

SOUTHBANK NEWS

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Puzzles & Trivia P25



“Betwixt” COVID variants Photo by Murray Enders Local cafe Betwixt is among a number of Southbank businesses navigating the impacts of the Omicron variant, as staff members Aimee (left) and Inez (right) continued braving the storm this month. Full story on page 9.

Southbank 3006: new resident group forms to “unite Southbank”

WORDS BY Sean Car COMMUNITY

Five Southbank residents have banded together to form a new not-for-profit community organisation as an alternative to the Southbank Residents’ Association (SRA) in an effort to “better represent” the area’s “diverse interests”. The new group, named Southbank3006, officially launched on Monday, February 7 to provide a “unified voice for Southbank”, responding to what its founders claimed was a lack of opportunities for residents to connect and engage in their local community. Of its five founding members, four recently served on the committee of the area’s existing resident organisation, the SRA, but quickly resigned because its “leadership and goals did not align with their own vision of how to best

serve the Southbank community”. A statement issued by the group to Southbank News this month said Southbank3006 would focus on “connecting community” and provide opportunities for locals to advocate on a range of issues surrounding improved liveability in Southbank. Membership to the group is free and open both to individuals and owners’ corporations. “Southbank3006 aims to address a perceived need that many people have flagged with its founders—namely peoples’ desire to connect with one another when they live in vertical villages,” the statement read. “The new group is seeking to unify the diverse sectors of Southbank, create opportunities to engage with each other, improve liveability in the area for all residents, address significant traffic management and safety issues, and advocate for issues with local and state governments.” Continued on page 3.

Arts Precinct plans get tick, but questions remain over its integration with Southbank

The \$1.7 billion transformation of Melbourne’s Arts Precinct has been largely supported by the City of Melbourne, however the council wants plans for the large-scale project to better integrate with Southbank.

WORDS BY David Schout PLANNING

One councillor said that while designs were “good” and even “great”, refinements were needed as the project’s relationship with Southbank directly to the west was the “biggest gap” in the plans.

Further issues surrounded construction heights, local traffic outcomes and “overhanging” building designs.

Development Victoria’s masterplan for the project — which includes construction of new gallery NGV Contemporary (NGVC), and a large elevated deck featuring a football field-sized area of open space — was presented to councillors at the February 1 Future Melbourne Committee meeting.

Both council officers and councillors were broadly supportive of the plans, which planning chair Nicholas Reece called a “hugely exciting vision”

However, their support hinged on amendments.

“The City of Melbourne does welcome the Victorian Government’s investment in the Arts Precinct, and NGV Contemporary is going to be an incredible addition to the precinct and secure our reputation as one of the world’s leading locations for fine art,” Cr Reece, the Deputy Lord Mayor, said.

“Having said all that, it’s important that we get the design of the vision

right, and how it actually hits the ground and interfaces with the local community is a very important matter.”

Cr Reece noted that the preferred building on Southbank Boulevard was 24 metres, however the plans proposed a height of up to 60 metres for NGVC.

“[To support that height] we will want to ensure that what comes before us is something truly, truly world-class in terms of design excellence,” he said.

Designs for NGVC were open to a national design competition and are yet to be released.

The council’s deputy planning chair Rohan Leppert said while he too was excited about the project, its biggest question mark was how it would integrate with Southbank.

“This is a ‘good’ and ‘great’ project, but let’s make it the ‘best’ project and ensure it integrates carefully with Southbank to the west because that is the biggest gap [in the current plans],” he said.

In particular, he questioned how plans for 18,000sqm of public open space (roughly the size of an AFL-sized football ground) on a raised deck would interface with the local area.

“I love that the first principle in the masterplan is ‘civic generosity’ and pushing all of those raised platforms further to the west and providing more public open space for civic and cultural function is going to be Continued on page 3.

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The deadline for the March edition is March 3, 2022.

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YRBA partners with *Southbank Directory* to support our locals

WORDS BY *Jack Hayes*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Cam Grant*
BUSINESS

The *Southbank Directory*, an annual business guide published by *Southbank News*, has this year partnered with the Yarra River Business Association (YRBA) in a bid to support the local business community.

To encourage Southbankers to support their own and give local businesses a much-needed boost amid the ongoing impacts from COVID-19, the 2022 *Southbank Directory* features special resident 3006-only offers from a host of YRBA member businesses.

From a complimentary beer or wine at Ludlow to 20 per cent off your next voyage on the *Spirit of Melbourne*, there is something for all locals to enjoy, locally.

YRBA president Jeremy Vincent and his team have worked tirelessly with this masthead over the past two years to deliver relief for local businesses and grow their connection to residents.

“Southbankers are the lifeblood of our precinct at the moment, and we have been working with *Southbank News* to strengthen the relationship between residents and businesses for the two years of the pandemic,” Mr Vincent said.

“Hopefully, when all this is over, there will remain a strong attachment and a better appreciation by our operators that it’s worth looking after the locals, in good times and bad.”

“We also hope that the locals are starting to see our businesses as part of their community and not just as places where tourists spend their dollars.”

The *Southbank Directory* will be distributed throughout Southbank and South Wharf during February ●

For more information:
yarrariver.melbourne

Engineer inspects intersection following community petition

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
SAFETY & SECURITY

The Department of Transport has undertaken an in-person inspection of the Kavanagh St and Power St intersection after a resident raised concerns of safety.

Local road advocate campaigner Jannine Pattison launched a petition last year, saying the intersection needed an urgent safety upgrade after witnessing multiple crashes at the site.

An expert engineer from the Department of Transport recently met with Ms Pattison to assess the intersection.

“A visual inspection of the intersection was carried out during that visit, and further site analysis was carried out,” the Department of Transport said.

“We will continue to monitor traffic and safety at this intersection, however, there are currently no plans to make any changes at this intersection.”

A Department of Transport spokesperson said it would continue to monitor traffic and safety at the intersection, “however, there are no plans to make any changes at this time”.

“Keeping all road users safe is our number one priority, and we continuously explore ways to make our roads safer, working alongside road safety partners like councils and Victoria Police.”

Eight crashes have been recorded at the site in the five years to December 30, 2020, two of which resulted in serious injuries, data shows.

Ms Pattison said she hoped to see the speed limit reduced to 40km/h between Kavanagh St and City Rd as well as speed cameras installed.

“Not a week goes by where there is not an accident or a near miss, and as we come out of COVID restrictions the traffic will only increase once more,” Ms Pattison said in the petition she launched last year ●

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Southbank 3006: new resident group forms to “unite Southbank”

Continued from page 1.

Leading Southbank3006 advocates for Southbank in David Hamilton and Jannine Pattison, who will serve as the group’s inaugural president and vice-president, respectively.

Both Mr Hamilton and Ms Pattison have risen to local prominence in recent times, with the former having been an outspoken critic of the City of Melbourne’s design, budget blow-outs and project management of the Southbank Boulevard project.

“We want to address how businesses, state-wide arts bodies, and state government agencies in the area interact directly with the communities in which these bodies are located, and not ignore us,” Mr Hamilton said.

Ms Pattison is a 16-year resident of Southbank and has instigated several petitions about traffic safety, with her advocacy having helped bring about the long-overdue upgrade of the Power St and City Rd intersection.

“After spearheading two petitions, one for maintaining green space at Boyd Park and the other to address traffic hazards at Power St and City Rd, I quickly realised that local residents are not feeling heard or supported, that their needs are not being met, and change is needed in Southbank,” Ms Pattison said.

“With so many people now calling Southbank home it is critical that we have a community group that truly represents the voice of the people. Where people feel heard, validated and connected.”



▲ L-R: Glenn Leese, Trisha Avery, Mary-Kay Rauma and Jannine Pattison. David Hamilton is absent.

The remaining three members of the group include *Southbank News* columnist Trisha Avery, Bankers Facebook page founder Glenn Leese, and foreign-born Mary-Kay Rauma, who said she was passionate about connecting the diverse nationalities that called Southbank home.

“This community needs an organisation that represents all of Southbank’s varied geographic sectors and diverse cultures and works hard on their behalf to gain the respect of governments and local businesses. By communicating with key parties early and effectively, we can get

ahead of issues and help minimise decisions that erode the liveability of Southbank,” she said.

“Southbank3006 will be a more modern organisation for the 21st century. It’s going to communicate the way you should – talking to people through social media, being out and about in the community and providing opportunities for people to get together where they can connect socially; not just forums with politicians.”

“We want to pull in all the sectors of Southbank from Whiteman St to Southbank

Village. COVID has created this huge need for people to want to interact in these lonely vertical villages. You’re looking into all of these apartments wanting to know one and other. That’s the greatest pull.”

Since launching the Bankers Facebook group – an online space dedicated strictly to Southbank residents – Glenn Leese said many had expressed interest in meeting their neighbours and knowing more about the area.

“Southbank3006 aims to meet all of those needs,” Mr Leese said. “I encourage everyone who lives in Southbank to join Southbank3006—it’s free and the more involvement we have, the more we will be able to achieve.”

Ms Rauma said that in addition to social events, the group was seeking to unite Southbankers by providing opportunities to connect and engage on a range of issues and called on anyone interested in helping to get in touch.

“We’re really lean and mean right now, and I’d love to have people who are interested in running events like book groups, trivia nights, coffee meet-ups. We’re not here to make money or run a particular agenda. We’d love for people to come forward,” she said ●



For more information:
southbank3006.com

Arts Precinct plans get tick, but questions remain over its integration with Southbank

Continued from page 1.

wonderful. But that interface to the west is really important.”

Cr Leppert said the land under the current decking was the closest example of “urban blight” within central Melbourne, and questions needed to be asked on how the new area would lead to better outcomes.

“Above and beyond City Rd and the traffic sewer that is getting in and out of there, all the car park entrances and exits along Sturt St, and the complete lack of activation below the decking, makes for a remarkably unattractive and decayed part of the city. What we don’t want to do – and I’m not suggesting the plan does this – is push those problems even further west as we continue to deck over the land ... we have to ensure that this new extraordinary precinct is fully integrated, in a design sense and in a strategic sense, with Southbank to the west.”

Cr Leppert commended the landscape designs and pedestrian links as part of the open space that will allow people to walk from the city “straight



▲ A render of the new open space component of the Arts Precinct transformation project.

to the heart of the Arts Precinct”.

However, he said further scrutiny was required on how the space might be utilised.

“The use of the space for art will be quite limited if it’s all highly-designed landscaping, flower beds and new trees. I am wondering where the small-scale performing arts functions that spill out of the State Theatre

– which they already do – where they will go in the new open space.”

Another issue raised from the masterplan was the use of “cantilevered”, or overhanging structures.

Cr Leppert said in most instances the council resisted overhangs due to the fact they inhibited passive surveillance, made drainage difficult, and complicated ownership and control,

and that if the state government persisted with the idea, it received an appropriate level of scrutiny.

“We need to make sure that if the government is insistent on building NGV Contemporary with these overhangs, which we assume that they are, that an extraordinary amount of work is done on ensuring that the design outcomes there are exemplary.”

Like councillors, locals generally commended the masterplan as an exciting project. However, there were concerns particularly around the height and bulk of the new NGVC, and traffic issues associated with the closure of parts of Sturt St.

Both the Southbank Residents’ Association and the owners’ corporation of the nearby Triptych Apartments expressed concern about the overshadowing associated with a building up to 60 metres in height.

Councillors agreed the traffic impact report was “poor” and said more work was needed to ensure that all transport networks were considered.

David Hamilton from the Triptych committee of management urged council officers to meet with the building’s owners’ corporation, something Cr Reece agreed should occur ●



David Schout
JOURNALIST
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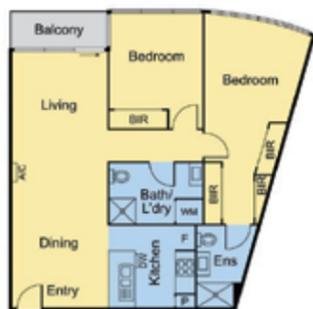
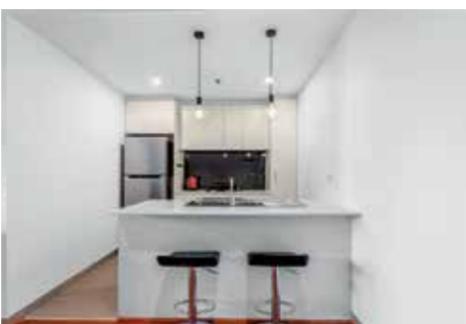
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Oops! Council admits contractor blunder over steel walkway

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne has been left red-faced after admitting contractors used steel rather than timber for a new walkway as part of the problem-plagued Southbank Boulevard project.

The blunder comes after the steel grating walkway was slammed by residents as “dangerous” and a “rubbish trap” with the grates also causing a dog’s paws to get stuck.

The walkway is part of a new neighbourhood park between Fawkner St and City Rd, which opened to the public last November.

The council’s error is the latest bungle in the Southbank Boulevard project, which has already been beset by delays and disruptions, with the works becoming the council’s most expensive in history with costs blowing out from an estimated \$34 million to \$47 million since works began in 2017.

A City of Melbourne spokesperson apologised for the walkway mix-up, saying it would be fixed “as soon as possible”.

“Unfortunately, the contractor installed the incorrect steel grating material along the walkway,” the spokesperson said.

“Council has requested the material be replaced as soon as possible with closely spaced decking – as originally planned.”

“We apologise to the community for this error and look forward to seeing locals enjoy these much-needed open new spaces.”

Southbank Residents Association president Tony Penna said he was surprised when he saw the steel walkway after the park opened and immediately raised it with the council late last year.

“I referred them to the renders, and I said the plan was always a boardwalk not a metal-walk,” he said.

Many residents and visitors to Southbank Boulevard took to social media to vent their fury about the new steel walkway.

“It’s so awful! Already so much rubbish under



▲ The steel walkway at Southbank Boulevard will be replaced with a wooden boardwalk. Photo: Murray Enders.

it too,” one wrote.

“How are prams meant to wheel over this smoothly? Honestly, Southbank keeps the child-unfriendly designs flowing,” another said.

The council said the replacement decking would be consistent with the “high-quality presentation and amenity” that council intends for this new civic space.

Aline Silvestre, who recently moved out of Southbank, believed the walkway was “dangerous” for children and pets after her dog’s paws got caught in the grates.

“My dog didn’t get to the point of hurting her paw thankfully, because I took her out quickly. But as soon as we got to the platform, I could feel how uncomfortable she was,” she said.

“I understand it looks beautiful and it’s nice to bring some ‘nature feelings’ to the city, but it’s not practical.”

Southbank resident and community

advocate Jannine Pattison said the mistake from the contractor had added to the “debacle” since the Southbank Boulevard project had begun.

“While the upgrades of Southbank Boulevard are an improvement on what was originally there, it was such a lost opportunity, and the council can take a lot of learnings from this project into its future planning for Southbank and Melbourne.”

Meanwhile, the final piece of the Southbank Boulevard project is under way, with a \$2.4 million new play space being built between Kavanagh and Fawkner streets – with works to be completed in September.

The 1000-square-metre space will feature climbing boulders, swings, slides, and ladders as well as new trees and street furniture. Existing on-site infrastructure will be demolished in early February before construction begins.

“

Unfortunately, the contractor installed the incorrect steel grating material along the walkway. Council has requested the material be replaced as soon as possible with closely spaced decking – as originally planned.

”

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said it would be one of the largest new spaces being delivered as part of the Southbank Boulevard transformation.

“It’s important in times like these to keep delivering key projects, and I’m pleased to say the final piece of the Southbank Boulevard transformation is officially underway,” she said.

“We know it’ll become a much-loved facility for local families in one of our most densely populated suburbs.”

Resident David Hamilton, said while he was pleased works would finish this year, “It’s just been a badly conceived project from the very beginning, and execution of a badly conceived project can’t rescue it”.

A business owner said works from the initial stages of the project had “become so disruptive we had to move”. “I lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue,” the owner, who asked not to be named, said ●

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TRAILBLAZER NAMED MELBURNIAN OF THE YEAR



Peggy O'Neal is a prominent business leader and women's advocate

Prominent businesswoman and Richmond Football Club President Peggy O'Neal AO has been crowned 2021 Melburnian of the Year for her work advocating for women in leadership roles.

Since moving to Melbourne from West Virginia in the United States of America more than 30 years ago, Peggy has forged a successful career as a lawyer, and in 2013 became the first-ever female president of an AFL club.

Peggy is also a board member of Women's Housing Ltd – helping disadvantaged and vulnerable women gain access to safe housing.

'When I came to Melbourne in 1989, I could never have imagined that an honour like this would come my way,' Peggy said.

'My deepest thanks to the City of Melbourne for this recognition. When I consider those who have previously been named Melburnian of the Year, I am surprised and truly humbled to find myself in such company.'

'I am particularly pleased that this award cites my lifetime commitment to equality for women and girls and the significant role that sport can play in making equality happen for all communities.'

Previous Melburnian of the Year winners include leading medical researcher Professor Doug Hilton AO and radiation oncologist and tobacco-free lobbyist Dr Bronwyn King AO.

The prestigious award forms part of the annual Melbourne Awards program, which this year recognised another eight organisations for their valued work across a range of industries.

Winners included The Torch, a program supporting Aboriginal art in prison and in the community; Farmer's Daughters, a food and dining experience that champions local sourcing and sustainability; and RMHive, an app developed to respond to the unique mental health needs of health-care workers.

Visit magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au to read more about their amazing achievements.

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A successful local Urban Forest Fund project completed recently was in Printmakers Lane, Southbank.

The hot dry Mediterranean climate was the inspiration for cooling vines in a laneway on the University of Melbourne's Southbank campus.

'Historically it is quite a harsh laneway,' project manager Sebastian Di Girolamo said.

'So we came up with the idea of a design from Italy, Greece and Spain, hotter climates, where they use vines to create shade and make laneways cooler. It's not a fruiting vine, it's more ornamental. The contractors ran a cable up the wall from the plant to create a structure for the canopy to grow on. The vines will cross over to the other buildings overhead. The idea is once the plants are blooming and leafy they'll create a shade canopy over the laneway.'

'We're expecting within the first 24 months of planting that we should have vines growing over the canopy. Already they're latching on and starting to shoot.'

The City of Melbourne contributed \$100,000 to the greening project which will transform the Printmakers Laneway into a shady green space that can be enjoyed by students and members of the public.

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As the vines grow, they'll create a shade canopy over Printmakers Laneway



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Seamless start for state's newest school

WORDS BY *David Schout*
EDUCATION

There was a moment when the 2022 school year started that Anne Stout felt like she was finally leading a “real school”.

Appointed last June as founding principal of one of Victoria's newest schools, Port Melbourne Secondary College, the experienced educator was for a number of months the sole employee at the under-construction school.

The ensuing period saw the establishment of everything needed for the school — which will predominantly service Southbank, Port Melbourne and Fishermans Bend — before the all-important start date.

This ranged from hiring staff, curriculum planning, policymaking, establishing vision and values, timetabling and more.

So, by the time Victorian schools began their year on Monday, January 31, it was a considerable achievement in itself.

And, for Ms Stout, the most rewarding of sights was a simple one.

“It was just fantastic to see them walking around in their uniforms,” she said.

“When you see students coming in in uniform and into the community, I think that's when it starts to feel like you're a real school.”

While students and staff had spent time at the school prior to this day, January 31 represented the first “official” day for Port Melbourne SC.

