

SOUTHBANK NEWS

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Puzzles & Trivia P22



Dancing towards a better Arts Precinct
Photo by Charlie Kinross

Works on the \$1.7 billion Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation (MAPT) have ramped up with developer Lendlease commencing major construction on the State Theatre's refurbishment as well as a new urban garden. Full story on page 5.

Parking overhaul as drivers to pay until 10pm and on Sundays

Free on-street parking on Sundays has been scrapped for drivers coming into the CBD and parts of Southbank, as the City of Melbourne overhauls how it charges motorists.

WORDS BY David Schout
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Drivers will also be charged until 10pm, rather than 8.30pm, from Monday to Sunday, however will have access to free on-street parking for 15 minutes "to support quick trips", and discounted "off-peak" rates.

The move, alongside an overarching Parking and Kerbside Management Plan, is expected to be endorsed by councillors at a May 16 Future Melbourne Committee meeting.

It would also see the implementation of consistent two-hour parking limits every day, 7am to 10pm, to simplify what drivers saw as confusing signage.

The council did not propose any increase to the current maximum \$7 hourly parking rate, and would implement what it said was "fairer, data-led pricing" with a new off-peak \$4 per hour rate all weekend and after 7pm on weekdays.

The sweeping changes would begin in July and only be implemented in the "CBD", which for on-street parking purposes includes a significant parcel of Southbank bounded by Clarendon St, City Rd and Southbank Boulevard.

Following this rollout, the council will next review parking settings in Carlton and West Melbourne, followed by all other neighbourhoods

throughout the municipality in order of priority.

"Good parking management helps keep our city moving, and we want to make parking simpler for people who drive into Melbourne," Lord Mayor Sally Capp said.

"Businesses need confidence that their customers can find a park, and deliveries will arrive on time. That's why we're making up to 15 minutes of parking free, creating consistent two-hour limits and installing clearer signs."

While some criticised the move as pushing away potential visitors, the Lord Mayor said the opposite was the case.

"Feedback from traders was loud and clear; they want to see more active management across on-street parking, to attract more customers and increase parking turnover."

Demand for parking has changed in recent years, with a greater appetite for weekend parking compared to pre-COVID levels.

Pedestrian numbers also indicated that the number of people coming into the city on Sundays was similar to Saturdays.

Cr Capp later told 3AW: "We have thousands of people who try to pay for parking on a Sunday, so we have decided to make it consistent on Saturdays and Sundays."

Continued on page 2.

Residents feel financial pain as interest rate rises add stress to households

WORDS BY Brendan Rees
ECONOMY

Southbank residents are weathering a storm of continuing interest rate rises, with many saying the cost of living was not getting any easier.

Among those feeling the pinch is single mum Sinead, 32, who moved out of her one-bedroom apartment at the Australia 108 tower in April after her weekly rent payments increased from \$350 to \$550, which was simply out of reach.

She said she tried to negotiate with the landlord so she could stay for three months to "at least give me some time to look for other places, and they said, 'no'."

Sinead, who asked for her surname not to be used, is

now house sitting a two-bedroom apartment in Southbank while her friend is overseas until late May.

In the meantime, Sinead, who has a 20-month-old boy and works part-time, said she had been brought to tears looking for a home, but in a turn of luck, she had recently been given approval to move into a two-bedroom rental property in Ashburton after entering a ballot.

"It's a government initiative so I believe what happens is now I have to provide proof of income and then they will show me the property and if I like it, I can move in," she said.

Another resident Caitlin said she and her partner, who have two children aged three and 12 weeks, had been putting extra money into their mortgage but the latest interest rate rise meant "there's not much buffer left".

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D mOTHERTONGUE arrives at ACCA



Michael Pastrikos Tommy-Lee Davies Max Hui Andrew Salvo Lilian Kwan Trent Bonnici Austen Kosasih

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▲ The proposed parking changes will apply in the CBD and parts of Southbank.

Parking overhaul as drivers to pay until 10pm and on Sundays

Continued from page 1.

“We get a lot of feedback and the data actually shows, when something is free, you don’t get the turnover and traders are wanting to see turnover on that street parking so that more customers can come.”

It was expected the council would benefit from a forecast increase in parking meter revenue of around \$2.7 million in the first 12 months.

Research that informed the new plan revealed that up to 30 per cent of CBD traffic was drivers “cruising” to find a park, a situation that increased vehicle congestion, emissions and “frustration for drivers [that] can lead to unsafe driving or illegal parking”.

A significant number of drivers also reported convoluted, confusing signs in the central city.

Some controls currently switched between “1P” and “2P” during the day, and the council said a move to implement across-the-board two-hour parking removed confusion.

