市政审议该提议之前，我们需要完

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

联邦国防部发言人表示，欢迎墨尔本市政府对此的关注。

简化公寓规则

撰稿 Meg Hill

由于三个月的COVID-19疫情流行期间所暴露出的弱点，墨尔本市政已经着手开始彻底修整与公寓居民的关系。

在6月2日举行的未来墨尔本委员会(FMC)会议上，议员们一致投票通过了萨利·卡普(Sally Capp)市长提出的一项

动议，该议案指出居住在都市公寓中居民的主导地位，以及COVID-19疫情带来的挑战。

由此，该议案要求市政管理层检查资讯及服务，为物业管理志愿者以及公寓业主提供“量身定制的支援”，还规定为公寓(分契)社区提供一个虚拟支持研讨会。

虽然动议获得一致通过，但一些议员

表示有所保留。

卡普市长表示，该动议旨在解决公寓居民最近几个月所面临的问题。

市长说：“我们知道，墨尔本市里大多数居民都生活在高层建筑中，约占83%，刚好超过14万人。”

“当你住在公寓里时，你所面临的问题类型与住在单体住宅所面临的问题是不

同的，重要的是我们能够反映所面临的问题，并为居住在公寓里的居民提供支持。”

市长说，在疫情流行期间暴露了许多问题，其实在疫情之前这些问题已经存在。

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Sold 61k above reserve Michael Pastrikos



Sold

6/38 Wells Street, Southbank
Sold 110k above reserve Michael Pastrikos

raywhitesouthbank.com.au



RayWhite

3107/241 City Road, Southbank

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- On the market for 1 week
- 4 Written offers received
- Many more buyers with finance approved ready to buy

Contact Michael to discuss the sale of your property today

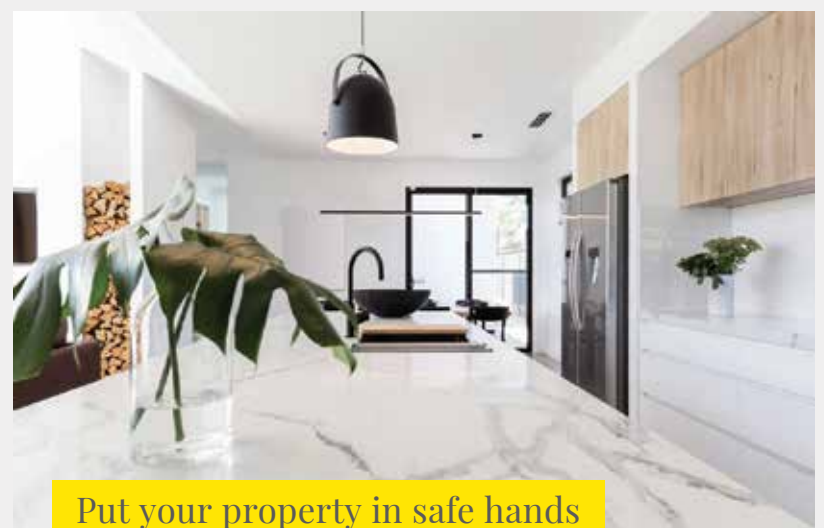
Michael Pastrikos
0404 282 864

Zara Ebadi
0410 871 367

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Rental Market Performance May 2020

RayWhite



Put your property in safe hands

CASE STUDY

Our May performance indicated that, despite covid-19, there is still plenty of activity within the market. We have a large selection of pre-approved tenants. There has never been a better time to put your property in safe hands.

Our Rental Activity

Enquiries	2478
Inspections	438
Tenants Inspected	613
Apps Received	338
Leased	64
New Landlords.	39



Lilian Kwan 关丽莲
0404 565 050
lilian.kwan@raywhite.com



Persa Kapsali
0450 840 440
persa.kapsali@raywhite.com

Our Sales Activity

Listed - 16 properties
Sold - \$10,583,688
Settled - \$11,259,500

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