Deputy Premier and Education Minister James Merlino was there to officially declare the impressive multi-level school open, alongside local member and Health Minister Martin Foley, and Federal Minister for Macnamara Josh Burns.

Speaking with *Southbank News* at the end of the first school week of 2022, Ms Stout said despite the busyness of launching a foundation school, things were “reasonably normal”.

“It's nice to have a first week and feel like we've got routine, that everyone knows what



▲ A view of the new Port Melbourne Secondary College from the air.



▲ Principal Anne Stout.

they're doing ... we've had so much really positive feedback, particularly from families saying what a great week their child was having. That's been really pleasing.”

The former Mac.Robertson Girls' High School principal entered her new role with significant experience with founding schools, having served as assistant principal at Albert Park College when it first opened in 2011.

This experience was likely to have been crucial in walking Port Melbourne SC's 19 new staff members through preparations prior to the school's opening day.

“It is very different to starting at an established school,” she said.

Ms Stout will live in Southbank during term times and considers herself as an “early adopter” of the area, having bought an apartment around 20 years ago.

She paid tribute to the wider local community support in the school's opening days.

“We're really fortunate. We've been really warmly welcomed into the community — we couldn't ask for nicer neighbours. Local businesses have been dropping in and saying ‘hi’ and offering their help, which has been great.”

Like other schools throughout the state, Port Melbourne SC is abiding by the latest COVID-19 protocols which include twice-weekly testing of students.

But the school has a unique advantage in fighting the virus.

While it will eventually have an enrolment capacity of 1100 students, in 2022 the school welcomed only Year 7s so far, and will progress by year level thereafter.

This has meant there is a small amount of students in a relatively large educational

facility.

“We've actually got a building that's really well ventilated, and has lots of outdoor space. And we've obviously got a small cohort of students and a big venue so from that point of view we've got ample ventilation in that space.”

Port Melbourne SC is one of 100 new schools the Victorian Government has committed to opening between 2019 and 2026.

Previously known known by its interim name “Fishermans Bend Secondary School” during the planning phase, the school will have a strong focus on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) subjects according to the government.

As Fishermans Bend is still under development, the school is likely to accept students beyond its immediate catchment area in early years, including those from Docklands ●



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Southgate revamp gets green light, but community reacts with mixed views

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PLANNING

A state government decision to approve a \$470 million redevelopment of Southgate has divided the community, with some welcoming the plan – while others say there was a lack of “any kind of attempt” at consultation.

Under the plans, the existing three-level complex will be partly demolished to make way for new bars, restaurants, and shops within a new five-story podium.

A 26-storey office building will also be built as part of the Fender Katsalidis-designed revamp which will also see the creation of 2000 square metres of new public open space (about the size of a supermarket) above Southbank Promenade.

The project, which was initially estimated at \$800 million by the Australian arm of Singapore-based developer ARA, will create 3600 ongoing jobs and provide public benefits worth more than \$12 million, including more accessible public open space and pedestrian links to other precincts in the area.

Planning Minister Richard Wynne gave his approval of the redevelopment in December, which he said would “bring new life to this much-loved part of Melbourne, providing a thriving new hub for retail and hospitality.”

“The new-look Southgate will create a new destination for Melburnians and tourists – creating hundreds of local construction jobs and thousands of ongoing jobs once the project is complete,” he said.

But residents of the Quay West apartment building have expressed concerns that there was a lack of consultation from ARA over noise, traffic, and loss of amenity issues.

Resident Mem Aziz, who has been outspoken over ARA’s “failure” to communicate, said while residents were not objecting to the redevelopment, they were concerned about the 26-storey tower creating issues of privacy and overshadowing.

“The area of Southgate and Southbank is already overdeveloped with buildings overshadowing each other, major traffic hazards, and less oxygen flow,” he said.

“As a resident I have made numerous attempts to reach out to ARA and the Victorian



Government for over 12 months, sending letters, emails and making phone calls, but to no avail.”

“The government nor ARA have made any kind of attempt to contact us or myself in any way.”

Mr Aziz said overall he felt “utterly disgusted with the entire handling” of the project by decision makers, and predicted the tower would increase the power bills of residents “as we will be required to keep the lights on for much longer because of the shadowing”.

Another Quay West resident John Smith said he was “quite disappointed” the project had been given the go-ahead without proper community consultation.

“As residents, we’ve never had any contact with ARA, they’ve just not really acknowledged us,” he said.

“The other interesting thing was nowhere in the Minister’s approval was there parties like Quay West, whereas other venues such as Hamer Hall were included.”

Mr Smith said traffic flow during and after construction was “a major issue”. “How is everything going to be managed so we as residents of

Quay West retain our lifestyle without severely being interrupted?” he questioned.

A statement from the state government said in line with the Melbourne Planning Scheme, the project layout “ensures minimal amenity impacts to surrounding properties and no overshadowing to public open space, including the Yarra River, between 11am and 2pm”.

David Schuller, chair of St John’s Lutheran Church, which is located next to Southgate, said he had experienced “good consultation” with the project’s liaison manager.

“We welcome development that assists in the area in showcasing Southgate,” he said, but added “we understand during a construction phase there’s going to be things you need to work through.”

He said ARA had been “very open” to hearing their concerns around noise, dust, and working times, and had been given reassurances it would work to “address” these potential issues.

While he acknowledged some residents and businesses have had “some stronger opinions” on the redevelopment, he said “as far as we are concerned, we’re part of a community that includes everybody. If they want to develop, we’ll

work with them and I’m pretty sure we’ll get an acceptable outcome.”

Mr Schuller said it was his understanding that ARA would complete detailed planning this year and envisioned there would be “quite a bit of consultation in the coming 12 months”.

But he said it would be mostly “business as usual” for the church when the construction phase occurred with no impact to their own car park access.

Jaye Chin-Dusting, owner of Mary Martin Bookshop at Southgate, said “in principle, I am very excited about what looks to be a world-class and enviro-friendly redevelopment”.

“The Mary Martin bookshop has been a part of the precinct since the very beginning, and we look forward to being a continued part of this space,” she said.

“The pandemic has thrown up a lot of unknowns for Melbourne and everyone has struggled with even the best-laid plans, but future projections look most exciting.”

At a council meeting last year, Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece said neighbouring businesses including La Camera and The Langham Hotel had voiced concern about “unsatisfactory” consultation with ARA. La Camera declined to comment to *Southbank News* while The Langham was contacted for comment.

ARA Australia investments and asset management head Rohan Neville said the redevelopment would transform Southgate into a “world-class precinct that enhances Melbourne’s positioning as one of the world’s most liveable cities.”

“As proactive asset owners and managers, we constantly evaluate opportunities to enhance our assets,” he said. “With this announcement, we are able to build upon Southgate’s iconic status and unlock its untapped potential as well as revitalise the precinct; enabling tenants to thrive in a post-pandemic economy.”

The project was approved following consultation with the City of Melbourne, Heritage Victoria, the Department of Transport, Melbourne Water, and the Office of the Victorian Government Architect.

The City of Melbourne was asked if it believed that a proper consultation process had been in place, but instead referred *Southbank News* to its May 18 Future Melbourne Committee meeting during which the plans were approved ●

E-scooters launch, but not without issues

WORDS BY *David Schout*
TRANSPORT

Hundreds of electric scooters are available to hire across Southbank and its surrounds after Melbourne’s long-awaited hire scheme was launched on February 1.

Up to 1500 scooters are now available to hire and ride across the Melbourne, Yarra and Port Phillip council areas, via confirmed providers Lime and Neuron Mobility.

The green and orange scooters, booked via their respective apps, will be permitted to travel at 20kmh on bicycle lanes, shared paths and low-speed roads (up to a maximum 50kmh speed limit).

They will not, however, be permitted on footpaths and riders must wear a helmet.

A CBD police operation on the first weekend the scooters were available (February 4 and 5) detected 38 separate offences, including for failing to wear a helmet, disobeying red lights and carrying a passenger.



▲ Geofencing technology will enforce “go slow” zones for the scooters, including the notoriously busy Southbank Promenade.

Infringements were handed out to riders using both hired and privately-owned e-scooters; the vast majority of which are illegal.

“We just asked people to use common sense and embrace [the hired e-scooters] for what it is, to see if it’s another way of getting around the city,” Assistant Commissioner Glenn Weir said.

“We want people to self-regulate here. We don’t want to have to be out necessarily pulling people over because we want them to do the right

thing. But let me tell you if they don’t, then we will.”

Hiring a scooter is a straightforward process.

Once a user has completed their ride, they can park it almost anywhere provided it is out of the way of pedestrians and away from designated “no go” areas.

In and around Southbank, these areas include the South Melbourne Market and all throughout Kings Domain, while the notoriously busy Southbank Promenade is geofenced as a designated “slow speed area”.

Neuron Mobility’s head of Australia and New Zealand Richard Hannah said the group was “delighted” to have been chosen for the multi-municipality trial, which will run for an initial 12-month period and continue if successful.

“E-scooters are really well suited to the city, and they will be a great way for locals as well as tourists to travel in a safe, convenient and environmentally-friendly way,” he said.

Safety concerns surrounding e-scooters have reared their head

in several jurisdictions both within Australia and around the world, and Mr Hannah said it was a key area of focus.

“Safety is our top priority; it dictates our e-scooter design and also the way we operate them. Our e-scooters are packed with a range of cutting-edge safety features, we have a full suite of insurance, including third party liability cover, and we know from experience in other cities that our riders really appreciate this.”

Several cities around the world have operated e-scooter sharing systems since 2017, notably throughout the US and Europe.

Closer to home, Brisbane and Auckland have also trialled the micro-mobility option.

Announcement of the trial is arguably well overdue for what is a largely unregulated transport option.

Most private e-scooters seen on the city’s streets prior to the trial’s launch were illegal, as they are both too powerful (greater than 200 watts) and travel faster than 10 kmh (current Victorian law).

While Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll said last year that inner-city councils – with a mix of low-speed roads, shared user paths and bicycle lanes – were an ideal testing ground for new transport options, the truth is that Melbourne has had a chequered relationship with micro-mobility hire schemes.

Singaporean-based oBikes were quickly booted from the city when their fleet of yellow bikes were more likely to be found in trees and rivers than paths and roads during a calamitous period in 2018.

Later in 2019 the state government’s “blue bikes” were also axed.

While these sturdier “docked” blue bikes had not experienced the same dumping issues as oBikes, uptake was low.

More recently, however, e-bikes (also provided by Lime) have emerged as an available option, also in the neighbouring councils of Yarra and Port Phillip.

The City of Melbourne said it would closely monitor outcomes during the year-long e-scooter trial ●



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Launch Housing granted new gym

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
COMMUNITY

Southbank's Launch Housing has received \$18,000 from the City of Melbourne's 2022 Connected Communities Grant program for a new outdoor gym.

The independent Southbank-based community organisation, formed by Hanover Welfare Services and HomeGround Services, aids in delivering homelessness services and support to disadvantaged Victorians who are in need of housing support.

Its Southbank Crisis Accommodation site manager Yassin Abdillahi said Launch Housing was "committed to ending homelessness" and the new gym would help make an impact on this mission for people benefiting from its services.

"Exercise has many benefits beyond improving someone's physical health. It can improve mood, energy and sleep, promotes social and community connection and can improve self-esteem," Yassin Abdillahi said.

"Health and housing are so intimately connected, and we believe providing opportunities for our clients to improve their health and wellbeing in a gym setting promotes community, connectedness and participation which are critical to getting and sustaining housing."

While attending a gym can be a positive step in helping one through mental health battles, the luxury of being able to afford a gym membership is not granted to all.

But the new Launch Housing gym will help with residents feeling "empowered" and "motivated".

"Many of the residents that stay with us feel excluded from community fitness facilities, gyms and pools," Yassin Abdillahi said.

"This new outdoor gym is a necessary stepping stone for inclusion into community fitness and health. We would like to help the residents get the most out of the outdoor gym and help them to get towards their goals, one day at a time."

The council's latest grants program is worth \$543,322 and went towards 77 different grants that Lord

This new outdoor gym is a necessary stepping stone for inclusion into community fitness and health.



Mayor Sally Capp said would help ensure "residents feel engaged and supported."

"These grants will support not-for-profits, community groups and schools, giving people the opportunity to connect with their neighbours and contribute to our wonderful city," Cr Capp said.

With the health of residents during a time of immense change and stress being at the forefront of the initiative, the council's Health, Wellbeing and Belonging portfolio lead Cr Dr Olivia Ball said she was "thrilled" about the grants after the pandemic had continued to leave "many people feeling lonely and isolated."

The new gym equipment is expected to arrive in May and will resemble set-ups which can be found at local parks and sporting fields, allowing residents, once they have left the services of Launch Housing, to continue to use familiar equipment in their surrounding parks.

"The new equipment will allow for the introduction of new exercise programs co-facilitated by our wellbeing and peer support teams and personal trainers. This ties in closely with our Health Promotion focus to extend people's capacity for fitness and health," Yassin Abdillahi said.

"Our aim is for this to encourage our clients to have a stronger awareness of their own health and develop healthy habits which they take with them after their time at Southbank." ●

Businesses "on its knees" as Omicron wave continues to bite

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
BUSINESS

COVID-related staff shortages and lockdown-like conditions keeping consumers at home is causing devastating impacts for Southbank traders who are begging for help.

Many restaurants, cafes, and eateries told *Southbank News* they did not know what was "going to happen next" after making the difficult decision to either reduce their opening hours or close temporarily because of staffing constraints or a fall in foot traffic.

Breslin Bar and Grill manager Katia said while trade was "slowly, slowly going back to normal", their Southbank Promenade venue was still "very understaffed".

"It's been very challenging for all of us that's for sure ... we have been looking for managers, it's been over three months, [but] no luck yet," she said, adding staff were working longer hours to cover shifts.

Katia, who asked for her surname not to be used, said the Omicron wave had also rattled consumer confidence, which resulted in either closing their outdoor or indoor dining areas due to low patronage.

"When it's quiet we just open one, [with] maybe two or three staff on the floor, that's about it," she said.

"We closed when a couple of staff tested positive to COVID, myself included, and we had to shut for four or five days in January."

Betwixt Café and Bar owner Cheng Liu said his Southbank venue was "certainly impacted" with a shortfall in staff and customers "still scared to dine out".

"Because of short staff, we try to survive. It's a very hard time. We can do nothing," he said.

Dead Man Espresso owner Rubin Carapyan said, "It just feels like another lockdown. It's still up and down". "There's no one in the café," he said, speaking of a Wednesday lunch service at his South Melbourne venue.

He said isolation rules were changing "almost every day" and "we don't even know what's going to happen next."

"I've cut my staff hours but now ... I'm going to have to cut down our trading hours from three to probably one [o'clock]."

He said even if a third of workers were to return to offices and the government offered some cash support it would help.

"You don't need to get the full amount like we got last time, just half of it would get us through it."

Nick Edgar, owner of Gordon Expresso, agreed, saying there "definitely needs to be some level of help" by the government.

"The problem is there's no structure to what's going on," he said. "Previous lockdowns had structure - they weren't perfect but at least they had structure and now it's just every man for himself"

"There probably only needs to be a couple of months [of support] just to get us over this hump."

At the February 1 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, City of Melbourne councillors spoke of the critical need to provide financial support for businesses who were



▲ *Nick Edgar, owner of Gordon Expresso.*

"desperate" for help.

Councillors voted to lobby the state government to support traders with a range of incentives to boost city visitation as well as review its work from home advice.

The council will seek an additional round of hotel vouchers to support stays in the CBD, free public transport for major events such as Moomba, and a third serving of the successful Melbourne Money scheme which injected \$60 million into city cafes, bars, and restaurants.

However, while the motion was passed, Cr Roshena Campbell spoke against an amendment which sought to call on the Premier and the Prime Minister to engage with workers' representatives to facilitate a return to work "as soon as it is safe to do so," saying "given the reluctance of public servants to return it is inconceivable that the involvement of unions is going to positively facilitate their speedy return while our city is on its knees."

Cr Campbell said it "would make yet another delay in getting workers back" and one traders "cannot afford" after referencing that 53 per cent of businesses had told a council survey that they weren't confident of lasting "three more months".

But her viewpoint was roundly rejected by councillors who said supporting the engagement of workers' representatives would "expedite the process" of bringing workers back.

Cr Capp said the "shadow lockdown" had been "demoralising" for business, and by calling on all levels of government, the council was committed to "doing whatever we can to get the city buzzing again".

The Yarra River Business Association said weekday foot traffic for January was up 30 to 50 per cent compared to the same time last year, but 50 per cent lower than January 2020 (pre-pandemic).

"Rebuilding Melburnians confidence in returning to the CBD, and specifically to Southbank for entertainment, will be the big challenge for 2022," it said ●

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New dog park soon to open but questions raised over fast shrinking open spaces

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PLANNING

A new dog park in Southbank is almost ready for opening, with construction expected to finish by the end of February – but as the City of Melbourne embarks on its most ambitious green open space program, many want to know: are there any spaces left?

The dog park will transform a disused area beneath the Kings Way southern undercroft near Moray St and feature an off-leash area the size of a basketball court as well as play equipment.

The project, which forms part of the council's City Rd Masterplan, comes after residents said they wanted more pet-friendly spots – with the dog park joining eight other designated off-leash areas in the municipality.

However, while the new park is a welcomed initiative, population pressure and new developments squeezing Southbank's already precious open spaces has raised questions about the future creation of green spaces in the area, which has become Melbourne's most densely populated suburb.

The council's draft budget for 2021-22 set aside \$20 million for the acquisition of suitable parcels of land for public open space in Southbank, with 1.1 hectares of new open space



▲ The new dog park will open in March.

Photo: Murray Enders.

being targeted by 2025.

A City of Melbourne spokesperson said green open space remained one of its "highest priorities" including transforming Southbank Promenade and creating new parks but stopped short of revealing where these spaces may be earmarked, citing the impacts of COVID-19 on the construction sector.

The council said it was "reviewing and adjusting" its plans and processes across all of its infrastructure projects, as factors such as supply chain delays, staff shortages from isolation requirements and increasing material and labour costs meant that project timelines could sometimes change at short notice.

"We're getting on with our biggest ever infrastructure spend, but the

impacts of COVID-19 continue to be felt across the construction industry in Australia," the spokesperson said.

"We will continue to keep the community updated about changes in construction schedules – and work with our partners, contractors and traders to reduce delays as much as possible."

RMIT Centre for Urban Research planner Thami Croeser, who advises the European Union, said he applauded the council's commitment to more open space, but where exactly the best spots in Southbank might be "is probably a question that would need a lot of focused study".

Southbank Residents' Association president Tony Penna, agreed, saying, "the question is: are there any spaces left?"

"I'm not aware of any spaces. We've always said that right from the budget announced, we were questioning where they were going to find that space, because the money was not to enhance what was already acquired space, but it was to find new space," he said.

Projects in the pipeline include 2000 square metres of public open space above Southbank Promenade as part of the Southgate redevelopment, while the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation will deliver 18,000 square metres of public open space.

At Southbank Promenade 1000 square metres of open space will also be developed after the council made a deal with developers at the former home of ExxonMobil at 12 Riverside Quay.

The Southbank Boulevard project is another which is set to be completed this year, but according to Mr Croeser, he felt the design "feels like a wide footpath beside a road".