“Our on-street parking can be complex with some parking signs, limits, and charges confusing and inconsistent, resulting in frustrating experiences for drivers in the city. This plan will change that,” the council’s deputy transport chair Cr Davydd Griffiths said.

On-street parking represents just four per cent of all parking available in the city, with the remaining 96 per cent managed off-street in commercial car parks. ●



Are you fur real? Fox sighted in Southbank

There’s a tell-tail sign that foxes could be moving into Southbank after one was spotted scurrying along what appeared to be Kavanagh St.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*

The sighting of the fox, captured on video and posted to the Southbank Community Hub Facebook page on May 8, with its bushy tail clearly in view, drew comments that foxes were quickly becoming a “normal thing” in the city.

While the fox’s reasons for being in the Southbank area are unknown, *Southbank News* can only speculate that it was in town to inspect the site of its future gallery, The Fox: NGV Contemporary. ●

winter night market

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STUDENT Q&A

ARTS



“

Get to know a student's experience at The University of Melbourne's Faculty of Fine Arts and Music. Ishan Vivekanantham is currently studying a Master of Production Design (Stage) at the Victorian College of the Arts.

”

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*
ARTS & CULTURE

What attracted you to your study?

The VCA was my first choice for my master's degree mainly because of the surrounding Southbank area. The campus is surrounded by so many theatres and galleries, which makes it the perfect area for an endless amount of



inspiration. The fact that I can finish class and immediately walk across the road to see a play or get lost in a gallery is so special to me and is one of the highlights of my experience.

Describe a typical day of study ...

It's quite an intense course as it packs so much skills-based learning, internships and placement shows within two years. A typical day in second year is not unlike that of a designer in the industry. I sometimes start the day with a production meeting for a VCA show I am designing, then work on any problems or questions that arise, and visit the workshops, meet with directors, drop in at rehearsals, and do a lot of model-making.

What has been your favourite experience?

I would say spending time with my fellow designers. We spend a lot of time in the design studio together working on separate projects and also collaborating with each other on VCA shows. It's amazing to see the breadth of creativity in the design studio as our aesthetics are wildly different and unique.



What inspires you?

I would say curiosity lies at the core of my design practice and it is what drives my creativity. My undergraduate background is in both architecture and engineering, which taught me early on how to think both creatively and practically, and how both are incredibly important to my design practice. The curious side of me strives for innovation within spatial design, which means I'm always trying to

do something different and new. This comes surprisingly naturally in this line of work as every time I design it is with a different text and creative team. New voices and stories incite innovation and curiosity naturally, which is what makes every show different.

How have you collaborated with other students and what is the campus community like?

There have been many subjects throughout the degree which encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, mainly with directing, production and acting cohorts. I've found it very valuable as these subjects have fostered the creation of friendships and partnerships that I hadn't expected. I've found other artists I have worked with now that I want to work with in the future, and getting to know all of them so early on has created this incredible network of people I can depend on.

How do you feel connected to your industry through your degree?

While being surrounded by the industry is a bonus, an even better aspect is having tutors and lecturers who are all practising designers in the theatre industry. Their experiences and insights have taught me so much about the industry I'll be entering into next year, which eases some of the anxiety I had previously. Their expertise has pulled back the curtain so to speak, and they have been supportive with opportunities like backstage set tours and internships in the industry.

What does a creative career look like?

Part of my design philosophy is exploring and questioning everything. I don't feel limiting my knowledge base to what my future career will be is helpful to me, especially in performance design where so many different fields and ways of thinking collide. Having a background in engineering and architecture has helped me greatly with collaboration between departments in design and has also opened up the opportunity to expand into many different fields. For me personally, the career of a creative looks varied, innovative, and exciting. ●

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BINS BOOST CONFIDENCE FOR MEN LIVING WITH INCONTINENCE

A trial of free incontinence product disposal bins across the City of Melbourne has been expanded to three extra locations to make the service more accessible to the community.

The bins are now located in the men's and all-gender toilets at the following Council-owned facilities:

- Carlton Baths
- City Library
- Fawkner Park Senior Citizens Centre
- Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre
- Kathleen Syme Community Centre
- Kensington Neighbourhood Centre
- Library at the Dock
- Melbourne Town Hall public toilets (on Collins Street)
- North Melbourne Community Centre.

Melbourne is the first capital city in Australia to install incontinence product disposal bins in Council-owned facilities.

The 12-month trial began in September as part of the BINS4Blokes men's health campaign, an awareness and advocacy campaign promoting the installation of incontinence bins in public toilets.

The City of Melbourne is an inclusive and accessible city and we want people who experience incontinence to have access to the facilities so they can feel confident to get out and about.