"Do we really need that one lane of traffic on Southbank Boulevard? It may have been necessary to retain traffic access back when this was being planned in 2016, but now the pandemic has shifted priorities: we work from home more and rely more on our local neighbourhoods."

The City of Melbourne's environment portfolio lead Cr Rohan Leppert said while expensive, the council's priority was buying land

at the western end of Southbank while another avenue was "chewing up" existing open space to create more green space like the City Rd Masterplan.

"That won't deliver a park per se, but it will deliver a high amenity green tree-lined street that's going to completely change the way that part of Southbank feels, so that's just as important," he said.

Cr Leppert said another option was building an elevated park linking the two halves of Southbank over CityLink, which he campaigned for in 2020, "but obviously to get that through you need a long-term plan, and you need the state government to legislate for it."

"We haven't had traction there with the local member or the state government at this time."

Asked when the council may look at buying land in Southbank's west, Cr Leppert said, "as soon as possible, but we're not just going to announce the time and then arbitrarily set that because you need a deal that is good value for the ratepayer."

"We are at the start of the process but we're embarking on the most ambitious and aggressive open space acquisition and improvement program in the city's history, and you only have to compare this year's four-year budget with last year's four-year budget to see the \$250 million difference to understand." ●

Southbank local makes sustainability a priority

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*
SUSTAINABILITY

When Sara Riva moved to Southbank, she quickly realised there was something missing.

Having lived in Yarraville and Newport for 10 years where the local council was providing free permaculture courses for everyone – underscoring a focus on sustainability – Ms Riva couldn't find anything like that in Southbank.

She put it down to the different demographics in Southbank where many people lived in apartments or owned investment properties, creating a different sort of community.

"I thought I may as well start a Facebook group to see if people here might have the same ideas," Ms Riva said.

"Slowly, we started with a few members, and three years later, we're at around 150 members now."

Ms Riva's public Facebook group named "Southbank and South Melbourne Zero Wasters" is a space where people can share information and ideas in the spirit of creating a more sustainable community.

People in the group share information about finding the best renewable energy providers, where to refill shampoo bottles, how to create a worm farm on an apartment balcony or how to repair an old pair of socks – anything geared towards becoming more sustainable.

While Riva said the group should be the first stop for any locals who are conscious of the environment, she said many people had stayed for the community connections.

"I've seen a lot of discussions starting from the group," she said.

"People start to recognise each other then they go for coffee or a for a walk, and it grows into getting to know your neighbours."

But starting a group focused on sustainability hasn't been an entirely easy process for Ms Riva.

"I've definitely found it a challenge," she said.

"In terms of friendships, and in terms of community spirit, it's really slow in growing. I say to myself I'm lucky because I bump into people in my building. A lot of people I've met in Southbank say they don't see the people in their own apartment buildings."



▲ Southbank and South Melbourne locals creating a more sustainable community.

Asked how her group was different to the numerous Melbourne Good Karma Network Facebook pages already providing a platform for community connections, Ms Riva said the focus for Zero Wasters was creating a space for people interested in living a sustainable life.

"I would like to have more people interested in it," she said.

"Go in, have a look, if there's something of interest there, join." ●

For more information:
Facebook: "Southbank and South Melbourne Zero Wasters"



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Pedicabs back in action

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
BUSINESS

The Novotel hotel on South Wharf is open again to interstate tourists after almost two years as a quarantine hotel, giving a boost to tour operators.

Locals say that custom is 20 per cent of its old level in this prime tourist precinct but the signs are promising.

Green Cabs is offering a \$35 daylight trip from DFO to the station for shoppers.

Oliver was waiting outside the shopping centre and even though it isn't like the old days of plenty at least there were people around.

This is a massive improvement from the heartrending situation last year when Rona Walk was deserted except for police, an occasional skateboarder and quarantine workers sitting outside the hotels on their breaks.

The industry has moved forward and coped with the mandatory vaccinations and QR codes that have enabled the community to break out of quarantine.

According to the Novotel website, some communal parts of the hotel are still closed, and guests are required to wear masks, but this hasn't stopped them sightseeing.

A fare of \$35 or \$15 with tips will get two adults and two children across a bridge and into the CBD in a pedicab.

Oliver prefers Queens Bridge because of its low rise and some pedicab pilots, as they're known in the industry, charge double to use the bridge to the MCG.

"It's an absolute killer," said Jimmy, a veteran pilot. "From DFO to the MCG I charge \$70 and I would need a break."

Many pilots have taken up other jobs during lockdown and haven't returned. "There are ones who have stayed put in lucratively paid jobs," Jimmy said.

During the Australian Open, Oliver was the only pilot serving the entire CBD. He did not sign up for the tennis. "He had the whole city to himself," Jimmy said. "It was a smart move."

The Urban Hub, the convenience store next door to the former quarantine hotels, has also reported an increase in custom.

The main customers were security guards, police and army personnel for many long months, then the store closed after the debilitating



▲ Oliver waiting for customers outside DFO.

winter of '21 when hopes of a return of tourists were dashed once again by another lockdown.

"We're still not back to normal," said Zain, the store assistant. "Our stock and sales are about 20 per cent. Before COVID we were really busy."

Workers can't resist making comparisons with days of old. Many are still dreaming of the golden years.

"Back in the day, DFO was the number one waiting point for Green Cabs," Jimmy said. "We had six bikes able to use the rank at peak times, four at the bottom of the rank, two at the pedestrian crossing and four at the tram stop."

Many of the venues are still closed and during the Australian Open seven cabs were employed but pilots are in short supply.

On a good night, such as New Year's Eve, a pilot can still make \$2000. "On Friday and Saturday nights I'm unhappy if I make less than \$500," Jimmy said.

There are shifts at the casino as it cranks up Pétanque Social, a new riverside bar.

"Going to Crown. Jump in. Free ride," Jimmy said as he began his shift ●



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Olympic gold medallist receives Australia Day award

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COMMUNITY

Ever since Lucy Stephan was a youngster, she set herself “little goals” to become a champion rower, but to actually win gold at the Tokyo Olympic Games “felt like a dream”.

The 30-year-old of South Melbourne trained between five and six hours a day including a 20km morning run as part of her preparations before competing on the global stage.

She said her gold medal race with the women’s four crew was a feeling she could not describe, particularly during the pandemic which had forced the postponement of the major event.

“I was having to tell myself probably every 30 seconds like ‘no, it happened, you actually won gold;’ she said.

For her efforts, the star rower was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in this year’s Australia Day honours list for her service to sport as a gold medallist at the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games.

It is a huge achievement for Ms Stephan who grew up as a country kid in Nhill, a town half-way between Melbourne and Adelaide, where the Wimmera River had no water for years.

She learned to row while a boarder at Ballarat Grammar after her interest in the sport was sparked when she attended the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra while on a Grade Six camp.

“Funnily enough when I was at boarding school, Lake Wendouree [in Ballarat] was bone dry, so we used to go to Geelong once a week to row so that’s where I learned to grow and then fell in love with it,” she said.

“I guess it was a space where I found that I belonged, and I could be myself, and that kind of opened up to me why I fell in love with the sport so much,” she told *Southbank News*.



▲ Lucy and teammates win gold at Tokyo.

“I always played sport but for me rowing was a sport where it wasn’t about natural talent or being gifted in terms of playing netball or being a runner.

“I feel like with rowing, it’s more to do with what’s between the ears and how tough you are.”

Ms Stephan, who described her OAM as “very special”, said the Olympics was “definitely a lot of work” and something she was grateful to be a part of.

She said Japan did an “absolutely incredible job” of hosting the Games which was “something that the world needed to bring us all together.”

While sightseeing was off-limits due to the pandemic, she said crossing the line to win gold was one of many “pinch me moments”.

Her success comes after representing Australia with the women’s eight in the Rio 2016 Olympics.

She has also won multiple medals including gold at the World Rowing Cup and World Rowing championship – two events she is now training again for while also assisting in a coaching role at Scotch College, Hawthorn ●

Southbank eye doctor James La Nauze honoured by Australia Day award

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COMMUNITY

A dedicated eye doctor of Southbank whose work has seen him help rural communities and restore sight to people in disadvantaged countries has been recognised with an Australia Day honour.

Dr James La Nauze, whose career in ophthalmology spans more than four decades, was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his services to ophthalmology and not-for-profit organisations.

Originally from Albury-Wodonga, he spent 20 years bringing about sight-saving and life-changing interventions to regional New South Wales and Victoria before returning to Melbourne where he has consulted at the Vision Eye Institute Footscray for the past two decades.

Among his professional roles, Dr La Nauze was also a board member of the Fred Hollows Foundation (2010-19), a not-for-profit aid organisation dedicated to combating preventable blindness and other vision problems.

He led clinical teams in Vietnam, Cambodia, China, and Nepal in what he described as an “attempt deal with the cataract backlog in developing countries.”

“Taking the bandages off ... suddenly going from blindness to seeing is quite a miracle, but it doesn’t make us the miracle makers, it’s just a technical thing for us,” he said.

“You don’t do it for that feeling, you do it because it needs to be done.”

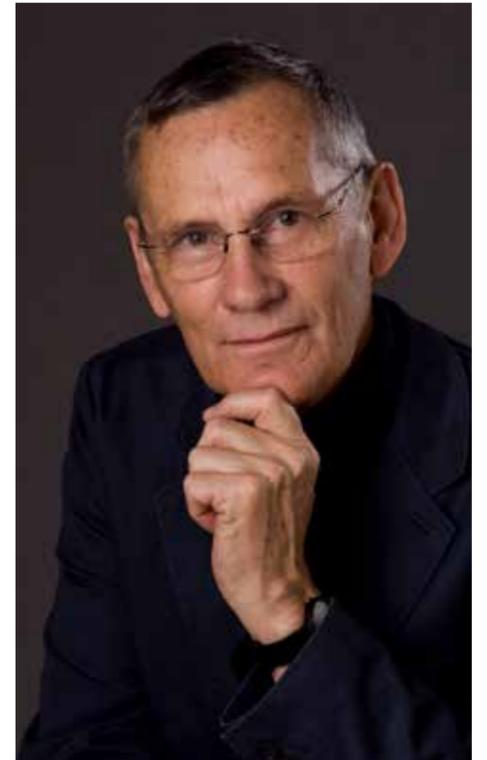
“It does drive change, and drive wants you to make sure other people have got those skills to help their own communities ... the whole mantra of Hollows is not to do the work, but to teach others to do the work.”

Dr La Nauze said he met Fred Hollows in NSW while a trainee in the 1970s when Mr Hollows was undertaking the seminal National Trachoma and Eye Health Program (NT&EHP).

“Fred was an icon to the younger generation of ophthalmologists. He was committed to social justice especially for indigenous Australians and was a role model for many of us,” Dr La Nauze said.

“As a consequence of the NT&EHP, field trips were undertaken to remote parts of Queensland where there had never been ophthalmic care.”

“What I and others learnt was that the major eye problems looming in these places was not trachoma but diabetic retinopathy – young people as well as older going blind as a result of



▲ Dr James La Nauze has been awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

having no service to treat the conditions.”

Such experiences later led Dr La Nauze to establish the first rural registrar rotation in Australia in 1988, a program set up to expose trainee ophthalmologists to the rural lifestyle while also undertaking technical training.

The program, which is still running today, allows trainees to work in clinics rather than hospitals, giving them more exposure to patients, supervising doctors and the issues in running an ophthalmic practice – which Dr La Nauze said had become a “model throughout Australia”, an achievement of which he was proud.

Another achievement included Dr La Nauze establishing the first Australian regional eye clinic for visual assessment at the Woodstock Centre for Developmental Disabilities.

Upon receiving the Australia Day honour, Dr La Nauze was humbled, saying “it’s nice to be recognised.”

“I guess I have done some things in life which I think probably gives more importance to the work than the individual,” he said ●

Connect with your local community

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

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

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

www.facebook.com/groups/southbankcommunityhub/

f SOUTHBANK
Community Hub



Residents fight to oppose “overblown” rewrite of nature strip draft guidelines

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The leaf blowers are out for a group of South Melbourne green thumbs who have vowed to create enough noise to keep their beloved street gardens.

Dozens of busy bees have popped up in the neighbourhood with nature strip gardening having grown in popularity during lockdowns – which has seen Moray and Cobden streets transformed into pockets of lush vegetation.

But the fun trend could be nipped in the bud with the City of Port Phillip having drafted a rewrite of its nature strip guidelines which could see street gardens – some decades old – subject to removal.

Under the draft rules, about which the council is inviting the community to have its say before February 13, the minimum clearance distances from kerbs, driveways, and footpaths would greatly impact what residents could plant.

South Melbourne resident Emma Cutting, who has launched a petition to save the street gardens which has garnered almost 6000 signatures, feared the rule rewrite would see gardens removed at “council’s whim”, which she described as “overblown” thinking.

While she acknowledged there was a need for an update to create clear and safe guidelines, Ms Cutting said community members “really want” to work with the council to “find a balance between safety and gardening to “benefit the community and the economy.”

“The more I talk to people, the more people want to make a difference. The flow-on effects from street gardening are wonderful and should be encouraged,” she said.

She said benefits included increasing biodiversity, improving food security, addressing urban climate change like heat island effect and



▲ South Melbourne resident Emma Cutting has launched a petition to keep street gardening. Picture: Cameron Grant.

water retention and other health issues.

Ms Cutting, who founded local community greening initiative the Heart Gardening Project, said she was glad the “amazing community” had so far “made enough noise” to have the feedback on the guidelines extended from December 15 to February 13 but hoped the “enormous restrictive” clearance areas would be “hugely reduced” or “deleted”.

The draft nature strip guidelines stipulate plants must be one metre from the edge of the kerb, one-and-a-half metres around service pits, one metre from the edge of a driveway, and under half a metre high within two metres of a driveway.

Mayor Marcus Pearl said the council was reviewing their draft guidelines to “ascertain how to support this practice while maintaining safety and accessibility along our nature strips”.

“After emerging from lockdown, we have seen an increase in residents gardening on

nature strips across Port Phillip. To support this growing interest, we’re reviewing our Nature Strip Guidelines to ascertain how to support this practice while maintaining safety and accessibility along our nature strips,” he said.

“Tree health is a key consideration when assessing existing nature strip gardens and council officers will work with the community to find a solution that is appropriate for safety and tree health.”

“We welcome feedback from our community on this initiative and encourage residents to visit our Have Your Say page.”

Cr Pearl said safety included everyone being able to use the footpath, drivers seeing people walking and cycling, people being able to get out of a parked car, workers safely accessing service pits, space for bins and rubbish collection, and ensuring light and access is maintained.

Public feedback will be accepted until midnight February 13 ●

Southbank man arrested after police seize drugs, cash in raids

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
CRIME

A 30-year-old Southbank man has been charged with drug-related offences after police raided properties in Melbourne’s south-east on January 28.

Detectives from the Prahran Divisional Response Unit executed three search warrants as part of its investigation in Southbank, Braybrook, and Malvern East.

Officers seized about 34 grams of methylamphetamine and four grams of cocaine, with an estimated total street value worth \$14,000.

A small amount of MDMA, 1,4-Butanediol, prescription medication, drug paraphernalia, six mobile phones, and about \$2750 in cash was also allegedly seized.

The Southbank man was charged with trafficking and possession of methylamphetamine and cocaine, possession of prescription medication, dealing with the proceeds of crime, committing and indictable offence while on bail.

He was remanded to appear at the Melbourne Magistrates Court on February 21.

Two other men, a 39-year-old of Malvern East and a 42-year-old of St Kilda, were also arrested and charged with drug-related offences.

Detective acting senior sergeant Georgiana Jones said police would continue to focus on reducing the harm of illicit substances within the community, as well as the impact of drug-related crime on road trauma, assaults and family violence.

“Whether you are a street level drug dealer or trafficking commercial quantities of illicit substances – if you are profiting from drug transactions you will be arrested, charged and put before the courts,” she said ●



▲ Veronica Gorrie accepts the Prize for Literature.



▲ Minister for Creative Industries Danny Pearson.

Policewoman takes out top literary prize

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
ARTS & CULTURE

A former policewoman has won the country’s most lucrative literary prize, worth \$100,000, for her debut book *Black and Blue*.

Veronica Gorrie, a Gunai/Kurnai woman who lives and writes in Victoria, won the Victorian Prize for Literature.

Black and Blue is a memoir of her childhood and the decade she spent in the police force.

“I’m so grateful my book’s done so well,” she said, accepting the prize to loud cheers at a ceremony at MPavilion on February 3.

The book deals with “deaths in custody and the way police are killing us,” she said. “We need to raise the age of criminal responsibility.”

The lit awards have a tradition of backing political causes. In 2019, the author of the prize-winning book *No Friend but the Mountain* spoke by phone at the prize-giving ceremony from detention on Manus Island.

The Kurdish journalist Behrouz Boochani has since been released and now holds an academic post.

Three of the past four winners of the prize have won them for debuts and this tradition was continued in other literary categories as the Minister for Creative Industries handed out more than \$200,000 in prizes.

Melissa Manning’s debut book *Smokehouse* won the fiction prize and was published by

University of Queensland Press.

UQP had three titles on the fiction short list and a total of five titles in the prize overall, performing well in the Victorian literary stakes.

“I think they’re [UQP] willing to back beyond straight commercial,” Ms Manning told *Southbank News*. “They’re a publishing house but at the same time they’re willing to take a chance on different forms.”

Smokehouse is a series of interlocking stories that Ms Manning, who lives in Carnegie, states are in the “literary genre”.

She works as a lawyer by day and a writer by night and thinks about the meaning of words she uses in her jobs. “One’s for the beauty, the other is for the function,” she said.

Dylan Van Den Berg won the prize for drama for his play *Milk*. The play also won the NSW Premier’s award, even before it was performed.

Victorian Minister for Creative Industries, Danny Pearson, made the announcements and was photographed buying a book for himself at the Readings stand.

He went for *Tiger Daughter* by Rebecca Lim, winner of the People’s Choice award and a contender in the prize for young adult fiction.

“It’s important we get more Asian Australian stories around in Australia for people of non-migrant background to see in print,” Mr Pearson said.

He said his own mum was a bit of a tiger. “She’s fierce. As I was growing up, I was always surrounded by big, strong women.” ●

A cafe with a mission to “boost morale” in Southbank

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
BUSINESS

After a rough period for many small cafe businesses who have had to close, one cafe ready to help revitalise Southbank is Mr Summit Cafe.

Due to open in mid to late February, the cafe is an “exciting” collaboration project for business partners and “genuine lovers of coffee”, Tony Rouillon, Daniel Emerton and Jordan Setiawan.

“As entrepreneurs and baristas, the three of us have a very strong background in hospitality and customer service and especially in cafes. We are also enthusiasts in the Melbourne specialty coffee space,” the business owners said.

“The concept of Mr Summit is bringing the friendly customer service of your local coffee shop, with the precision and quality that you would find at any specialty cafe.”

Situated at the base of The Summit on City Rd, the cafe has not come without troubles when the lease was signed in the middle of the pandemic. But the owners are confident Southbank’s newest “meeting point” will be found at Mr Summit Cafe.

“Along with smiling faces and an emphasis on customer service we really want this location to become the meeting point for the entire population of Southbank,” they said.

“From the local residents, to the employees and employers, people just stopping by and those who want to stay a while, everyone is invited to sit down and have a great cup of coffee, a freshly squeezed juice and some delicious food.”

Already gaining an attraction on their social media page, with their Instagram followers expressing their eagerness for the cafe to open, the owners are relying on “consistent social media” usage to encourage more people to visit.