In launching the trial, Councillor Jamal Hakim said it's important more people have access to proper disposal bins for their incontinence products - particularly given many instances of incontinence can be much better managed with the right resources.

"With the proper facilities to dispose products, we hope those living with incontinence can continue getting out and about, and doing what they love when they're here in the City of Melbourne," Cr Hakim said.

"The trial will not only showcase a practical solution for those living with incontinence, but importantly, raise awareness and facilitate a much-needed conversation on the topic."

The bin trial runs until the end of September.

For more information, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/bins4blokes



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Influenza vaccination significantly reduces the risk of contracting influenza and passing the virus to family, colleagues and friends.

For more information and to book, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/flu vaccine

Major upgrades take shape in Arts Precinct transformation

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
PLANNING

Works on the \$1.7 billion Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation (MAPT) have ramped up with major construction starting on the State Theatre's refurbishment as well as a new urban garden.

A treasured Melbourne icon, the heritage State Theatre will be restored and enhanced, with works to include new seating, flooring, and other air conditioning improvements for audience comfort – the first time in its nearly 40-year-history.

Modifications will also be made to the expanded underground loading dock, which will double in size and open more opportunities for shows to be staged.

A new rehearsal space and studio, the same size as the State Theatre stage, will allow performers to rehearse and warm up on site for the first time.

Above ground, work will start on the foundations for the new public garden, about the size of the MCG, in the heart of the precinct.

Creative Industries Minister Steve Dimopoulos visited the site on April 28 to view around 80 different work sites, the number of which is expected to grow to 300 in the next six months.

"The Melbourne Arts Centre Precinct transformation will not only ensure we bring the biggest and best creative offerings to Victoria, but it will also create hundreds of jobs for Victorian tradies to work on this iconic project," Mr Dimopoulos said.

As a major component of MAPT, the Arts Centre Melbourne's Theatres Building (under the spire) is undergoing significant upgrades, which will bring the theatre's sound and staging technology up to world-class standards as well as vastly improving accessibility with wider aisles, bigger lifts, and new wheelchair-friendly viewing positions.

Most of the Theatres Building is underground and sections of the specialist engineering system that protects the building's foundation from corrosion will be replaced, safeguarding the building's future.

A concrete and steel terrace at the rear of the building has also been removed, making

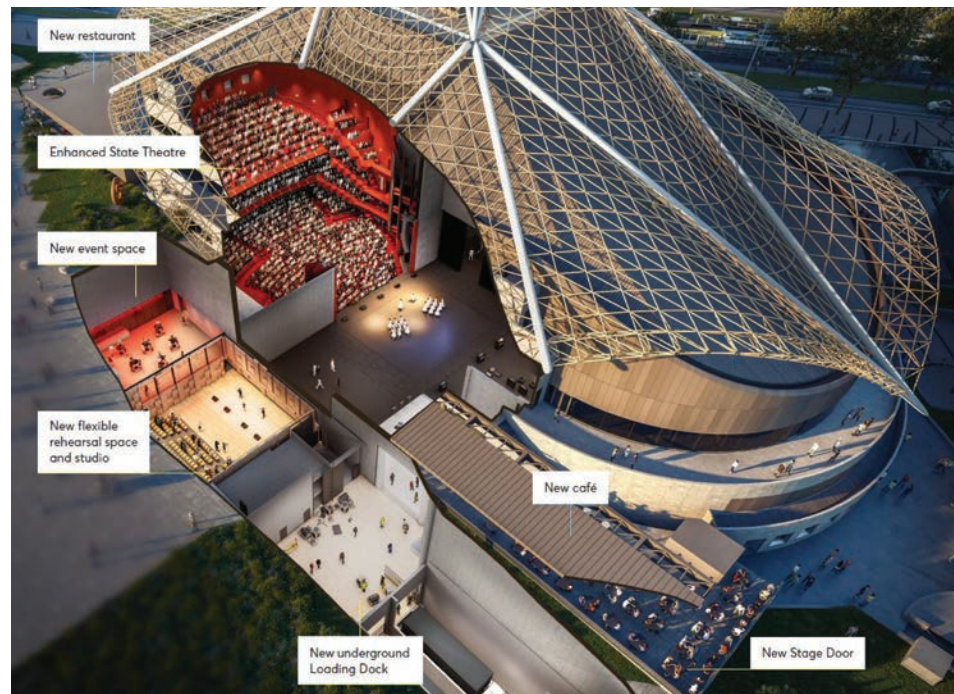
way for future excavation works to expand the building's footprint under Sturt St, which has been permanently closed between City Rd and Southbank Boulevard.

The transformation project will also see construction of Australia's biggest contemporary art and design gallery The Fox: NGV Contemporary.