“It’s exciting to see such a strong following from the local population and we hope that



through our Instagram, we can bring as many people through the door as possible,” they said.

Leaning on their own uniqueness and vision for Mr Summit Cafe, the team is confident it can bring Southbank an atmospheric cafe that is different to any other in the area.

With a recognisable choice of distinct take-away coffee cups with the business’s mascot and bright orange lid, Mr Summit Cafe is focused on being an inviting place for all.

“When brainstorming the ideas for the business, the idea of the mascot came before the name,” they said.

“We wanted a recognisable and inclusive character to represent the brand and when naming him, we thought, why not name him after the place we will call home.”

Mr Summit Café is located at 165 City Rd, Southbank ●



▲ A render of Yarra Botanicals at Southbank.

Floating botanical oasis coming to Southbank

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
BUSINESS

Sandridge Wharf along Southbank Promenade will soon be home to a new two-level outdoor pontoon bar and pub-style eatery known as Yarra Botanicals.

Opening in early March, the venue is the latest notable landmark from Melbourne-based hospitality group Australian Venue Co which is behind 42 other venues in the city.

The new floating venue comes as a welcome boost to the Southbank precinct, which has suffered badly as a result of the pandemic.

It will also see a second floating pontoon venue on the Yarra, sitting on the opposite side of the river to the popular Arbory Afloat.

Australian Venue Co CEO Paul Waterson said what made this venture different from its other suite of venues across the city was its mission to celebrate and support Victorian produce and producers.

"We've committed to investing \$20 million into Victorian beverages over three years, and are proud to support the Drinks Victoria campaign," Mr Waterson said.

"We list Victorian products across all of our Victorian venues but to be able to deliver 100 per cent Victorian drinks and 90 per cent Victorian produce is a really exciting milestone for us, as a Melbourne-based hospitality group. We're so proud to back Victoria with Yarra Botanicals."

Offering a range of cocktails, wines, beers, ciders, premium spirits and share plates with local fresh seafood, pub-inspired snacks and woodfired pizza, Yarra Botanicals is a one-stop destination for everything that represents Melbourne's social and lively atmosphere.

The venue will invite guests to relax under market umbrellas, in comfy booths or on day beds while enjoying brunch sessions and live music riverside, or to take in the city skyline from the upper storey.

CEO of Melbourne Food and Drink Victoria Anthea Loucas Bosha said she was excited for the opening and what it meant for Southbank coming back to life.

"I am very excited for the upcoming launch of the incredible new venue on the Yarra which will showcase the world-class food and drinks which make Victoria one of the great drinking and dining destinations of the world," Ms Loucas Bosha said.

With a key focus on sustainability, the Yarra Botanicals' installation has been designed to have minimal impact on the environment and the venue itself will be filled with native plants and indigenous aquatic vegetation including climbing vines, native trees, planter boxes, herb gardens and edible plants.

Plants and herbs have also been curated especially for gin, as attendees are encouraged to make the most of the on-board botanical oasis and garnish their drinks with an array of choices from the garden.

A truly explorative, farm-to-table venue, Yarra Botanicals will be open seven days a week, from 10am until late ●

New-look Melbourne Skydeck takes guests to new heights

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
BUSINESS

After undergoing a multi-million-dollar makeover, Southbank's iconic 300-metre observation platform has relaunched with a new look and name.

The Eureka Skydeck, now renamed Melbourne Skydeck, now boasts new "world-class" experiences including the largest virtual reality theatre "of its kind in the world".

The Melbourne Skydeck Voyager Theatre, which has 8K high definition, takes guests through 16 iconic Melbourne and Victorian experiences, including a ride on Luna Park's historic wooden rollercoaster, a courtside seat at Rod Laver Arena, and feeling the crisp ocean air above the Great Ocean Road.

Guests are taken on 11-minute journeys in the theatre with chairs that feature vibrations, movement, and scent emission - from the aroma of freshly roasted coffee to roses at the Melbourne Cup.

For a closer look at the city, there's an augmented reality 3D model of Melbourne showcasing the city's development from pre-settlement through to the future, based on work by Monash University architecture professor Dr Tom Morgan.

Also new to Melbourne Skydeck, the highest observation platform in the Southern Hemisphere, is the Melbourne Skydeck App, for Android and Apple. Using free Wi-Fi, guests to go on a virtual treasure hunt of 31 hidden markers - with those who find, scan, and unlock all can claim a prize on exit.



Bar 88, which is hailed as a "cool and classy" full-function bar featuring French champagne, allows guests to enjoy 360-degree views on the window-ledge seating.

And for the brave, there's The Edge, which suspends daring guests in a transparent glass cube that projects out from Melbourne Skydeck as well as The Plank, a virtual reality experience that ends with a thrilling virtual plunge and zipline ride.

General manager Mark Shaw said the relaunch on December 15 gave guests "a deeper, more immersive and entertaining experience and the ability to explore Melbourne from different perspectives."

"Skydeck has cemented its place as one of Melbourne's best attractions, but we wanted to take it to the next level," he said, adding "we really believe we've encapsulated Melbourne in a nutshell."

"We've taken everything we love about our city, all of the great stories and facts and showcased it in an innovative and exciting way that everyone from kids to grandparents will love."

Mr Shaw said his team engaged Melbourne's best designers, VR specialists, academics, historians, storytellers and musicians, and chefs to create a series of "incredible immersive experiences" ●

Barista burnout

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
COMMUNITY

Some baristas in Southbank are getting sick of explaining the law to anti-vaxxers. They want to be people pleasers, but at what cost?

Hayley, Charlotte and Julia have worked through the pandemic at Frankie Walter Peta in Freshwater Place.

When you're working that close to people it's not the same as a polite chat on Zoom.

"We've had to become people pleasers over the lockdown," Charlotte said. "I have a sleep as soon as I get home."

"One thing that has changed is that a lot of customers are coming in with their problems," Hayley said. "We've been the customers' back-up."

She's getting sick of being on the front line of



▲ From left: Hayley, Julia and Charlotte.

health regulations when baristas are employed to deal with coffee beans.

"I don't speak to the public, only about coffee. It's easier," she said.

This cute little café is tucked beneath the infrastructure at Freshwater Place and its three young baristas are trying to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony.

Hayley prefers to arrange yoga lessons than deal with annoying customers.

But Charlotte manages front-of-house and some of their regular customers have turned out to be anti-vaxxers and they want to argue the point.

"We've had some controversial customers," she said. "We nod our way through the conversation. They want to chat because they will have an anti-vax conversation."

"It's too much of an effort to argue the point. You don't engage with a girl at the checkout to disagree with them."

She said customers were more aggressive than they used to be. "They want to pick a fight. One guy was full-on, swearing at me. He never came back. We're just following the rules."

She said another was an office worker and regular customer.

"One guy who argued was a nice customer, friendly until he found out the rules. He had a fight with the owner."

Sometimes the girls are working by themselves. "People come in and tell you their life stories. Because it's not reciprocal I can't take any more," Julia said.

She had situations where a customer would come in and say, "my father just died" or "I'm going to see my sister on her death bed."

Working in a café is not as bad as working in a bar where someone will sit up at it and talk at you non-stop.

"We call them punishers. At least here we deal with people for five minutes at the most," said Charlotte.

People go to their baristas for a bit of cheek and gossip and that's what you'll find at Frankie Walter Peta.

Some baristas act as if they're human resource managers but at this little café with its homely supply of plants, books and yoga, they know how to please ●

Sunday 6 March
9am Worship with Bach Cantata
Sie werden euch in den Bann tun (BWV183)
for 4 soloists, choir, strings, violoncello piccolo,
2 oboes da caccia, 2 oboes d'amore and continuo
St Johns Bach Choir and Orchestra
directed by Graham Lieschke
Guest Preacher (Video): Pastor Britta Taddiken
Senior Pastor, Thomaskirche, Leipzig, Germany

Resuming the series of the nine JS Bach cantatas with texts by Christiana Mariana von Ziegler

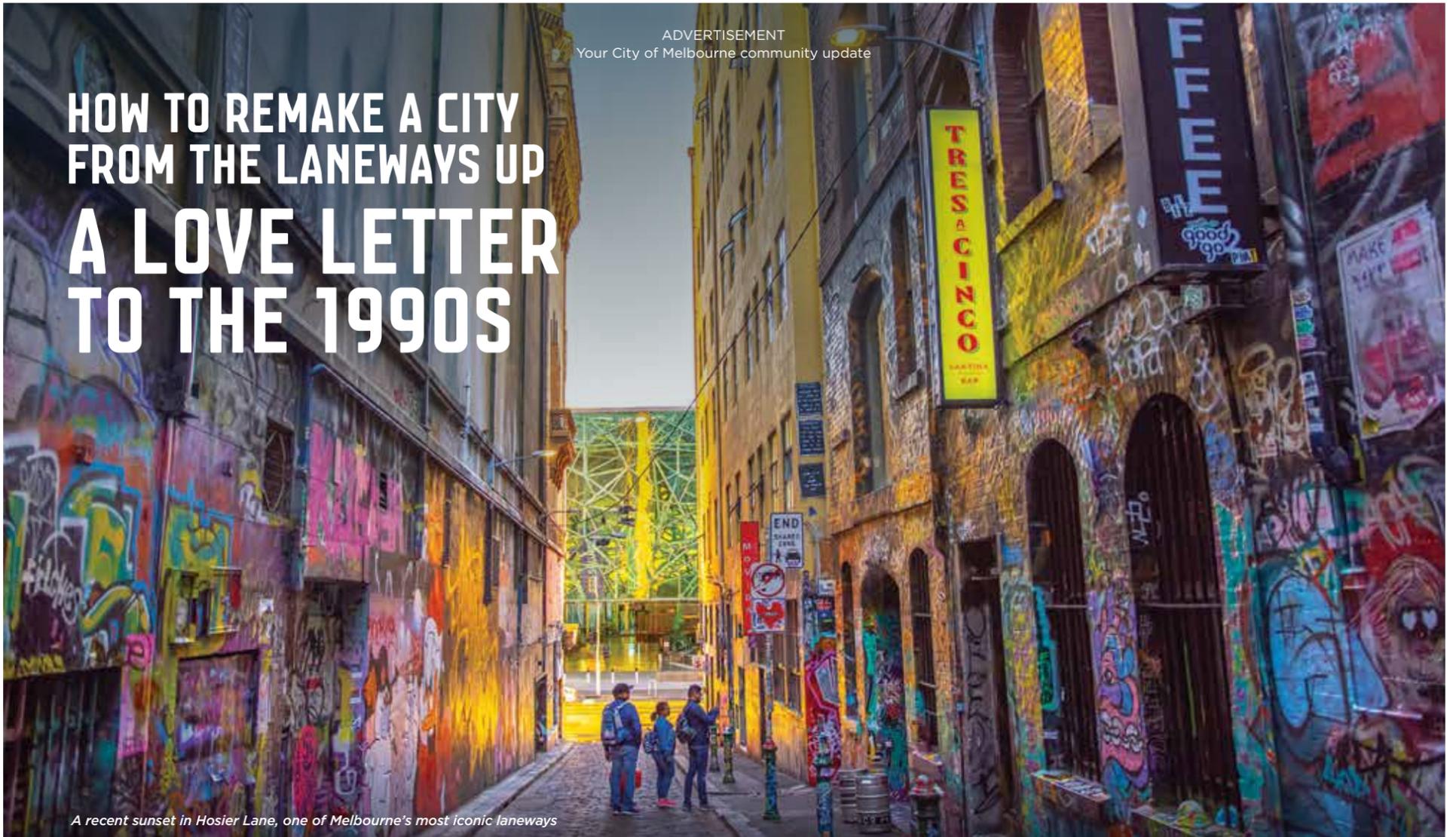
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9am Worship
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Your City of Melbourne community update

HOW TO REMAKE A CITY FROM THE LANEWAYS UP A LOVE LETTER TO THE 1990S



A recent sunset in Hosier Lane, one of Melbourne's most iconic laneways

What can the genesis of Melbourne's much-loved laneway culture teach us about remaking the city?

As the sheen came off our '90s obsession with sundried tomato focaccias, a quiet revolution was underway in the city's abandoned buildings and underground arcades.

'On a Sunday we'd cook a barbie on the roof of our building on Hosier Lane, and it felt like the only other living creature in the city was the bird of prey circling overhead,' said Mark Healy, a founding director of Six Degrees Architects.

Mark and 10 friends had taken over the top floor of an old building made vacant by the recent recession. It felt like they had the city to themselves but when the sun went down their entertainment options were limited to musty pubs and noisy nightclubs.

'We wanted somewhere in the city to stay up late and drink and talk with friends, and one of us had the idea of starting a bar,' said Mark. They pooled their slender resources and converted a stripped-out hair salon into the city's first laneway bar.

'There were no grand plans beyond that. Meyers Place was open from 4pm to 4am and all drinks were \$4,' said Mark. It was 1994.

The bar was quickly crammed full of curious artists, designers, makers and city dwellers, many of whom had set up homes and studios in hidden warehouses and faded neo-Romanesque beauties.

Tiny bars were soon scattered like secrets across the city's laneways: Rue Bebelons, Misty, Hairy Canary, St Jeromes, Troika, Hell's Kitchen, Robot, Gin Palace.

'Melbourne discovered its mojo during the 1990s recession,' said Craig Allchin, another co-founder of both Meyers Place and Six Degrees Architects. 'It built a brand out of empty spaces.

'It was an interesting place. It was cheap to rent those old spaces. That's what enables new things to happen in cities. And that's currently up for grabs again.'

Although the crew from Meyers Place has moved on to different projects, some of these bars are still serving drinks more than 20 years later, and our foodie scene now graces our footpaths and parklets through our outdoor dining initiative.

'There's value in curating free or very inexpensive spaces for creative people. There's a lot you can do with empty spaces created in the city by the pandemic.'

Cheap rent attracts artists

A sweeping view of the city convinced jeweller Ali Limb to take a seventh-floor studio in the Nicholas Building in 1994. That and the cheap rent. She joined a matrix of creatives tucked away in draughty city studios.

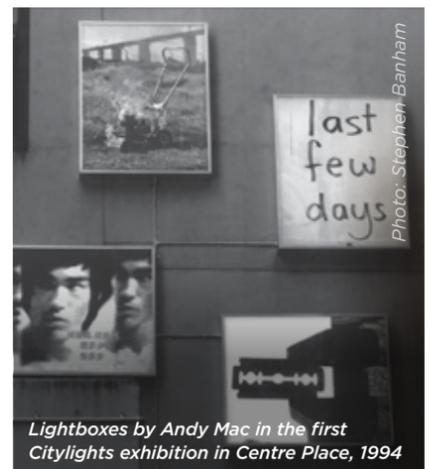
'Jewellers in the city were doing really great and edgy stuff. Like an exhibition of rings formed from ice that would gradually melt over the day,' said Ali. 'Beautiful, spontaneous, experimental.'

In 1998 Ali teamed up with friend Emma Goodsir to create a laneway retail space and gallery for local jewellers. A startup grant from City of Melbourne helped them take the leap and e.g.etal is still running today in the central city under Emma's direction.

'e.g.etal fuelled the craft and made it a financially viable career for many artists,' said Emma. 'This contributed to the city's growth into an internationally recognised hub for contemporary jewellery.'

Momentary beauty was also fostered by indie fashion house Alice Euphemia, which opened in a 'dark and spooky' underground arcade in Flinders Way in 1997 and eventually moved into an empty police station in Cathedral Arcade.

'The rent was so cheap we could afford to be creative,' said owner Karen Rieschiek, who ran Alice Euphemia for 17 years. Alice nurtured nascent local labels including Gorman and Kuwail.



Lightboxes by Andy Mac in the first Citylights exhibition in Centre Place, 1994

The launch of each new collection was an excuse for a party that spilled out into the laneways and attracted all types of creatives. Collaborations abounded.

'You can't fake that. There's value in curating free or very inexpensive spaces for creative people. There's a lot you can do with empty spaces created in the city by the pandemic. How landlords use their empty space is going to be very beneficial to the city,' said Karen.

The City of Melbourne is now connecting landlords with prospective tenants like artisans and entrepreneurs to convert empty shopfronts into pop-ups through its Shopfront Activation Program.

Putting the fun back into art

Look up while walking down Centre Place and you'll still see two of the four light boxes that the City Lights crew stuck to a wall on the side of a bank in the early '90s. Vessels for a new type of exhibition space.

'It was 50 per cent permission and 50 per cent punk anarchy,' said Citylights co-founder Richard Butler Bowdon. 'The punk anarchy sucked people in. It was unexpected. People were used to seeing advertising in light boxes but instead they got art.'



Citylights 2 launch party in a pre-graffiti Hosier Lane, circa 2000

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Citylights soon expanded to eight smaller light boxes in Hosier Lane. On the surrounding walls, young artists began to put up stencils, stickers and paste-ups.

Street art culture began its stealthy spread. The laneway launch parties got rowdier.

‘The stencil thing really blew up at that Hosier Lane site. It was from the ground up. We were part of a current that put fun back into art,’ said Richard.

When the city turned its attention to buffing the streets until each surface sparkled, it also created empty canvases for street artists, according to curator Dr Lachlan MacDowell.

‘You wouldn’t spend six hours painting a wall that would be cleaned regularly. So stencilling began to make sense – you could create multiples and not worry too much. They were at the human scale,’ said Lachlan.

From punk roots sprang the City of Melbourne’s Laneway Commissions program which saw new temporary artworks commissioned, like love letters to the local terrain. A giant safe lodged perilously overhead. A confession chamber. Unreachable phone boxes.

Having seen the city as a playground in the 1990s, Lachlan has teamed up with artists to bring light and colour to our laneways through the Flash Forward program, which commissioned artists to add their distinctive mark to 40 city laneways.

.....
‘The punk anarchy sucked people in. It was unexpected. People were used to seeing advertising in light boxes but instead they got art.’
.....



Photo: John Collings

The former Meyers Place bar, a pioneer in laneway culture

Urban choreography

It may have seemed spontaneous, but the slow dance of ‘urban choreography’ – as Council’s City Architect Rob Adams describes his 38-year relationship with Melbourne – began in 1985.

‘We made incremental changes to reinforce the city’s own character,’ said Rob. Footpaths were widened. Lighting was added and traffic calmed. Disused roads were reclaimed as green space. Melbourne began to play to its strengths: iconic bluestone pavers, laneways.

‘Gradually, we even returned our attention to the long-forgotten river.

‘When the property market crashed, rents in old buildings dropped and everyone moved to high-class accommodation. These old buildings were left empty.’

While adventurers had made a community in some empty spaces, Rob and his team approached landowners and encouraged them to convert their buildings into residential spaces.

The idea was controversial at first and required fancy footwork with the fire department and other regulators, but Postcode 3000 evolved quickly and Melbourne’s residential population swelled from 685 city dwellings in 1982 to more than 40,000 dwellings today across the CBD, Southbank and Docklands.

Through a new residential campaign, ‘This is your local’, we’re once again encouraging people to embrace city living and make the most of current stamp duty concessions on new apartment purchases.

There were unexpected side-effects of the success of Postcode 3000. As more professionals moved into the city, studio spaces were converted into apartments and rents went up. Many artists were forced to withdraw, but they left a powerful legacy.

‘The creative people who got pushed out by Postcode 3000 are the people we can bring back into the central city post-COVID,’ said Rob.