Southbank3006 residents' group president David Hamilton said communication with residents by the Melbourne Arts Precinct Corporation (MAP Co), an entity created by the state government to drive the vision for the project, had been "extremely good", with briefings provided on a regular basis.

"The project listens and responds to residents and to date it's been very concerned to involve local community and local residents," he said.

However, Mr Hamilton said there had been some concerns about traffic management, "which involve flaws in design of Southbank Boulevard, because Southbank Boulevard's traffic



design did not assume this project".

"So, there needs to be some work by the [City of Melbourne] to deliver better traffic flows, particularly the signal sequencing near Southbank Boulevard at Sturt St and Kavanagh St," he said. "That's the immediate issue. It really is between the council and the Department of Transport to get the signal work flowing a lot better."

Lendlease has been managing the early works of the project since July last year, during which critical shared services were relocated to keep Arts Centre shows running during construction.

Albert Park MP Nina Taylor said, "This

project will deliver long-lasting benefits for our local cafes, restaurants, hotels and retailers, which will all get a boost from extra visitors coming to our city to enjoy the amazing creative and cultural offerings on display." ●



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Footpath works take shape on City Rd-Power St intersection

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
TRANSPORT

A major overhaul of the notorious City Rd-Power St intersection is almost complete with the laying of bluestone paving on the expanded City Rd footpath being one of the final expected stages.

The \$3.8 million upgrade will see the footpath widened, a pedestrian crossing moved away from the busy corner and all City Rd lanes shifted over at the intersection to create more space between pedestrians and road users.

The state government is carrying out the major upgrade after a truck hit and injured five people in a horrific incident in May 2021, prompting a community outcry.

At the time a petition was launched calling for all heavy vehicles to be removed along the dangerous stretch of road, which is popular for accessing the nearby West Gate Freeway.

Southbank Residents' Association president Tony Penna has consistently maintained that while the final design "certainly goes some way" to addressing safety concerns, trucks ultimately needed to be banned from the intersection.

The Southbank3006 residents' group has previously said while it supported the upgrade, it had concerns with heavy vehicles using the intersection, and also feared speed would be a factor as drivers negotiated a wider turning arc onto Power St, compromising the safety of pedestrians.

Works, which started in October last year, were initially expected to finish at the end of March, but a report from VicRoads in May said in addition to laying bluestone paving on the expanded City Rd footpath, crews would finish installing permanent line marking of the pedestrian crossing (and install bollards on the southeast corner of the intersection).

VicRoads said night works would continue on Sunday nights while the final line marking was installed, with day works to begin for the installation of bluestone paving.

Speed reductions will be in place between 9.30am and 3.30pm Monday to Friday while workers are on site. This is to avoid reductions during the peak-hour travel times. ●



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Councillor Roshena Campbell returns after “disappointing” by-election defeat; would not have voted to back Voice

After defeat in an historic Federal by-election, City of Melbourne councillor Roshena Campbell spoke with Southbank News about the result, the Voice to Parliament, and voting against the Lord Mayor.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Returning Cr Roshena Campbell plans to see out the council term after defeat in an historic Federal by-election, and has revealed she would not have joined fellow councillors in voting to support an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

Selected as the Liberal Party candidate for the April 1 by-election in Aston, a Federal seat in Melbourne’s east vacated by Alan Tudge, Cr Campbell and the party suffered a famous defeat to the Labor government.

The result marked the first time in 103 years that a sitting government had won a seat from the opposition in a by-election.

Following an unpaid leave of absence leading into the election, and after previously vying for Liberal pre-selection in the seat of Casey in November 2021, Cr Campbell said she now planned to remain as councillor until the next City of Melbourne election in late 2024.

“It was a disappointing result,” she said of the Aston loss.

“But I’m obviously delighted to come back to the City of Melbourne and continue my work here for the remainder of the council term ... so no intentions to put my hand up at the moment.



▲ Cr Roshena Campbell with Opposition Leader Peter Dutton prior to the Aston by-election (Picture: Facebook).

It was a privilege to be a candidate in that by-election but I’m conscious of the work we’ve got to achieve in Melbourne.”

During her absence, City of Melbourne councillors voted to back the “yes” campaign in the lead up to a referendum on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

The move saw it become the first capital city council to “adopt a firm position on the Voice” according to Lord Mayor Sally Capp, ahead of Australia’s first referendum since 1999 later this year.

While she did not wish to comment on the debate given she was not in the council chamber, Cr Campbell confirmed with *Southbank News* that she would have voted against the motion at the March 21 Future Melbourne Committee meeting.

She did, however, say she believed council resources were better spent addressing local issues rather than national ones.