‘If we can get those empty spaces and put creatives into those spaces, what a great combination.’

.....
Footpaths were widened. Lighting was added and traffic calmed. Disused roads were reclaimed as green space. Melbourne began to play to its strengths: iconic bluestone pavers, laneways.
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For more information visit magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au/reignite-melbourne

WAYS TO LOVE MELBOURNE

Laneway street art

Look at our laneways afresh. Flash Forward has revitalised 40 central city laneways with art, sound and lighting. Or book a free street art walking tour. Read more at magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au



Melbourne Attractions Keypass

Melbourne moments

Get discounts through the Melbourne Attractions Keypass. Look for \$20 tickets at Arts House. Catch a gig. Connect with Aboriginal Melbourne. Cruise around our friendly bike lane network. Find out more at www.klook.com/en-AU/promo/city-of-melbourne/



Shopfront Activation Program

Shopfront activation

Look for entrepreneurs and artisans-in-residence at street level. We’re transforming empty shopfronts into creative spaces and temporary shops under a \$2.6 million program with the Victorian Government.

Local businesses

Enjoy an outdoor table at your favourite eatery. We’re making it easier for businesses to trade outdoors with permit fee waivers, new infrastructure and a boost for the Business Concierge.

Parks and gardens

Pack a picnic basket full of goodies from an indie city grocer and explore our stunning city gardens. Find the secret waterfall, do some forest bathing and breathe.



River Studios, Creative Spaces

Creative spaces

Find a space so you can create. Creative Spaces fosters art in the City of Melbourne by connecting artists with affordable studios. We manage several studios and two public art galleries, as well as the national website creativespaces.net.au

CRYSTAL BALL: WHAT’S NEXT FOR MELBOURNE

Here’s what five 1990s laneway legends imagine might come next for inner-city Melbourne.

The long lunch

‘For all the talk of different styles of work, the social nature of one-to-one time is what we’re craving. Maybe it means the return of the business lunch? That chance to say, “Hey, let’s have lunch and go shopping”, or meet after work for a drink. The human stuff.’

Mark Healy, co-founder of Meyers Place and Six Degrees Architects

Old-fashioned ‘hospitality’

‘It will all be about the word “hospitality”. People will want to be cared for, made welcome. It’s not all about the dollar, or how many bums you can fit on seats. It’s about creating a wonderful space that people want to enjoy.’

Andre Bishop, founder of Robot Bar in Bligh Place

Artist-led recovery

‘An artist-led recovery will only work in the long-term if artists are seen as central to the functioning of a city, no matter how gentrified it gets.’

Stephen Banham, designer and lecturer at RMIT

Business innovation

‘Allowing inspired small business people freedom to create is what sets Melbourne apart, so we should continue to invest in them.’

Ben Luzz, owner Gin Palace and Bijou Bar and Bottle Store

Bring the energy back

‘I’d like to see some pop-up places – independent fashion stores, shopfront artist’s studios, small music events, artist-run galleries in vacant shops, street markets. It would be great to bring back the vibe of the 90s.’

Concettina Inserra, artist and photographer



Information and events in this publication are current at the time of printing. Subsequent changes may occur. All photos taken in line with health and safety guidelines.

KEEP IN TOUCH

To stay connected with all the latest news from the City of Melbourne, follow us on social media and subscribe to *Melbourne* magazine online at magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au

You can also join conversations to influence plans for your neighbourhood through Participate Melbourne at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au

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Arts Precinct

Doors open at the Melbourne Art Fair on February 17

Melbourne Art Fair returns to the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre after a two-year hiatus.

WORDS BY Carol Saffer

CEO and fair director Maree Di Pasquale said there was enormous excitement within the Australian artworld about Melbourne Art Fair's return.

"Not only because it's Australia's first fair in two years, but also because the fair has never before presented such an extraordinary cross-section of work by the region's most significant artists, from newly discovered talents to the most collectible in contemporary art," she said.

This year the fair is arranged in sectors highlighting different art formats.

In the first precinct aptly titled *GALLERIES*, 63 leading national and international galleries will present works for sale from emerging and renowned contemporary artists.

The inaugural international platform, *VIDEO*, presented by apparel and footwear retailer *SUBTYPE*, presents new directions in contemporary moving image artwork by emerging and established artists from around the world.

In response to this fair's theme of "Djeemba-na" or "Place", 11 local and international artists created videos which reflect on the collective and lasting impressions felt by people's situated experiences in the world.

VIDEO offers first-time participation from in-



ternational galleries, unable to physically exhibit, enabling dealers from across the globe to maintain a connection with Australasian collectors.

An on-site/off-site recital program *LIVE*, presented by Glenfiddich, features the energy of performance and sound art. It celebrates Australia's most boundary-pushing artists with critically significant performances both at the fair and across the city, created to inspire and enthrall

the imagination.

Large-scale installations and spatial interventions, set within the expansive exhibition spaces within the Exhibition Centre, make up *BEYOND*.

BEYOND curator Emily Cormack said each of the installations questioned what this place was when we were without each other.

"In different ways the works draw us to one another, inviting physical proximity, wrapping

us, inviting us to dance, sit or digitally interact, enveloping us and affecting us," she said.

Occupying the entrance foyer of the fair are the ambiguous tendrilled forms and interactive video works of Caroline Rothwell's *Infinite Herbarium* project, presented by Tolarno Galleries.

PROJECT ROOMS is area where artists from Gertrude Contemporary and LAST Collective participate in a non-commercial platform for artistic experimentation where performance and multimedia meet in thrilling outcomes.

Single malt scotch whisky label Glenfiddich has collaborated with rising Australian multidisciplinary artist Jordan Gogos to create a unique bar experience at the fair serving a dynamic menu of cocktails, highballs and drams.

The Melbourne Art Fair will extend into inner Melbourne with a new series *LATE NIGHTS*. In partnership with *Broadsheet*, the nights spotlight art across the city, including an opportunity for galleries to open their doors on the eve of the fair.

The Melbourne Art Fair is at Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on South Wharf from Thursday, February 17 to Sunday, February 20.

Program details and ticket purchases at melbourneartfair.com.au ●



ACCA's *Who's Afraid of Public Space* exhibition asks the tough questions

WORDS BY Kaylah-Joelle Baker

The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) is raising questions around audiences' understanding of public space, culture and values in its latest exhibition *Who's Afraid of Public Space?*

Not to be missed, the contemporary art exhibition opened in Southbank on December 4 last year and will continue through to March 20.

"Taking place at ACCA over the summer months, the project extends across the city through a number of dedicated off-site projects programmed both in the lead-up to, and throughout the exhibition, as well as through related satellite exhibitions and events programmed by institutional partners," senior exhibition curator Miriam Kelly said.

An exhibition with multiple installations and interventions, which explore an array of themes that overlap and intersect, *Who's Afraid of Public Space?* "engages contemporary art and cultural practices".

"*Who's Afraid of Public Space?* is organised according to a dispersed, distributed structure, encouraging a polyphonic and polycentric understanding of our increasingly complex public realm," Ms Kelly said.

"The exhibition is inspired by and seeks to animate recent global debates related to incursion of private interests in the public sphere, politics of land and place, and patterns of urban transformation, gentrification and technological change."

Dividing the on-site exhibition between the Gathering, Education, Reading and Project spaces, the combination of the four galleries with their diverse artists, collaborators and advisers have aided in providing a basis for conversations to escalate.

From *The Ngargee Djeemba* project in the Gathering Space explores the material identity of public space and country, while *The Common Room* in the Reading Space steps out of the norm of what is expected of a library today.

Visitors are also then invited to engage in active participation in *Creating Art in Public* in the Education Space and step outside of the on-site exhibition with off-site programs hinted at within *The Hoarding* in the Project Space.

"The number and diversity of artists, collaborators and advisors involved in *Who's Afraid of Public Space?* were essential to the capacity for the project," Ms Kelly said.

"The exhibition at ACCA was also intended to invite visitors to explore beyond the walls of the gallery and discover art back out in public space."

Encouraging art to not be confined to four walls, "one event not to be missed" is that of *DAS BOOT* which will be taking place at ACCA's forecourt on March 19.

The event will centre around an artists' car boot sale and market with food, drink, music and festivities to entertain and intrigue visitors.

Representative of ACCA's mission to "Do Art Differently", *Who's Afraid of Public Space?* is an exhibition that needs to be seen to be understood in its entirety.

And Ms Kelly is hopeful it will portray the "complexity of the public realm" with viewpoints and perspectives that "reflect Melbourne's diverse community".

"We hope the exhibition underlines the value in public space, the importance of public culture and the relevance of public institutions – as shared resources for the enjoyment and betterment of our community."

acca.melbourne ●

CRITIC

Difficult to face today

Often the exhibitions at Buxton Contemporary are quite alienating, a feature of the gallery's large, dark exhibition spaces, their preference for screen installations and the confronting material.

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge

Turbulent Water, the current exhibition by American artist Rebecca Belmore in the downstairs gallery, actually includes a screen covered in a wall of water.

The atmosphere is so eerie that the faint-hearted might find themselves rushing for the stairs.

Observance, an exhibition by six First Nations artists upstairs, contains some humanity and whimsy that is, at first sight, easier to face.

Yet the presentation is so formal and the lighting so subdued that even a brilliant use of materials can be swamped by the message.

Songs of Sorrow 2015 by Karla Dickens, (Wiradjuri) contains a poem and the most beautifully crafted wall-hangings made of wire and domestic items in the shape of pointed fingers.

It's a pity that the didactic board immediately foregrounds the context of family violence instead of letting the work make its own point.

In *Observance 2012*, a video by Julie Gough (Trawlwoolway), the narrative is subservient to the actual footage, inviting the viewer in.

The video shows a group of bushwalkers in an idyllic beach setting. The words "kahnowhher" and "free white men" appear on the screen.

The rocks suggest Tasmania or somewhere on Bass Strait. The words "perintyer" and "convict" are projected on the screen.

The filming is from above, as if watched closely by an original inhabitant, as the walkers spread out onto the beach and follow the coast. The word "sheep" comes up next.

Sometimes the sky is forbidding. There are close ups of bubbleweed, kelp and native grass-



▲ *Missing or Dead 2019-21* by Julie Gough.

es. The words "trabanna" and "blanket" appear then footage of a dead kangaroo.

At one point the walkers wade through the water. One runs out on a sand bar and extends out her arms in a cross. The words "ponedim" and "England" follow.

After that, the words become more violent and include "whale boat", "gun powder", "pistol", "hang by rope".

The setting is named Dispossession Bay in Tasmania and the arrival of the white men into one of the world's most beautiful landscapes is simulated by today's backpackers in the video.

It takes a while to make a connection between an innocent walk through the "wilderness" with an "invasion".

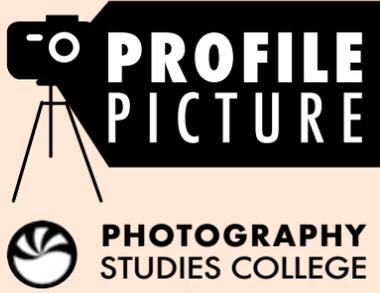
In *Missing or Dead 2019-21* Gough documents the lives of 185 Tasmanian Aboriginal children who were stolen or lost. The material is more forthright.

Many children died in exile on Flinders Island or in the orphanage in Hobart. Some had no names.

Gough made flyers detailing when they were last seen and attached them to trees in a park near Hobart.

This memorial to the people lost in colonial times is still difficult to face today.

Rebecca Belmore's *Turbulent Water*, and *Observance*, featuring six First Nations artists from Australia and Pacific, Buxton Contemporary, until May ●



Siblings united through photography

It's rare to find siblings who get along as well as Chad and Menaka Weerasinghe.

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*

With both developing a keen interest in photography and fashion growing up, Menaka has followed in her younger brother's footsteps and is completing a Bachelor of Photography at the Photography Studies College (PSC) in the Montague Precinct.

While Chad enjoys street fashion, snapping people wandering around the city in exquisite clothes, Menaka wants to get involved in the world of photojournalism.

"I did a series for my image and concept class for gender which was named *Beauty & Culture*," she said.

"I took portraits of women from different nationalities showing their natural beauty. The series was shot against a white background to focus on the women by taking away the distractions of backgrounds."

Menaka also asked the women what they considered as beauty in their cultures and what advice they would give to their younger selves.

"I am very proud of this series, and I want to keep adding to it, with successful and beautiful women from different nationalities, to help young girls to learn from these successful women," she said.

Having graduated from PSC already, Chad said he had since been working in the commer-



cial photography space, recently taking street fashion shots for Melbourne Central.

"I walk around the city and whoever is dressed stylishly and nicely I approach them and ask if I can take a photo. I document people from different walks of life," he said.

"My main aim is to capture the moment of the subjects and the environment, with the intention of connecting fashion and everyday street life."

Growing up, Chad and Menaka's parents took thousands of photos which they hung up on the walls of their home, a habit which "annoyed" Menaka when she was younger.

"When I was younger, I got annoyed at that, but now as I got older, I'm grateful," she said.

"Growing up, we had so many photo albums and boxes of photos and negatives which we all loved to flip through and look at through the years."

Menaka and Chad's parents met on a movie set in Sri Lanka as extras, both sharing a passion for fashion.

"My mum's mum was a famous seamstress in Sri Lanka and both my parents were into fashion.

My dad would stay up to 6am in the morning making clothes for me. He used to work for a leather company," she said.

Chad said it was great to be from a family of photographers.

"From the start Dad shooting himself growing up, and Mum being obsessed with capturing life events, to me and my sister photographing and working together has been amazing!" he said.

Chad and Menaka live together in Deer Park, commuting to the city for uni and fashion shoots. But like most siblings, they have their moments.

"We have fights and arguments of course, but it doesn't last long. We're like best friends and we hang out together," she said.

In the future, Menaka said she would love to work for *National Geographic* doing photojournalism and portrait shots – quite the shift from mechanical engineering which she originally studied before starting at PSC.

"We're thinking of next year going to Sri Lanka to take photos there, maybe of these painting in caves where they don't know how they came up with the colours!" she said.

For now, Chad said he would be continuing with his *Street Style Aesthetic* series, as well as photographing events and working for designer labels.

And, perhaps unconventionally for most siblings, helping his older sister develop her skills as a photographer in conjunction with support from PSC.

"PSC has supported me with so many industry connections, from learning from experienced, knowledgeable, award-winning teachers working in the industry, involving you in the Melbourne photographic community, to helping you with pretty much anything you need," he said.

Menaka said she was thrilled to be going back to the South Melbourne campus this year.

"We're going to be doing more studio work this year, which we haven't used before due to lockdown," she said.

"We'll have another teacher who'll teach us documentary photography and she's done a doco in Sri Lanka!" ●



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IMAGE BY PSC GRADUATE JUNE LOW



Cruise operator takes out prestigious tourism award

BUSINESS

A Yarra River tour operator and self-drive boat hire business has taken out a Victoria Tourism award, recognising its resilience in the face of COVID-19.

Melbourne Boat Hire won the City of Melbourne Innovation and Resilience Award, with owner Matt Gannon saying his team was delighted by the honour.

"It's a good surprise," he said after the inaugural award was introduced after the Victoria Tourism Industry Council partnered with the City of Melbourne to recognise the resilience of the tourism sector during the past year.

Mr Gannon said it had been a tough two years for his business and was still experiencing up to three or four cancellations a week due to the Omicron wave.

"It's been a challenge, we're not out of the woods just yet unfortunately," he said, but added he hoped the return of international tourists wasn't far away.

"We pivoted a few times throughout the last two years, which was a challenge. We started doing a lot of commercial work, a lot of bridge inspections with a vessel and then we set up a floating coffee cart at the Botanical Gardens."

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said tourism was key to the city's economic and cultural revival.

"These awards will be recognition for the tourism operators that have continued to show excellence and innovation throughout the toughest period the industry has faced in modern times," Cr Capp said ●



Detroit style pizzas are back at Arbory Afloat

BUSINESS

Delicious Detroit style pizzas (DSP) are back at Arbory Afloat for a limited time only, but this time, with a Turkish twist.

Melbourne's iconic floating bar and restaurant Arbory Afloat will reignite its DSP pop-up for another year offering a special menu of signature, deep-pan goodness until Sunday, April 3.

Available every day from 11.30am, the limited menu features five specialty toppings but with only 75 of the eight-by-ten-inch cheesy rectangular pizzas up for grabs each day, you'll want to get down quickly or miss out!

Known as the upside-down pizza, DSPs are built in reverse and topped with a healthy dose of cheese running edge to edge and an array of other fresh ingredients, before then baked in a hot deck oven.

The result – a fluffy pizza with crispy edges, a slightly chewy centre, and flavour sensation.

Curated by Arbory Afloat's resident pizza aficionado Salim Gafayri (ex-Bar Nacional and

Cecconi's Flinders Lane) and executive chef Nick Bennett, the duo has been busy working on a fresh new menu to complement this year's season.

"This year, Arbory Afloat has resurrected to transport guests to the Turquoise Coast in Turkey. With a new theme came a new menu, which we filled with classic and contemporary Turkish dishes, so it only made sense that this would be carried through to our DSP pop-up," Mr Bennett said.

Salim Gafayri said, "It's been fun playing around with new tastes, and incorporating robust flavours like Isot Biber, a dried Turkish chilli pepper, sumac onions and toum aioli. This could be my favourite menu yet."

The DSP pop-up will feature margherita, supreme, lamb adana, hot smoked salmon and chicken pizzas for \$29 each ●

For more information:
arboryafloat.com.au



Outdoor virtual arcade at Southbank

EVENTS

A "futuristic outdoor" gaming area – which uses digital sensing technology – has transformed Southbank's Queensbridge Square.

The free pop-up arcade officially opened this month with participants of all ages and abilities invited to play the digital games which includes creating unique virtual art and solving quizzes.

The games work by a camera tracking players' movements so they can use their bodies to control the game in real time on a large LED screen.

The City of Melbourne partnered with tech specialists and engineers at SAGE Group as well as Swinburne University to develop the outdoor arcade which is open seven days a week from 7am to 8pm, until March 3.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the arcade was an initiative to bring fun, inclusive experiences to the city.

"During a soft launch in December, players enjoyed more than 100 games a day, and we expect thousands more will check it out over the next six weeks," she said. "The pop-up attraction is free, family-friendly and safe to enjoy in the open-air, making it the perfect addition to a fun-filled day out in the city."

Swinburne University Centre for Design Innovation Professor Jeni Paay said final year design students, who helped in developing the arcade, were able to gain "industry experience, on a real-world project, where they get to see the results in the city."

SAGE Automation Smart Cities technical lead Ashby Martin said they "pushed the limits of what we could do with the technology." ●

SOUTHBANK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Welcome to 2022!

I hope our community was able to find some much-deserved time away or to get out and about before Omicron started to settle in. Sadly, just when we thought we were there, we seemed to have gone back into a self-imposed lockdown. I have noticed the streets around Southbank and the CBD are still very quiet compared to pre-COVID.

Since my last column, much has been happening. We continued our discussion with the City of Melbourne and Department of Transport regarding the safety of Power St's City Rd and Kavanagh St intersections. We have been able to achieve some modifications to the light sequence at Kavanagh St. Next time you are there you might notice the green man is given a few seconds before the intersection lights change, thereby giving the pedestrians a head-start. While this is only a small modification it is nevertheless an important one and certainly assists. SRA will continue to advocate for change to this intersection.

Just before Christmas the neighbourhood park of the Southbank Boulevard upgrade between Fawcner St and City Rd (next to Australia 108) was completed – finally. This is the "boardwalk" park – according to the plans. However, I am not sure if you noticed, but the metal grate walkway is far from the "boardwalk" renders that were being proposed for this space. We were contacted by numerous members of the community who were also inquisitive if this was the actual finished product or if there was something more. In particular the metal grate for a walkway was the stand-out concern. What is there is sadly the finished product. We were not satisfied with this and went back to council with our concerns.

SRA has been a strong advocate for this project for almost 10 years when the first discussions



began. We were heavily involved with the community consultation, and it troubles us that this component of the space is far from what was being proposed. A boardwalk is exactly that – a "board" walk. After deliberations with the project team, it has indicated the contractor will be recalled to replace the metal with a more suitable finish. What this will look like I am not sure but rest assured SRA will keep engaging with the council for a suitable outcome, but thus far we are grateful it has recognised the differences from the proposal and are keen to have it addressed. But the question needs to be asked – how this was able to occur in the first place? While I have asked the council, I am not

expecting any response with much substance. But it is certainly positive the Southbank Boulevard project is making progress with the final pocket park works with the children's play space between Kavanagh and Fawcner streets expected to begin this month.

However, more concerning for many of our residents will be the e-scooter trial that has just launched. Our community seems to be divided on e-scooters. Many have embraced them while many others find them annoying and a safety hazard, particularly when driven down footpaths at high speeds. So, I suppose the question is, how can e-scooters co-exist harmoniously within a community? I certainly don't have the answer to this question but would like to hear from our community. The City of Melbourne has reached out to SRA and requested we are part of the discussion with the trial. We have started this discussion with the e-scooter operators to understand how they are managing their scooters and their intention within the community. Likewise, they are hoping SRA will be able to provide feedback from a resident's perspective so the model can be tweaked where possible. If you have any experiences you would like to share, we would love to hear from you. All feedback will be a valuable contribution to the outcome of this trial.

I have also started a conversation with the Lord Mayor with regard to delivery bikes and our footpaths. This is not a problem that is

unique to Southbank, but other parts of the municipality have raised similar concerns. In many ways this discussion will also tie in with the e-scooters. But I felt it was important the Lord Mayor is aware this is a growing concern within our community.

SRA has an exciting year planned – COVID permitting. Our volunteer committee is excited to hopefully be able to get back out into our community and bring everyone together with the long-awaited postponed Community Day. We also have other exciting announcements to make in the coming months. Watch this space for more information.

If you have some time and would like to assist us with the community day, we would be delighted to hear from you, and if you would like to provide feedback for the e-scooter trial you can reach us at info@southbankresidents.org.au. If you would like to show your support and become a member, it is only \$10/year via our website – southbankresidents.org.au. Without members our voice is merely a whisper ●



Tony Penna
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Aboriginal man wins top prize for artwork depicting identity and sexuality

As a proud gay Aboriginal man, Ronald Pepper didn't hold back in putting his all into a recent piece of artwork which took home the top prize in the Koorie Art Show.

WORDS BY *Spencer Fowler Steen*

A swirling, brightly coloured collection of images and paintings on canvas, Mr Pepper's artwork *Coming Out 2* tells the story of his identity growing up as a First Nations man, a story he is "proud and honoured" to tell.

"It's exhilarating," he told *CBD News*.

"It's nice to put my stories out there and to win an amazing award and to have all the elements of my art practice and to tell a story in a nice way."

Part of Mr Pepper's painting exhibits trips he took to Japan and China in 2010 under his local government's Sister City program.

Since then, his love for art has only grown having graduated from Federation University with a Bachelor of Visual and Media Arts in 2017.

He has since had multiple commissions and been involved in exhibitions in Australia and overseas.

Asked what inspired him to create *Coming Out 2*, which earned him the Koorie Heritage Trust's (KHT) \$10,000 top prize, Mr Pepper said he wanted to put everything into one painting.



"What inspired me was I wanted to create something that tells the story of my identity and growing up as an Aboriginal man," he said.

"I'm gay in two worlds, in a positive cultural way, and I wanted to let people know that coming out in the 21st century; you can be who you are and be proud of what you do in your culture and where you're from – to be a role model for your people."

Mr Pepper's esteemed piece of artwork is



also about passing on the lore of the land to the next generation, which he experienced with stories told to him by his late mother.

"Last year and the year before were sad and very dark for me," he said of this experience in an interview with Andrew Stephens for KHT Voices.

"Doing the bright colours and having support around me brought me to where I am. They [my parents] would be very proud of me now."

"Moving on in healing, in art – that has helped me a lot to process what has happened and to move forward."

Mr Pepper said the spirals signifying the intergenerational passing on of knowledge "will get bigger and bigger and grow more."

Mr Pepper also wished to congratulate his fellow artists in the Koorie Art Show and the artists who exhibited their work in KHT's Blak Jewellery exhibition.

"I see all the amazing artists making their art and it's bringing back what we've learnt through our time, and I'd like to say congratulations and to keep doing what we're doing to shape who we are as Aboriginal people," he said.

"I'd also like to thank the Koorie Heritage Trust for the opportunity they've provided me."

Mr Pepper is currently using an array of new art equipment he purchased using the prize money to produce new, "very different" artwork which will be exhibited at the KHT ●

For more information:
korieheritagetrust.com.au

SKYPAD LIVING

Vertical village "volunteers"

Australia is a nation of volunteers and in 2020, Volunteering Victoria claims that 42.1 per cent of Victorians aged over 15 volunteered in our state.

But volunteering is a term often used loosely – so it is useful to know what counts.

According to Volunteering Australia, volunteering is defined as "time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain". It involves an offer of something that is not required nor is an obligation.

Volunteering can be formal, where assistance is given to a not-for-profit or other "for-good" organisation, or it can be informal, where there is no association with another entity, but actions still contribute to a community's common good.

The ascribed motivations for volunteering are many, including supporting communities in crisis (such as after fires), supporting a cause (such as adult literacy), growing one's own social connections (meeting new people with similar values) and personal development (such as gaining confidence).

And all these motivations can be seen in the different instances of volunteering in our vertical villages. In particular, COVID-19 saw many building-based groups come to life. Informal volunteering in the form of offers of dog walking, trips to shops and even home cooked meal drop-offs all took place within our vertical villages.

But a note of caution has been sounded about some types of volunteering. For instance, offers by volunteers to "fix" common property (such as that annoying leak) can have far reaching insurance implications. And if injury occurs during or due to this work, then Pandora's Box opens.

There is, of course, another group of volunteers that feature in residential strata – namely, the owners' corporation (OC).

As most of us well know, an owners' corporation is automatically created when a plan of subdivision containing common property is

registered at Land Use Victoria. The resultant owners' corporation is responsible for managing this common property. And, as stated by Consumer Affairs Victoria, if an owners' corporation has 13 or more lots, a committee *must* be elected at each annual general meeting. For us high risers, this means that our vertical villages all have OC committees which have specific regulatory responsibilities related to managing common property.

This raises an interesting point about the notion of our "volunteer" OC committees.

Indeed, according to the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO), the more formalised the volunteer arrangement, the greater the possibility that the role is not one of volunteer. One key characteristic of genuine volunteering identified by FWO is that the arrangement include that the volunteer is under no obligation to perform work.

Is this the case with our OC committees?

Our regulations require the existence of an owners' corporation committee and tasks this group with specific responsibilities. Added to this is the question whether it can be said that these activities are undertaken for "selfless purposes" or for "furthering a particular belief in the not-for-profit sector"?

Indeed, is there mention of "volunteer committees" in our OC regulations?

You may now be asking what is the point of raising this issue? And does it matter whether or not the OC committee are volunteers or have another legal status?

My opinion is that for such an important group – one that holds responsibility for managing common property worth many millions – clarity about the OC committee's status is a needed starting point for the development of our high-rise residential sector ●



Dr Janette Corcoran

APARTMENT LIVING EXPERT

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MONTAGUE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

Living with ...

Happy New Year, dear readers. Not sure how each of your year has started, hopefully with full health, employment and strong relationships. We are going to need all our strength to navigate 2022 as we are moving into year three of this global life-changing event.

We have two elections coming up this year, a federal and a state, and I hope we will have the opportunity to hear how our precinct and the whole of Fishermans Bend is viewed at all levels of government. And, when the time comes, we look forward to partnering with other local community groups to hold "Meet the Candidates Debates" and, of course, we will let you all know where and when.

There are clearly ongoing challenges with us being able to access information about what is happening with development, amenity and placemaking, and we are not (as continually promised) receiving direct, or easily found communications about immediate plans for the Montague Precinct. At the Fishermans Bend Business Forum in late 2021, the chair of the Fishermans Bend Development Board and members of the Fishermans Bend Taskforce gave assurances that the (completed) Montague Precinct Plans would be delivered in early 2022.

However, it appears that with the latest surge in COVID numbers, members of the Fishermans Bend Taskforce have been seconded to other areas of need and those with local knowledge such as the council or state members are also busy elsewhere. Notwithstanding the obvious circumstances that has caused these secondments, development and growth in the precinct continues apace. I understand that for the "powers that be" this is a good thing, but what of the residents and businesses who are still living with noise, dirt and daily challenges with all that large and multiple building sites brings. We have not had any respite or even care ...

I was fortunate to be able to speak to Meredith Sussex AM, the Chair of the Fishermans Bend Development Board, about community concerns that were being forgotten. She responded to our concerns promptly and with understanding, and here is what she said ...

"A new year and new challenges.

The Board is really pleased that development in Montague is proceeding, providing new

homes in a great location and jobs in exciting new businesses.

But we are aware that ongoing construction does cause disruption, and that some residents feel that they do not have enough information about what is planned for the area. We want to work to address these concerns as much as possible.

Obviously COVID has impacted everything, including our community consultation program.

Our plan for additional infrastructure and open space in Montague and the Fishermans Bend precinct will be out for discussion soon, as will the detailed Montague implementation plan. These plans are built on all the earlier planning work, and the community input which informed that work. We look forward to further community input over the next few months.

In the meantime, we are celebrating the opening of our new local secondary school, and looking forward to a new year of working to deliver great outcomes for Fishermans Bend."

It is comforting that we have been thought about now, but please, Fishermans Bend Board and Taskforce, we need more direct and easy to access communication. Please don't tell us to go the website, not everyone can find the information online.

We do look forward to those community consultations, as long as they are real and are about the local residents and businesses, not just those from other areas who don't live or work here but want to "show off" their local knowledge or their planning expertise. Please make them truly local, for the ones living with the day-to-day challenges of being in a high growth and development area.

Thanks for reading folks ●



Trisha Avery

TRISHA AVERY IS THE CONVENER OF THE MONTAGUE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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METRO TUNNEL

It's goodbye for the Anzac Station acoustic shed

You may have noticed some changes at the Metro Tunnel's Anzac Station site on St Kilda Rd.

Crews are now dismantling the large, green acoustic shed which has been on the site for the past two-and-a-half years.

This will make way for the next phase of construction – building out the station's upper levels and entrance, and the new integrated tram interchange.

Crews installed the acoustic shed – which was 75 metres long, 30 metres wide and 21 metres high – in September 2019 to contain noise, dust and light from round-the-clock construction happening underground.

Around 400,000 tonnes of rock and soil has been transported from the site to excavate the station box, which is more than 20 metres below ground at its deepest point.

With major tunnelling now complete, construction is moving towards fitting out the tunnels and finishing the five underground stations.

The first phase of removing the Anzac shed was recently completed, with the roof dismantled by hand. Three gantry cranes, which were used to lower concrete tunnel lining segments down to the tunnel boring machines, were also removed.

The next step is for a specialist team to use long-reach excavators with hydraulic shears to remove the remaining shed cladding, then cut



and remove the steel frame. The shed removal will take around six weeks in total and is expected to be finished in March.

After the shed comes down, the concrete working surface and temporary backfill underneath will be removed, revealing the permanent station roof below. The station roof will be waterproofed and utility services installed above it before it is then permanently covered.

Crews will then put the finishing touches on the new tram interchange above the station, including laying tram tracks in their permanent

alignment. The tram tracks and traffic lanes have been realigned twice already during the project to allow cars and trams to keep using the road while the station is being built below.

Work is busily continuing underground too, with preparations underway to build the station platforms. Workers are fitting out the station with mechanical, electrical and plumbing equipment, and building internal walls. The concrete floor slab inside the tunnels is now complete, ready for rail tracks to be laid on top.

“

Almost 40,000 people a day are expected to use Anzac Station when it opens in 2025. It will ease the pressure on the St Kilda Rd/Swanston St tram route – the busiest tram route in the world – and provide train access to major destinations like the Shrine of Remembrance, the Royal Botanic Gardens and the St Kilda Rd business precinct for the first time •

”

For more information:
metrotunnel.vic.gov.au

OWNERS' CORPORATION LAW

VCAT rules that pigeon infestation on apartment building not enough to justify special levy

An owners' corporation (OC) in St Kilda has found itself in a messy situation in VCAT, with the Senior Member refusing to enforce an OC request to certain lot owners to rid the main apartment building from a pigeon infestation.

The building comprises a main multi-storey block of residential apartments, together with ground floor retail.

Lots one and two of the development are three-storey townhouses on an adjacent block but still part of the overall OC. The lot entitlements for these townhouses are four times higher than a one-bedroom unit in the main apartment block.

The OC sent a letter to all owners advising that an Urgent Special Levy was being raised to cover the costs of ridding the main apartment block of pigeons, cleaning the decorative facade of the main apartment block, and also to cover the additional costs of an increase to insurance costs. Accompanying the letter was an invoice for the lot owners for special levies totalling \$3,656.31.

The lot owners paid that portion of the levy comprising the increased insurance costs, but disputed the payment of the pigeon levy which remained unpaid.

The OC wrote back to the lot owners acknowledging that they received an indirect benefit from the pigeon control works only, applied the benefit principle and reduced the levy by 50 per cent overall.

This still did not satisfy the lot owners and the matter proceeded to a hearing at VCAT.

The OC submits that the lot owners received an indirect benefit from the pigeon control works undertaken on the multi-storey building as follows:

- potential for reduced insurance premiums;
- reduction in adverse health effects and injury to residents and visitors;
- potential increase in property value;
- improved appearance of the complex; and
- minimised pigeon infiltration.

The lot owners disagreed, and said, there was no evidence to substantiate any reduction in

insurance premiums as a result of the pigeon control works, and that insurance premiums had increased.

Secondly, there is no risk of adverse health effects and injury to residents and visitors as the townhouses are located in an adjoining building;

Thirdly, there is no potential increase in property value as the townhouses are in a separate building, with an address on a different street;

Fourthly, no works are being conducted to the townhouses, which presents as a separate building, so there is no benefit of improved appearance for the townhouses, and fifthly, works undertaken on a separate building will not minimise infiltration to the townhouse and may potentially drive the pigeons towards the building in which the townhouses are located.

The VCAT member found that there was some indirect benefit to the townhouse owners, as the risk of health issues, slippage, and increased insurance claims was a risk borne by all lot owners in the subdivision, indeed the payment of insurance levies is raised by the one OC, of which all lot owners in the subdivision are members.

The townhouse owners also received an indirect benefit from the pigeon control works in respect of the appearance of the multi-storey building and a potential increase in property values. Being part of the same subdivision the condition, and appearance of the multi-storey building will be of relevance and concern to any potential purchaser – a pigeon infestation or poor appearance of the multi-storey building is therefore likely in the Tribunal's view to impact on the property values of the building in which the townhouse is located.

However, overall, the OC's exercise of the benefit principle of 50 per cent was still far too high for the VCAT's liking. The levy was tossed out by the VCAT, and the OC will have to start all over again.

This case reinforces that OCs need to be very careful in how they apply the benefit principle. Even a 50 per cent discount is sometimes not enough •



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ST JOHNS SOUTHGATE

The power of nostalgia

Over the new year I was excited to go and see part four of the Matrix franchise, The Matrix Resurrections.

I hadn't been to see a film in years, but I was anticipating this one sufficiently enough to head out of an evening, even during the Omicron surge. It was by no means a great film, in fact, most moviegoers were disappointed by it, from what I gather, but I was grinning ear-to-ear through the whole thing. I loved it! It struck a chord with me for one reason. Nostalgia.

I saw the first *Matrix* film when I was 18 years old. It blew my mind and became an instant classic in my book. So, spending time once more with characters, Neo, "The One" and Trinity, was a delight. It was like slipping into a warm bath. In the end, the quality of the film itself didn't matter, I was happily paying to be wrapped up snug in a nostalgia blanket.

It's been well-documented that the pandemic life we've all been living has led many, if not most of us, to seek nostalgic comfort. Perhaps you've found yourself disinclined to read new books or start a new TV show, instead you've gravitated to the familiar – rereading old books or flicking over to a TV show you've seen many times before. There's a reason why.

Nostalgia has been shown to relieve anxiety and ease the burden of loneliness, two things that have plagued us as much as the plague itself. Reflecting on or dreaming about things from the before-times isn't just an indulgence. As long as you don't get lost in the pleasures of the past, it can truly be of benefit as it nudges you in the direction of hope for the future. What once was can surely be again. Right?

Prayer, in the Christian tradition, does something similarly hopeful for the practitioner suffering through hard times. People of faith often report engaging in the act of prayer more frequently when in distress and indicate that it gives them some relief from their anxieties (which sounds about right if you read Philippians 4:4-7!). But unlike engaging in nostalgia, which is talked about more openly now in this COVID era, prayer has become almost taboo. I've observed that people of faith are less likely to say "I'm praying for you" in circles where "sending warm thoughts" might

be more acceptable.

The funny thing about this, though, is that the tables have turned, historically speaking. Johannes Hofer, a Swiss doctor who coined the term "nostalgia" in 1688, saw it as a neurological disease – an unhealthy looking backwards – and he did so in an era that was very much approving of the outward piety of prayer. In a strange way, prayer, which might have been considered a cure for the nostalgia disease in the Christian piety of Johannes Hofer's 17th century Europe, is now itself considered the disease – a silly self-indulgence that if you must do it, you should keep it and any benefits it might bring you to yourself.

In my opinion, there is a place for both nostalgia and prayer. I can spend time with The One and Trinity from *The Matrix* and get that warm-fuzzy feeling, but I can also spend time talking to The Holy Trinity through Jesus, The One, and be all the more comforted and confident in the future.

We're all doing what we need to do to get by at the moment, and sometimes that's re-reading or re-watching an old classic. But the thing that elevates prayer above nostalgia is how it moves us from the individual mindset to the communal. Its intent is more than just self-soothing, its focus is outward, and the comfort that is desired through prayer, it is hoped, will be shared. If not now, in eternity •



Tom Hoffmann

TOM HOFFMANN IS THE PASTOR AT ST JOHNS SOUTHGATE CHURCH.

STJOHNSOUTHGATE.COM.AU



Selling a life of luxury in Southbank

When it comes to luxury property in Southbank, there isn't one defining attribute that elevates an apartment above all others.

WORDS BY Jack Hayes

Whether it be location, excellent building amenities or management, million-dollar views or spacious living zones, each high-end apartment in Southbank presents a unique and varying canvas for vendors and buyers alike.

They do, however, have one thing in common, and that is they all lay firmly within the crosshairs of Ray White Southbank's luxury property expert, Georgina Zeneldin.