“My position has generally been when it comes to advocacy on these issues — we had the debate about changing the date of Australia Day and I opposed the council doing that — that there are significant challenges that are within our remit; making sure the city is clean, keeping rates down, supporting small business and making sure that we provide to keep the city moving,” she said.

“So, my focus is very much about those things that local government needs to do, and making sure we get that right.”

Cr Campbell was elected on the Lord Mayor’s ticket as part of “Team Capp” at the 2020 City of Melbourne election.

However, she has found herself voting along different lines to the Lord Mayor on a number of key issues this council term, namely when she voted against plans for a safe injecting facility in the CBD, changing the date of Australia Day, and perhaps most notably against the city’s rollout of protected cycling lanes.

Cr Campbell’s continued criticism of bike lanes and what she termed “anti-car measures” at Town Hall eventually saw her removed as chair of the council’s transport portfolio.

“I think one of the great things about this country, and we see it even at the local government level, is that we have a robust democracy. We have debate in the council chamber, and I think we owe it to ratepayers to have that robust debate. They want a group of councillors that are going to bring independence and scrutiny to

the decisions being made, so I’m very proud to do that.”

She did not say whether this had caused friction or impacted her relationship with the Lord Mayor.

“The Lord Mayor and I work together day in, day out to achieve things for the city but there will be times when we disagree and there’s been notable examples of that.”

Since being removed from the transport role, Cr Campbell’s sole portfolio is that as chair of City Activation, which has focused on supporting small businesses and attracting new ones.

She was determined to make Melbourne “the easiest place to do business” by reducing red tape and enticing businesses to establish their headquarters in the city.

While the city and particularly the CBD had bounced back strongly on weekends and evenings, which had seen a strong rise in foot traffic, Cr Campbell said there was work to do outside of those times.

“I think the city has shown incredible resilience post-COVID, but I know for a lot of small business owners the past few years have been an incredible struggle and the job of us as council is providing them with what they need ... I know events have played a huge part in getting the return of visitors and we’ve seen pedestrian traffic skyrocket during event periods, but we also need to make sure that we have a long-term plan to grow both the daytime and night-time economy.” ●



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Crown fined \$30 million over “undocumented” bank cheque practice

WORDS BY *Rafael Gerster*
SAFETY & SECURITY

Crown Casino has been handed a \$30 million fine after Victoria’s gambling watchdog investigated undocumented bank cheque practices.

The Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC) issued the fine in April after a Royal Commission found Crown had allowed patrons to gamble by depositing bank cheques made out to themselves, and not to Crown, even before the cheque had cleared.

“This was a serious contravention because it was undocumented, long-running and subverted the

important controls on the use of cheques at the casino,” the VGCCC said.

The *Casino Control Act 1991 (Vic)* prohibits the use of cheques at the casino except in limited circumstances. This prohibition is designed to prevent the use of cheques to extend credit to gamblers or to launder money.

The VGCCC’s chairperson Fran Thorn said Crown’s banking practice could harm patrons and undermine the moral values of the casino.

“Practices like accepting bank cheques expose Crown to the risk of money laundering, put patrons at risk of gambling harm, and compromise our ability to ensure the casino runs

with integrity, safety and fairness,” Ms Thorn said.

The VGCCC will issue directions to Crown to ban the bank and blank cheque practices. The Commission also requires a review of Crown’s current procedures on accepting bank cheques, and will investigate undocumented practices at the Melbourne Casino.

Last year, the VGCCC fined the Casino giant \$80 million over its China Union Pay process and issued a further \$120 million fine for breaches of its responsible service of gambling obligations.

Meanwhile, in May the VGCCC issued a formal direction to Crown to implement a raft of



new harm minimisation and anti-money laundering measures, which incorporate key recommendations of the Royal Commission. By December, Crown is required to implement on all its electronic gaming machines (EGMs):

- Mandatory carded play, meaning that all EGM play at the casino will be linked to a patron’s identity.
- Mandatory pre-commitment using the YourPlay system, which ensures players set time and spend limits prior. While YourPlay will continue on a voluntary basis at other venues, at the Melbourne casino a player will not be able to continue to play beyond pre-set limits. ●

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Pet's Corner

Southbank's guardian angel



"I wouldn't be alive today without Buck".

WORDS BY *Shervin Nasiri*

Despite his tough appearance and his weight of a little more than 40 kilograms, five-year-old Buck is a thorough "social butterfly" who greets everyone and thanks those who give coins to his owner Sharkawi.

He is not an ordinary Bull Arab, but a therapy dog trained to interrupt undesirable behavior.

"I wouldn't be alive today without Buck. He keeps me alive," Sharkawi said. Buck can feel when his owner Sharkawi is depressed and feeling unwell. He has helped him many times by trying to stop him from doing "stupid things" – something that happened recently when Sharkawi felt helpless.

"He makes me think twice," he said.

Sharkawi became homeless when Buck was just a little puppy. Since then, they have lived on the streets together and have been each other's safety. "He really is my everything."

Buck sleeps a lot during the day, but at night he stays awake and keeps an eye on Sharkawi.

"He makes me feel secure when I sleep."

Despite taking good care of his dog and giving him lots of love, Sharkawi often hears insults about Buck from passers-by daily.

"They usually say that I should take my dog home and things like that. Well, I would have done that if I had a home. They don't know that my dog has everything he needs just like any other dog," he said, while pointing to a trolley he had behind him.

On the trolley are three large bags that Sharkawi carries with him. Two of them belong to Buck. In one, he keeps everything Buck needs, such as food, extra clothes, leashes, brushes, a bed, and blankets. The other bag contains all of Buck's favourite toys. Sharkawi himself only has one bag where all his belongings fit.

Many people tell Sharkawi that they understand his situation, but he said that they really had no idea.

"There are few people who have gone through what I am going through, so it is not easy for them to understand. Most people wouldn't even be able to live like I do for a day." ●



Council lagging behind on 44km bike lane goal

WORDS BY *David Schout*
TRANSPORT

The City of Melbourne isn't on track to reach its goal of installing 44km of protected bike lanes by mid-2024.

To date the council has delivered just over 40 per cent of physically separated cycling lanes (19km), and appears highly unlikely to hit its target in just over 12 months' time.

The council has not indicated when it might reach the goal.

In response to declaring a "Climate and Biodiversity Emergency" in February 2020, the council pledged to deliver 44km of lanes in four years rather than the 10 years it had initially pledged.

The fast-tracking of cycling lanes was the council's number two priority – second only to transitioning council assets from fossil fuels at



number one – as part of a 10-point action plan endorsed in 2020.

And, while a scorecard presented at the May 2 Future Melbourne Committee meeting showed it had achieved "strong progress" in eight of 10 areas, the ambitious and highly publicised cycling plan was lagging.

"That is one of the targets we've set for ourselves that we are tracking towards; we're teetering towards not

quite being on track, but we're going to continue doing all that we can to meet that and all of the priority actions," the council's environment chair Cr Rohan Leppert said.

"Obviously after an initial quick burst with the trial infrastructure for some of our new bicycle lanes to get to that 44km target within four years rather than 10, there was a slowdown last year. I do think there will be a smaller spurt in the coming months if we can get the Macaulay and Arden projects off the ground."

Cr Leppert said some hold-ups to delivering the action plan were outside the council's control.

"We don't have a perfect scorecard on every single front here; obviously [on] some of the matters here we are held up by other levels of government withholding approvals or by our own financial constraints."

In June 2022 councillors

controversially voted to pause the installation of bike lanes within the CBD for the entire 2022-23 financial year.

The move drew a strong public response as members of Melbourne's cycling community converged on Town Hall, while more than 1100 wrote in protest of the move.

Recent candidate for the Federal seat of Aston Roshena Campbell was the only councillor to vote against the continued implementation of the action plan, and she reiterated her criticism of the fast-tracked bike lane rollout.

"The environmental impact of speeding up that delivery [of 44km bike lanes] is not yet clear, but what is clear is that there is an economic impact. The bike lanes that were designed have had traffic congestion impacts, deterred visitors coming in by car, and council resources were required to fix up the design of them,

in particular Exhibition St," she said.

"We need to provide safe routes for cyclists, but we need to get bike lane delivery right – sometimes that doesn't mean quick is best. There are always going to be competing tensions about the use of our road space, but we can get this right, we just need to take the time to do it. So my view remains this: that the rollout to date has had significant concerns and I don't think an accelerated delivery of the balance of those kilometres of bike lanes will address that."

Notably for Southbankers, the City of Melbourne has committed to commencing northbound bike lane works on St Kilda Rd in the 2023-24 financial year.

The protected lanes – from Park St up to Princes Bridge – will provide a safe cycling link along one of Melbourne's most active vehicular traffic, and cycling, routes. ●





Flinders Lane Gallery

Situated within the beautiful Nicholas Building, FLG is the perfect destination for anyone looking for a relaxed yet inspiring encounter with art. Showcasing the work of over 40 contemporary and Indigenous artists the gallery presents a dynamic program of exhibitions and boasts an inviting, light filled showroom featuring the latest works from our stockroom.