Honing her skills over the past 16 years working with Melbourne's finest homes, Ms Zeneldin is fresh from a stint working in Dubai's luxury property market, dealing with some of the world's highest calibre of investors and properties.

"When it comes to luxury property in Southbank, there isn't one single attribute, it's a combination of features that work in conjunction to give you the best of the best," Ms



Zeneldin said.

"A luxury home is one that spoils its residents with lavish convenience. While every feature defines luxury in its own unique way, only when stacked together does it allow your home to stand out."

"Attributes like proximity to our amazing Arts Precinct, restaurants or the CBD, large double bedrooms like you'll find in Eureka

Tower, and smart home features providing convenience with a touch of a button are just a few contributing characteristics."

Prior to her time in Dubai, which saw her working with properties valued in the tens of millions, Ms Zeneldin worked almost exclusively in renowned luxury apartment towers, Eureka Tower and Freshwater Place, developing an intimate knowledge of what makes the

luxury market tick.

Despite the trials and tribulations of a global pandemic, Ms Zeneldin explained that Southbank's luxury property market would always remain strong, and relatively impervious to fluctuations.

"It will always be in demand. There isn't a lot of it in Southbank and I believe there will be a huge spike in transactions moving forward, as current owners remain reluctant to sell," Ms Zeneldin said.

"We have seen property in Eureka Tower listed on the market for no more than three weeks and could have been sold within a two-week period. Demand for these homes is incredibly strong."

"At Ray White, we assist the vendor with everything from A to Z, from upgrading and updating their apartments, to styling or advertising, we understand what buyers in Southbank want from a property."

If you are looking for a luxury property specialist contact Ms Zeneldin today on 0481 577 772 •

For more information:
raywhitesouthbank.com.au

SOUTHBANK SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

Sustainable solutions fill February

As we enter summer's last month, it is turning out to be one of the most active months both when it comes to environmental solutions-focused events and opportunities to get involved with our group's ongoing projects, from the garden to community events to Southbank's first composting hub.

We'll start with our own: opportunities to help and volunteer with our group.

Watering volunteers

As the sunny, hot days increase, so do our community garden's watering needs. As a reminder, this is something you can do in your own time (preferably early morning or late afternoon onwards). Alone or with a friend, once-off or on an ongoing basis, and it involves giving garden beds at the front of Boyd and concrete planters at its rear a good watering to help our seedlings and food producing plants to continue providing organic, locally grown food for the community. Please email us to get a link to the watering roster and watering instructions.

Open leadership roles

We are looking to fill the following volunteer positions as part of our leadership team that will help shape the direction of this group and Southbank's sustainability action and wider community moving forward. It's also an opportunity to be a part of a diverse community of likeminded people, looking to bring positive change in the world. These positions require a commitment of two to four hours of volunteer work per week, most of which can be done at your own pace and leisure.

Educational events champion and co-champion

We're calling for leaders to organise the fun educational events we have coming up. This involves one or two people leading this important arm of the group, who will be receiving plenty of ongoing support and help with the organising and implementation of events.

There are also always many helping hands in our group for implementing events and prior events management experience is not necessary. All you need is a passion for sustainability, a solutions-focused mindset, some organisational skills, and a self-motivated attitude.

Composting champion and co-champion

This person (or two people) will be leading

the delivery and management of Southbank's first community composting hub, set to be up and running by April. As part of a City of Melbourne grant our group won, this position will involve following the grant's blueprint to deliver the composting hub along with help from an external composting consultant. The council is helping us create this very important space that will significantly help reduce methane emissions and food waste for Australia's most densely populated suburb. This will also be a great opportunity to coordinate a volunteer team of about 10 people and learn more about the three main composting methods we will be using: worm farms, soil composting, and bokashi fermenting. Composting experience is welcomed but not necessary, as there will be good learning opportunities in this position as you go along.

Please email us if you're interested in any of these positions.

Message us with your email address or check our Facebook page for upcoming one-off opportunities to volunteer. We always welcome new volunteers for educational events either behind the scenes or on the day, and make sure our volunteers have fun and build a sense of community in the process.

Sustainability events

We had a very successful event with the passionate father-and-son duo behind ReWine last December.

We got to feel like a neighbourhood community through an evening of wine tasting and nibbles next to the community garden, learning about how we can significantly reduce our carbon footprint through the way we choose to buy wine without compromising quality, and got a first view of ReWine's mobile wine refilling van which comes right to your front door for wine bottle refills if their store locations are not within reach.

We were honoured to find out that ReWine chose to launch this new delivery service with our group through our event.

This family-run carbon neutral business with the motto "Return-Refill-Reuse" and decades of experience, has a strong environmental conscience that's all about making good climate action solutions accessible to the average consumer and supporting the right suppliers. While they work with local wine-makers who are also focused on doing right by the environment, ReWine is the only wine



retailer in Melbourne that supports returning wine bottles for refilling (whether it's for the same or a different wine). A small action that immediately cuts 80 per cent of a bottle of wine's carbon footprint.

If you missed this event, we will be doing something similar in the second half of February, on a weekday afternoon. Please contact us or watch our Facebook page for more details. If you want to learn more about sustainability in the wine industry, ReWine, or their new home delivery refill service, go to rewine.com.au, their Facebook page @ [ReWineAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/ReWineAustralia), or check out one of these events they will be running as part of the Sustainable Living Festival:

Sustainability in Wine Making with Mark Folett (February 10, 6pm),

How about "Low Waste"? with John Rbeiz (February 17, 6pm)

Waste in the Wine Industry with Marshall Waters (February 24, 6pm).

You can search for "rewine" in Eventbrite to find registration links for these events if you are interested.

February – Sustainable Living Festival

We also highly recommend visiting slf.org.au for a list of all Sustainable Living Festival (SLF) events taking place during February. There are even more interesting events happening this year, across Melbourne, and online. From beginning permaculture to holistic sustainable fashion, you'll see a wide variety of interests and topics covered under this festival, which connects people with important knowledge and sustainable solutions that are relatively easy to implement in our lives. Connecting people with climate action solutions is one of our group's core values, which is why we are keen to support businesses like ReWine and festivals like SLF that are representing these values across everything they do.

Why bother?

When talking about habit-changing solutions, I often hear people saying that it's the responsibility of governments and corporations to roll out environmental solutions that mitigate climate change and that individual action is too small to make a difference. To that I always say, while this issue might feel too big for individual choices to have an impact on it, we all had a hand in creating this survival-threatening issue and we can start understanding our significant impact as individuals. When we consider that each person produces 136kg of plastic waste each year on average (a very lightweight material), our high individual carbon and waste footprints, not to mention how we vote with our dollars with every purchase we make and choose leaders to make decisions for us with our actual votes, it shows us why it's important to stay informed and participate in festivals geared towards solutions, like SLF.

Next SSG meetups

Our next meetups will be Saturdays February 12 and 26, 10am to 12pm, at Boyd's front yard. As always, we invite everyone to join regardless of gardening or climate action experience. Please email us or go on our Facebook page for the Eventbrite registration link for upcoming meetups and educational events or to volunteer for an event, watering, or ongoing roles •



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HEALTH & WELLBEING

Why so many people fail in their efforts to lose weight and stay active

Between 2014 and 2015, a staggering 63.4 per cent of Australian adults were overweight or obese – well over half of our nation’s population. That’s almost two in three adults.

This is an increase from 1995, which was 56.3 per cent, illustrating that the problem is getting worse. Combine with this the statistic that 56 per cent of all adults in 2014–15 were not sufficiently physically active and that roughly 90 per cent of the population don’t follow the healthy eating pyramid and we have a massive health problem.

But why do so many people fail in their efforts? To be blunt, it’s because they want a quick fix, an instant solution and progress has to be rapid! There is no patience, no commitment and people are willing to spend their hard-earned money on cars, massive TVs, eating out, going to concerts, you name it. But anything is seen as more valuable than a financial commitment to one’s health and wellbeing. I see it all the time.

People will ring or email me and, interestingly enough, it is the ones who enquire about price first before anything else. Either go elsewhere for a cheaper price (which is fair enough to a point as everyone has a budget) or if they do start with us, they are usually the ones to drop off or fail in their attempts to make the changes that they “supposedly” want. I say, supposedly, because the commitment to an educated and step-by-step approach to weight loss or to regular activity takes time. It has purposeful built-in steps to help set them up for

success and not failure. It helps them through the behaviour change process. Overall, they do not value the time it takes to make long-term and lasting change. They also do not financially value better health and wellbeing enough.

If a client comes for personal training to my company, they are subjected to a four-step process that we almost guarantee will lead to the results that they are after. There is no time frame put on this, but it is spelt out and it is accompanied by an explanation that behaviour change to truly be embedded will take you six months. That doesn’t mean you need a personal trainer holding your hand every step of the way for six months, but I can almost guarantee that if you do commit to just one personal training session per week for six months that you will have been educated, empowered, structured, held accountable and know all you will ever need to know about how to get the very best out of yourself, and that you will never look back!

What price do you put on being fit, healthy and energised for the rest of your life? Based on our minimum session pricing of \$90 per session for 26 weeks you are looking at \$2210. How many coffees, alcoholic drinks, donuts, cigarettes, nights out could you cut back on to make this cost more viable? Again, I ask what price do you put on your health?



The four steps that we drum into our clients are ...

- Calendar/logbook – we provide a yearly calendar/logbook to track your exercise habits, mindfulness and daily postural exercises – this is to ensure accountability and behaviour change.
- Exercise – we work with each and every person to fine tune the right amount and type of exercise for them. We modify it as we grow together.
- Nutrition Diary – we ask our clients to complete a nutrition diary for four to eight weeks (more or less if required) filling in what they eat and drink daily and have them rate themselves from one to 10. We educate around nutrition following the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- Our OMRON bio-impedance scales – these scales take weight, BMI, body fat percentage, muscle percentage and visceral fat.

Then we work hard to drill in these four steps. If you are doing the first three steps well, number four looks after itself. If not, then we need to work harder on either or all of the first

three steps. Sound too good to be true? Trust me, I have been a university-qualified trainer for more than 25 years and in my very own business for nearly 10 years now, I have seen hundreds of our clients follow these steps successfully and the results have to be seen to be believed.

This article is not designed to sell our services, but as the title of the article stated, I wanted to highlight why so many people fail in their efforts. I sincerely hope that this article helps serve as a catalyst for change and if you would like to just have a chat, please don’t hesitate to contact me and I will try and help you and point you in the right direction!

For more information, exercise guidance or if you have any questions, feel free to contact me by heading to justintimept.com ●



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SAFETY AND SECURITY

Protect your number plates

We’ve recently seen an increase in thefts around Southbank, both from motor vehicles and storage cages, most commonly around our multi-level car parks.

WORDS BY Acting Senior Sergeant Damien Higgins - SOUTHBANK POLICE STATION

We’ve seen laptops, sunglasses, clothing, bikes, sporting equipment and wallets stolen.

While some cars and locks have been damaged, it appears most of these thefts have been opportunistic.

Many of the victims have left cars and storage cages unlocked.

To assist police in returning located stolen property, it’s a great idea to record serial numbers or engrave items with a phone number or licence number.

There’s also been a recent increase in the theft of number plates from cars around the area.

To assist local residents, we have anti-theft number plate screws to give to residents of the Southbank area.

They are free and can be collected from the Southbank Police Station, no special tools are required to fit them.

Hopefully if everyone can remember to lock their vehicles and storage cages, attend the Southbank Police Station and grab some



number plate screws, we can help reduce crime in and around the Southbank area.

Southbank Police Station is located at 66 Moray St, Southbank ●

For more information, call (03) 8635 0900.

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Learning from others

Around the world, cities are all regulating short stays, sometimes with eye-watering penalties greater than the property value of the apartment involved.

Now, as we hope to leave lockdowns behind us in Melbourne, what short stay listing regulations do we have here? None. Here in Victoria, no oversight, no control over short stay listings. Absolutely none.

If we look around the globe, we can find many examples of regulations that are being refined and adapted as circumstances change.

For example, as tourism in Europe begins to recover from the pandemic, a new Barcelona ban targets the short-term letting of rooms. The city already has a short stay registration and monitoring framework that seeks to rein in whole-apartment short term rentals with heavy fines and threats of suspension.

Janet Sanz, Barcelona's deputy mayor is quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "We love our city and we want to share it – but we need rules and we need balance. People in Barcelona can still rent out a room for a year to a student coming from abroad but for less than 31 days, it's such a tricky market to regulate that, from now on, we have to stop it."

Expert research on short stays

If our politicians are going to learn from other cities facing similar problems, how do they get the information they need?

Well, now it's easier. Two sedulous researchers from the University of Queensland, Dorine von Briel and Sara Dolnicar, have been studying the effect of short stays in cities around the world and the regulations that have been framed in response. They have published a paper: *The evolution of Airbnb regulations* that identifies

a global trend toward increasingly strict rules and stiff penalties targeting an industry that is underreported and difficult to monitor.

Here are a just a few of our observations from reviewing this recent research paper:

Berlin: Berlin State enforces annual registration with €100,000 fines for non-compliance. Hosts can only rent their property as a short stay for 90 days a year – and the host must apply for "change of use" permission. The penalty for non-compliance is a whopping €500,000 (A\$800,000).

London: London City's power of persuasion helped it thrash out an agreement with Airbnb to limit listings to 90 days per year. Yes, the corporate colossus agreed not to challenge the rule in court.

New York: The Big Apple enforces registration of all short-stay listings, with fines for non-compliance ranging from US\$1000 for a first offence to US\$7500 for a third strike.

Paris: Local municipalities can set annual limits, impose heavy fines on non-compliant hosts, and force hosts to disclose their records to the council. Parisians enjoy a rule that Melbourne desperately needs: All building co-owners must vote and agree to having short stays in the building. Let the residents decide!

San Francisco: New buildings in San Francisco that will allow short stays must have planning approval. The city has also introduced limits and disclosure rules on political funding and controls over politicians' short-stay interests – something we need in Australia.

Lessons for Victoria

There you have it – a new, Australian **independent expert report** that we can take to our politicians and say, "*The research has been done for you. Now, please show some leadership.*"

We Live Here has long argued for the regulations that have been variously implemented in major cities around the world:

- Let owners' corporation lot owners decide if their building will have short stays.

- Limit the number of days that an apartment can be short-term let.
- Require all short-stay hosts to be registered with the local council.
- Introduce proportionate penalties for non-compliance.

Thank you, Dorine von Briel, and Sara Dolnicar from the University of Queensland for documenting the global regulatory reality. Victorian politicians should be suitably edified.

What are the parties' policies?

We have been talking with all major parties about regulating short stays. We have engaged with the first, second and third Minister for Consumer Affairs, currently Melissa Horne. We met with Planning Minister Richard Wynne. We had talks with the Leader of the Liberal Party in the Legislative Council, David Davis. And we have ongoing communications with the Greens.

Even through the pandemic we tried to keep engaged with politicians across the political spectrum, via Zoom of course. We have been providing Victorian politicians with case studies, precedent legislation and regulations from other jurisdictions, expert reports, impact statements and statistics.

After all the work we have done, we are very pleased to see that at least one party continues formally to support our practical plans for dealing with short-stay apartments.

Ellen Sandell, Greens State MP for Melbourne, has again published a call for regulation of the short-stay industry, something we have been arguing strenuously.

And when we talk about short stays, we mean much more than unruly parties. Short stays bring many challenges to apartment living, with the attendant impacts on security, livability, amenity, maintenance costs, community fabric, housing affordability and – most salient now – infection management. These are the issues we have canvassed with politicians of all persuasions.

We applaud Ellen Sandell's announcement. We call on members of the government and the opposition to acknowledge that having well-researched policies for regulating short stays is indeed politic – your electors want to know how you will protect residents.

Disappointing anniversary

February 2002 marks the disappointing anniversary of a major deadline missed by the state government.

In 2018, the government committed to a review of the *Owners' Corporation Amendment (Short-stay Accommodation Act)* by February 2019.

The government needs to set up the review and implement significant changes before the pre-pandemic short-stay problems flood back. We asked about this promised review when we met late last year with the current Minister for Consumer Affairs, Melissa Horne. Let's get this started, please.

Coming up ...

Next month we will give you an update on the committee-stacking scandal that we have been following in this column. Plus, we will talk about the recently announced "design-to-rent" development that will deliver thousands of rental apartments and an equal number of unfettered opportunities for rent sharks to convert apartments to short stays en masse ●



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HISTORY

"Chevalier Blondin" – from Niagara Falls to Southbank

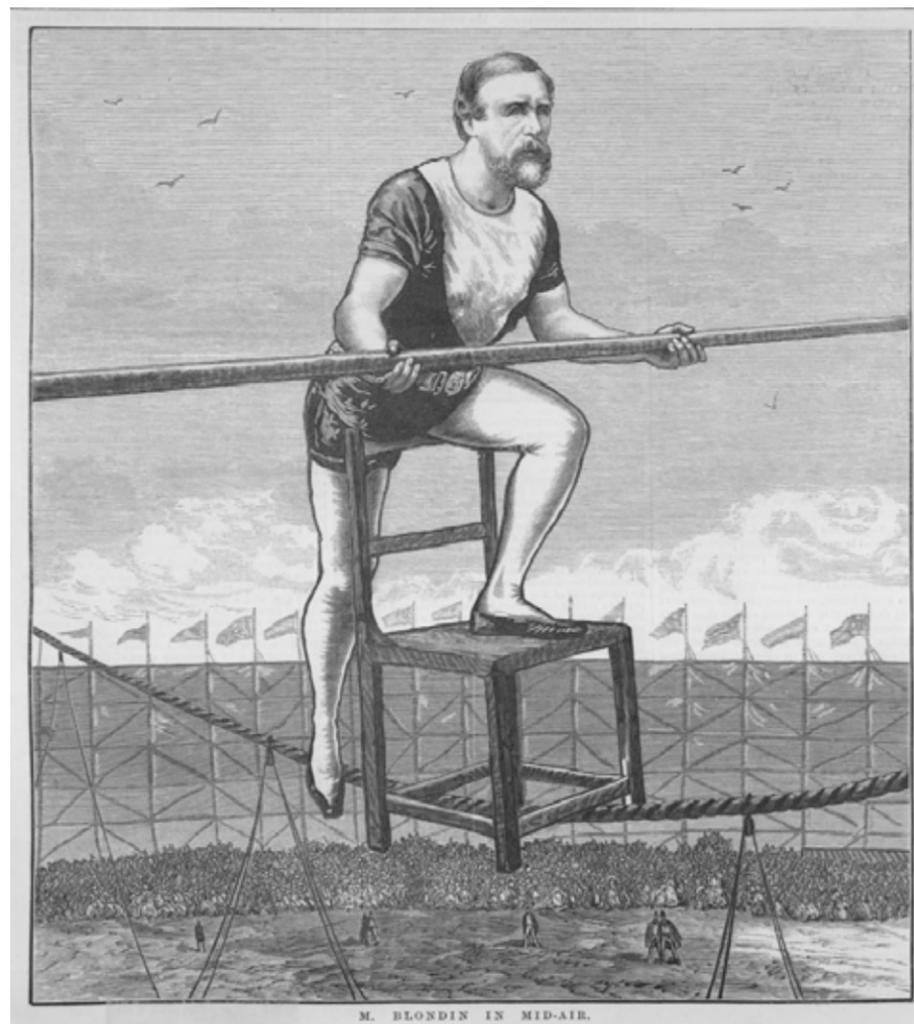
It's a long way from Niagara Falls in the USA to Southbank, via numerous other spots in the world. Yet that was the journey taken by "Chevalier Blondin", born Jean Francois Gravelet in 1824, an adventurer who specialised in walking on tightropes, a skill developed in his native France.