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Sky's the limit: Swoop Aero's mission to reach one billion people by 2030

As the only end-to-end logistics platform on the planet deploying its own cutting-edge drone aircraft, Swoop Aero is leading the way in redefining how to harness the power of our skies to deliver real impact where it's needed most.

WORDS BY Sean Car
BUSINESS

Since launching in 2017, the Fishermans Bend-based drone logistics company has wasted no time in asserting itself as a world leader in its field, operating across six continents and distributing more than 1.4 million items globally to date.

Already providing more than 4.5 million people around the world with access to life-saving medicines, disaster response or critical monitoring and mapping services, by 2025 Swoop Aero hopes to reach 100 million people through its ever-expanding networks.

According to its chief operating officer Jevan Goodhew, "hypergrowth" was the word which best summed up the next five to 10 years at Swoop Aero as it embarks on scaling up its services to reach one billion people by 2030 – proof that this amazing local success story is only just getting warmed up.

Commercial use of unmanned aerial vehicles, commonly known as "drones", has risen sharply in recent years and, with a projected global market share of around \$50 billion by 2030, the sky continues to present exciting opportunities to do things differently.

While many would be familiar with "mini-drones" commonly flown by everyday people for taking pictures or videos from above, much has been made of the technology's growing commercial logistics capabilities.

Now some 10 years in the making, US tech-giant Amazon recently launched a drone delivery service of its own for consumer goods – Prime Air – which, according to recent reports, is still overcoming significant challenges in rolling out its service at scale.

It's one example that puts Swoop Aero's rapid success in this industry into stark context, with the homegrown company founded by former Royal Australian Air Force pilot Eric Peck defying all of its competitors in the space of just five years.

As reported in the *Australian Financial Review* in June last year, Mr Peck revealed that Swoop Aero had rejected a \$100 million takeover bid from a US company servicing the defence sector, insisting that the company saw its purpose as much more than just defence sales as "I've been in the military, so I'm not against it, but I wanted to do more".

This was a message Mr Goodhew strongly reiterated, stating that the whole team saw its mission as "unlocking the potential of the sky", and providing a "beneficial infrastructure layer for society".

He said that since its establishment, Swoop Aero had sought to do this by designing its networks to service five main streams – medical transport, monitoring and mapping, maritime logistics, search and rescue and, disaster response.

"We're a commercial business focused on benefiting society as opposed to participating in some of the problematic use cases for drones," Mr Goodhew said. "We've thought about this holistically, and the way that we really view drone logistics is, essentially, unlocking the potential of the sky."

"So, we started with medical logistics. It gives us our social licence to operate and it's a very different story talking to potential customers about the ability to deliver urgent blood transfusions or a life-saving vaccine to someone in a remote African community as opposed to coffee or fast food."

Take Swoop Aero's work in Malawi, for example. Land-locked in East Africa between Mozambique and Zambia, Malawi is one of the poorest nations on Earth and it's where Swoop Aero has set up the world's longest running



drone logistics network.

Working alongside a US non-government organisation Village Reach, the company helps transport medical goods from district health centres into remote communities, which Mr Goodhew said ranged from notebooks and rubber gloves to blood transfusions, emergency vaccines and prescription medicines.

As one of Swoop Aero's "huge success stories", by September this year the company expects to have national coverage in Malawi, and has recently received a grant from USAid to conduct the world's first randomised control test for drone logistics from there.

But whether it's delivering vaccines or COVID-19 testing kits, or conducting disaster and area mapping or conservation and wildlife monitoring, Mr Goodhew said the services were all scalable due to the capacity to deploy multiple drones at a time.

"We're not deploying one aircraft with one pilot to go and fly 30 flights a day," he said. "We're deploying a fleet of drones into a geographic area and the system has been designed to be scalable from day one," adding that depending



on the respective airspace regulations, "the end goal is to have one pilot fly up to 30 aircraft".

"We think about a fleet of 30 aircraft in a particular area that really unlocks the benefit of using autonomous drones to carry out these logistics tasks. We're able to bring the costs per flight down significantly compared to traditional modes of transport," he said.

"We're obviously carbon-free; we've got a fully off-grid system if need be and so we can add additional capacity to existing logistics infrastructure without adding any additional carbon, which is pretty important to us."

"Then we also have this ability to transition from a particular mission type like a medical delivery to a disaster response delivery with no hardware changes to the aircraft, aside from loading the mission-specific role equipment.

So, we could be flying cargo missions over the streets of Melbourne and immediately transition to doing rooftop inspections post a localised thunderstorm if that's what our customers need us to do."

Like the company's co-founder Eric Peck, Mr Goodhew has a strong background working in defence having started his career as an army officer, before working in banking and completing a Master of Business Administration (MBA).