Perhaps his most famous walk was across the gorge below Niagara Falls in 1859. The tightrope was 50 metres above the water and stretched for nearly half a kilometre. Remarkably part of his performance involved carrying an accomplice on his back!

Through the 1860s he performed his walks around the globe (including in the snow in Moscow) before arriving in Australia in 1874 and performing in Brisbane and Sydney. In November of that year, he was engaged to undertake his daredevil activities in Melbourne. The site chosen for his performances was in the Domain Precinct, near the new site for Government House, currently nearing completion, where a large tent was constructed.

His first show was an event supervised by the Police Superintendent and Blondin could not begin until the afternoon wind had abated. Finally ready, Blondin carried out his final checks and supervision of the tightening of the ropes, held in place by a series of steady guys.

The rope was fixed about 12 metres high,



M. BLONDIN IN MID-AIR.

between a couple of masts, each containing a platform. The rope was four-stranded, 15cm thick, about 60 metres long, and capable of holding weights of 20 tonnes. When he was satisfied, the gates to the tent for spectators were thrown open to admit an excited crowd of about 3000, including the Governor and his suite.

At around 4.30pm, the star of the show emerged from his tent, dressed in a suit of silver chainmail, and wearing a helmet with plumes. Seizing his balancing pole, Blondin was run up to his platform from where he tackled the rope, crossing and recrossing in tune with the band below. He then performed a number of other tricks, including laying down at full length on the rope, turning a full back somersault and standing on his head, and others where he was blindfolded or where he pretended to be falling! He then carried his agent Monsieur Niaud on his back along the rope.

Then the rain that had been threatening all day started and the astonishing show had to be cut short. But what a performance had been witnessed by the admiring crowd, all of whom felt that they had received full value for their half-crown admittance from one of the master showmen to visit Melbourne during the 19th century ●



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SOUTHBANKER

Southbank chef wins top prize in prestigious gastronomic award

WORDS BY Carol Saffer

Kimberly Tang, a young chef and Southbank resident, has earned the Gold Medal Chef of the Year Award at the 2021 Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award culinary competition.

Around 100 talented young chefs competed in regional competitions in Australia and New Zealand during 2021, with 11 finalists achieving a place in the grand final at the William Angliss Institute in the CBD.

Ms Tang and the other finalists competed in a virtual grand final format. The three courses they created were live streamed to a panel of remote judges who calibrated the results.

As a previous finalist in the 2016 and 2017 Awards, Ms Tang said, "I love the thrill of this competition, and it's true that if at first you don't succeed, try and try again."

"Never give up because anything is possible; it's what you make of every opportunity that counts."

She has also competed for Australia in the prestigious Bocuse d'Or and Chaine des Rotisseurs competitions.

Ms Tang said, "my experiences in Golden Chefs have taught me a lot, helping me improve

my skills, organisation and knowledge in a short and intense timeframe."

Her gold medal-winning three-course menu started with a mushroom ravioli entrée with onion and horseradish jelly, mushroom and black garlic parcel, asparagus, pickled foraged mushrooms, yuzu gel, black garlic tuile, and ponzu emulsion.

The main course was a Hainanese style chicken with black garlic emulsion, mushroom pearl barley, crispy chicken skin, Negi oil, baby onions, shitake, and smoked charcoal pepper dust.

Wrapping up the meal, a peaches and strawberries cream Zen Garden dessert included mascarpone cremieux, black garlic and chocolate soil, matcha sponge, mushroom meringue, coconut lotus cookie, umeboshi compressed white peaches, strawberries, grapes, and yuzu gel.

"I really went all out to stay true to myself this year, drawing on traditional concepts from my heritage and then taking them to a new place with interesting technical applications," Ms Tang said.

Executive chef and Nestlé professional head judge Mark Clayton said the award was designed to allow young chefs to step out of their comfort zone and test themselves against equally qualified finalists.

Ms Tang wowed the judges with her technical skills.

"We attracted an outstanding level of chef talent, and the top spot was closely contested with an unprecedented five gold medals



awarded," Mr Clayton said.

"Kimberly produced a fantastic menu that took traditional ideas and modernised them, executed to a level not seen for a long time."

Ms Tang took home a \$10,000 cash prize and dining vouchers donated by Best Restaurants

Australia.

She has worked in the kitchens at Dinner by Heston Blumenthal Melbourne and Nobu at the Crown Casino complex and will soon take on the role of sous chef at the recently opened Society in Collins St ●

10 YEARS ON

Looking back at Southbank News - 10 Years On

FEBRUARY 2012 | ISSUE 05 |

SOUTHBANK NEWS

Police station for Southbank

Forget the much-touted police pod, Southbank is set to have its very own police station, with a 50-member facility to be built in the area before 2015.

The new facility will replace the station currently located at St Kilda Rd.

The City of Melbourne has cited the new station as a major reason for cancelling the police pod which was planned to tackle Southbank's rising crime rates.

Both Victoria Police and the council agree that the mobile police facility trialed during 2011 are the most practical solution to fill the void, before the new station is built.

The Southbank police station will become a reality after the St Kilda Rd complex is relocated to two locations – the operational components coming to Southbank and the administration going to a separate Docklands location.

Superintendent Peter O'Neill said that when the St Kilda Rd station was built, Southbank was a very different place to now.

"The St Kilda Rd police station will be moved to where it is more needed nowadays," Mr O'Neill added.

A report to the City of Melbourne's Future Melbourne Committee said the plan for the Southbank police station was a major reason that the police pod idea was thrown out.

"As a result (of the new station) there will be a significant police presence in the Southbank area by 2015 which would negate the requirement for the pod," the report states. "It is envisaged that there will be at least 50 police officers stationed at the proposed Southbank police

station."

Councillor Ken Ong, a long-time supporter of the pod, confirmed the decision to abandon it was heavily influenced by the promise of a beefed-up police presence.

"It was the long-term assurance that led to me agreeing to this (cancelling the police pod) compromise," Cr Ong insisted.

"We didn't want to spend \$350,000 on a pod that may be in use for only two years."

An appropriate site for the new station is yet to be decided on, with the police in consultations at present, analysing the entire area for a suitable location.

Many aspects must be considered including budget, problem regions and accessibility.

According to Cr Ong, a site close to where the pod was planned at Queensbridge Square would be ideal, which is also in close proximity to Crown Casino.

He added: "If the station is anywhere in the Southbank area it will be easy for police to get around to anywhere within the area, so it will be an acceptable location for the City of Melbourne."

Southbank Residents' Group newly-elected president Mabel Vargas said she hoped the new station would become a reality.

"I hope that this commitment becomes a reality and that in three years time we are not told that the police station is not going to happen," Ms Vargas said ●

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改造项目获批 社区反响不同

州政府批准斥资4.7亿澳元改造南门(Southgate)的决定在社区中引起了不同反响, 有些人对此计划表示欢迎, 而另一些人则表示, 此计划缺乏“任何形式”的社区咨询。

Brendan Rees

根据计划, 现有的三层建筑群将部分拆除, 以便建造一个新的五层楼平台, 开设更多的新酒吧、餐馆和商店。

作为 Fender Katsalidis 设计的改造项目一部分, 还将建造一座26层的办公楼, 并在南岸长廊(Southbank Promenade)上建造2000平方米(约一个超市大小)的新公共开放空间。

该项目由总部位于新加坡的开发商ARA开发, 其澳大利亚分部最初估计为耗资8亿

澳元。项目将创造3600个持续工作岗位, 并提供价值超过1200万澳元的公共福利设施, 包括更方便的公共开放空间和通往其他区域的行人通道。

州规划部长Richard Wynne于12月批准了该项目, 他表示, 该项目将“为墨尔本这个备受喜爱的地区带来新生命, 为零售和酒店业提供一个繁荣的新中心”。

他说:“全新的南门将为墨尔本人和游客创造一个新的目的地, 一旦项目成立, 将创造数百个当地建筑工作岗位和数千个持续的工作岗位。”

但是 Quay West公寓楼的居民表示担心, ARA开发商没有就噪音、交通和便利设施损失问题与社区进行咨询。

居民Mem Aziz直言表示, ARA“没有”就此项目与社区进行沟通, 他说尽管居民们不反对此项改造项目, 但他们担心这座26层的塔楼会带来隐私和阴影问题。



他说:“南门和南岸(Southbank)区域已过度开发, 建筑大楼相互遮挡, 严重的交通危险, 氧气流量减少。”

“作为一名居民, 12个多月来, 我多次尝试联系ARA和维多利亚州政府, 发送信件、电子邮件和打电话, 但都无济于事。”

维州最新学校顺利开学

在 2022 新学年开学之际, Anne Stout 感觉自己终于能领导一所“真正的学校”了。

David Schout

去年6月, 这位经验丰富的教育工作者被任命为墨尔本港中学(Port Melbourne Secondary College)的创始校长, 几个月来, 她一直是这所在建学校的唯一雇员,

在接下来的一段时间里, 学校所需的一切设施都要在最重要的开学日期之前建成。这所学校主要服务于南岸、墨尔本港和渔人湾(Fishermans Bend)区域。

这一切包括招聘员工、课程规划、政策制定、建立愿景和价值观、时间表等等。

为此, 要做到在1月31日星期一维多利亞学校新学年这一天开学, 这本身就是一项相当大的成就。

而且, 对于Stout女士来说, 最有收获的景象就是她所说的:“看到学生们穿着校服四处走动真是太棒了”。

“当看到穿着校服的学生走进社区时, 我想那就是你开始觉得这是一所真正的学校了。”

虽然学生和教职员工在这开学之前已经在学校度过了一段时间, 但1月31日是我们学校(Port Melbourne SC)的第一个“正式”日子。

副州长兼教育部长James Merlino在那里正式宣布了这所学校的开学, 这是一所多层楼面并令人印象深刻的学校。参加开学仪式的还有地方选区议员兼州卫生部长Martin Foley和联邦部长(Macnamara) Josh Burns。



在新学校开学的第一周结束时, 校长Stout女士接受了本报的采访, 她说, 尽管创办一所基础学校很忙, 但一切还是“相当正常”。

“这第一周我们非常高兴, 感觉我们有

规律可循, 每个人都知道自己在做什么……, 我们得到了很多非常积极的反馈, 尤其是来自很多家庭, 都说他们的孩子在新学校度过了多么美好的一周。这真是令人鼓舞。”

南岸又一个浮动酒吧

Kaylah-Joelle Baker

南岸长廊的 Sandridge Wharf 将很快成为新的两层户外浮动酒吧和酒吧风格餐厅, 名为 Yarra Botanicals。

该酒吧餐厅将于3月初开张, 地处最新的显著地标, 属于墨尔本餐饮集团, 既澳大利亚场地公司 (Australian Venue Co)。该公司在本市有42个其他餐饮场地。

新的浮动酒吧为南岸地区带来了可喜的推动, 该地区因疫情大流行而遭受了严重打击。

该浮动酒吧将在雅拉河上出现, 位于河热门的 Arbory Afloat 餐饮酒吧对面。

该公司首席执行官Paul Waterson表示, 该酒吧与全市其他场馆的不同之处在于, 它的使命是推广和支持维多利亚州的农产品和生产商。

Waterson先生说:“我们承诺在三年内为维州饮料投资 2000万澳元, 并为支持维州饮料的活动而自豪。”

“我们在维州的所有场所都推广维州产品, 作为一家总部位于墨尔本的餐饮集团, 能够提供 100% 的维州饮品和 90% 的维州产品对我们来说是一个非常激动人心的里程碑。我们很自豪能利用 Yarra Botanicals 来支持维多利亚。”

Yarra Botanicals提供一系列鸡尾酒、葡萄酒、啤酒、苹果酒、高级烈酒, 并让客



人共享当地新鲜海鲜、酒吧风味小吃和木烧披萨。我们这个餐饮场所能体现墨尔本社交和热闹氛围的一站式目的地。

客人将在酒吧的遮阳伞下、在舒适的包间或者在沙发上放松身心, 同时享受早午餐和河畔现场音乐, 或在酒吧的顶层欣赏城市天际线。

维多利亚食品饮料(Food and Drink Victoria)墨尔本首席执行官Anthea Loucas Boshia 表示, 她对这个新场馆开业感到兴奋, 认为这对南岸重新焕发活力意义很大。

她说:“我对即将在雅拉河上推出令人难以置信的新场地感到非常兴奋, 它将展示世界一流的食品和饮料, 使维多利亚州成为世界上最棒的饮酒和餐饮目的地之一。”

全新墨尔本高空观景台

Brendan Rees

南岸标志性的 300 米观景台在经过数百万澳元的装修改造后, 以全新的外貌和命名重新开放。

原来的 Eureka 观景台现已更名为墨尔本高空观景台, 拥有全新的“世界级”体验, 包括“世界级”最大的虚拟现实剧场。

拥有 8K 高清的墨尔本高空观景台航行者剧场 (Skydeck Voyager Theatre) 让客人感受 16 个墨尔本和维多利亚州的标志性体验, 包括乘坐Luna公园历史悠久的木制过山车、Rod Laver网球场的边缘座位, 以及感受大洋路上方清新的海洋空气。

客人们坐在剧院享受 11 分钟的旅程, 座椅会有振动、移动和香气散发, 从新鲜烘焙咖啡的香气到墨尔本赛马杯的玫瑰。

为了更仔细地观察这座城市, Monash 大学建筑学教授Tom Morgan博士研发了一个增强现实版的3D墨尔本模型, 展示了这座城市从早期定居到未来的发展历程。

这座南半球最高的墨尔本高空观景台还带有新的应用程序功能, 适用于 Android 和 Apple。客人使用免费 Wi-Fi, 就可以进入 31个隐藏标记的虚拟寻宝, 所有能找到、扫描和解锁标记的人都可以在离开时领取奖品。

酒吧 88 被誉为“酷炫优雅”的全功能酒吧, 主打法国香槟, 客人可以在窗台座位上

欣赏 360 度的全景。

对于胆大的客人, 可以尝试悬崖箱 (Edge), 勇敢的客人像悬挂在一个透明的玻璃立方体中, 伸出墨尔本高空观景台。还可以高空行走 (The Plank), 这是一种虚拟现实体验, 体验惊险的虚拟高空下坠和高空滑索。

观景台总经理Mark Shaw表示, 12月15日的重新开放让嘉宾们“获得更深入、更身临其境、更具娱乐性的体验, 以及从不同角度探索墨尔本的能力”。



What's On: February

Community Calendar



FRIDAYS: UNTIL APRIL 22

NGV Friday Nights

Celebrating the joy of being outside and free, the NGV Friday Nights series is returning in time for summer. A mix of eating, drinking and dancing, the event will focus around music and art.

ngvvic.gov.au



FEBRUARY

Seek & Find at Royal Botanic Gardens

Set your young ones on an adventure exploring nature with our Seek & Find Nature Cards, created by artists Claire Mosley and Casey Atkinson. To see what else is on at the gardens visit:

rbg.vic.gov.au

MPavilion

MPavilion is a temporary pavilion located in the Queen Victoria Gardens (opposite Arts Centre Melbourne) presenting daily free performances, talks, workshops and more until April 24

mpavilion.org



Melbourne Street EatZ

Located alongside the Yarra at South Wharf featuring weekly rotating trucks, bars, live music and events, it's the ultimate day and night out open from Thursday to Sundays until April 25.

melbournestreeteatz.com



Bearbrass Probus

Bearbrass Probus caters to retirees in Southbank, Docklands and the CBD and hosts regular events for locals to connect. To see what events are on offer online during lockdowns, visit the website:

bearbrassprobus.org



Southbank Sustainability Group

A growing group of green and sustainability enthusiasts who meet up at Boyd on the first and third Saturday of each month. Connect via Facebook for more information and educational tips!

Facebook: [SouthbankSustainabilityGroup](https://www.facebook.com/SouthbankSustainabilityGroup)

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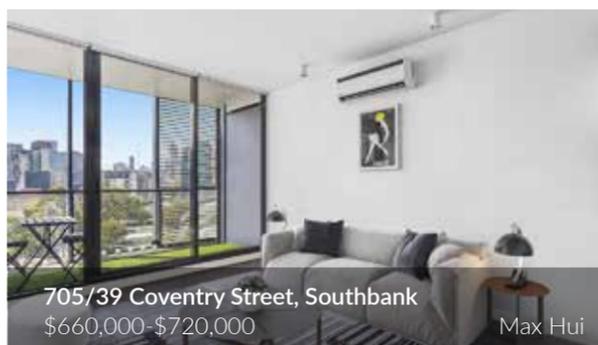
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\$600,000-\$660,000
Georgina Zeneldin



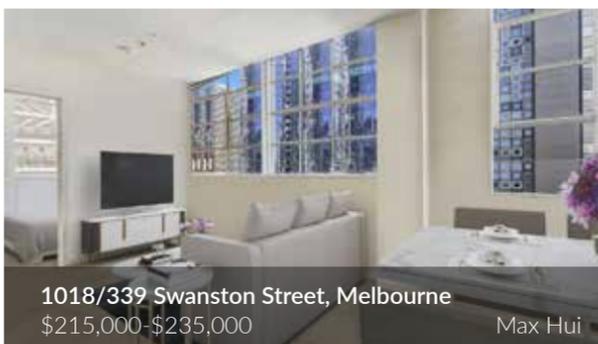
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Max Hui



1008/46-50 Haig Street, Southbank
\$525,000-\$550,000
Georgina Zeneldin



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Max Hui



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Trent Bonnici



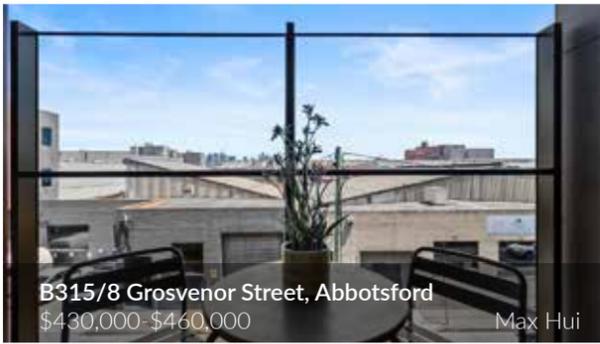
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\$430,000-\$460,000
Max Hui



14/185 Barkly Street, St Kilda
\$750,000-\$820,000
Trent Bonnici



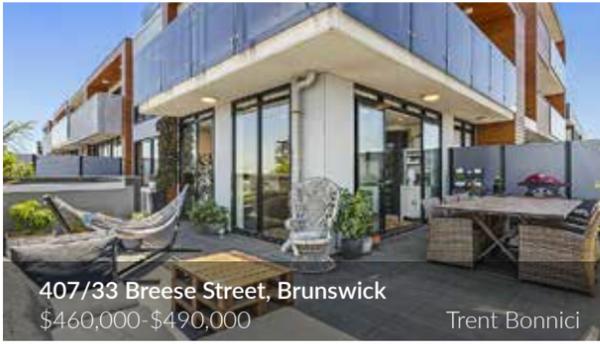
B315/8 Grosvenor Street, Abbotsford
\$430,000-\$460,000
Max Hui



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Max Hui



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Max Hui



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Trent Bonnici



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