Having been "fired-up to get involved in a start-up", he said that he first came across Swoop Aero's work via LinkedIn and thought, "I can't believe these guys are Australian, I needed to find out how to meet them".

After connecting with Mr Peck through a mutual connection, he would eventually join the Swoop Aero team, which today consists of more than 100 people across Australia, New Zealand, Africa and Europe.

While the lived experience of its founder in areas such as aviation and engineering have been central to the company's success, Mr Goodhew said Eric had made "a deliberate



the heart of Fishermans Bend.

Considered an "absolute step up in sophistication", *Kite* can travel up to 175km carrying 3kg of supplies (or 130km with 5kgs) at "blistering speeds" of up to 200km per hour, complete with secure payload storage and advanced detect-and-avoid technology.

But while it's easy to talk about the hardware, Mr Goodhew said just as important was the "software stack" that allows each aircraft to operate, from autopiloting and avionics architecture to the remote pilot stations or its logistics dispatch systems.

Swoop Aero is also in the process of rolling out autonomous, architecturally designed docking stations for its fleet, known as an "Aviary", combining landing infrastructure, charging technology, payload exchange, and user interface.

"Our platform is world leading," he said. "We have a fully integrated tech stack so there are no external dependencies."

"If you, for instance, wanted to go and start a drone logistics network anywhere in the world all you need is Swoop Aero to go and do that and there's no other company in the world that can say that."

While its mission, to deliver drone networks that realise the next giant leap in how essential supplies and services are delivered, is one which is truly global with plans for expansion in the United States, and countries across Europe, Africa and Asia, Mr Goodhew said it was also excited about future collaborations at its doorstep in Fishermans Bend.

With the precinct's proximity to the city, St Kilda and surrounding cafes and venues such as CB Co ideal for its young team, most important was the industrial space providing it with the freedom to keep innovating.

And with the University of Melbourne soon to establish its engineering campus around the corner from its headquarters, Mr Goodhew said direct access to such collaboration was "really, really important for us".

"We're able to do demonstrations here and they [students] can come through and see the production line, see the aircraft and actually see real, Australian, advanced manufacturing without having to get in an Uber and set out to some industrial park," he said.

"It's easy to underestimate proximity, but realistically, that's one of the key drawcards for us here in Fishermans Bend." ●

For more information:
swoop.aero



Sean Car

EDITOR

SEAN@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU



Faces of Southbank

Question: What brings you to Southbank and what do you like about it?



NICHOLAS ZAJAROPULOS

I just got back from Chile and have been missing coming here and having a coffee by the river. I come here about once or twice a year. It's a very nice area, you meet people from everywhere, and that's uplifting.



CHEYENNE GRONTHOS

I am here from Adelaide to visit my cousin who lives in Southbank. I love the buildings, the restaurants by the river and the vibe in this suburb. It makes me feel at home.



RAYAN HASSAN

I work here in Southbank and love the people I work with. I also like to take a walk here by the river. People are very friendly and welcoming here.



RORY MULDOON

I have been working here for a while now and usually walk in the area after lunch. I like the atmosphere here especially when the sun is shining. ●

Southbank leads way as more cafes, restaurants open on weekends

WORDS BY *David Schout*
ECONOMY

An increasing number of city cafes and restaurants are opting to open across the weekend in response to Melbourne's new rhythm — and Southbank is leading the way.

New data from the City of Melbourne revealed that the hospitality sector has acted on recent trends showing higher weekend foot traffic than prior to COVID-19, and have opted to remain open on both Saturdays and Sundays.

The council's quarterly "economy snapshot" revealed that across the CBD, Southbank, Docklands and Carlton, 68 per cent of cafes and restaurants were now open on the weekend, compared with 65 per cent in 2019.

However, in Southbank — where there are more than 100 cafes — this figure was above 80 per cent on both Saturdays and Sundays.

The shift in business behaviour has conversely seen a slight drop in Southbank hospitality traders operating on Mondays and Tuesdays, while Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays have remained the same as their pre-COVID level.

"Weekend trade on the Southbank strip has been strong over summer and autumn," Yarra River Business Association executive officer Tim Bracher said. "Typically, it will diminish, however, as the weather gets colder. Football and special events such as the Rising Festival will provide bumps in patronage."

Pedestrian counters across the city have revealed a now consistent trend of high foot traffic on both weekends and weekday evenings, when compared with pre-COVID numbers.

In recent months night-time spending was higher than pre-pandemic levels, driven by major events including the Grand Prix and concerts by international artists Harry Styles and Ed Sheeran.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the snapshot data had proven important for small business decision-making in the city.

"[It] continues to be a source of truth for our city traders, helping them adapt and grow in line with Melbourne's new rhythm," Cr Capp said. "The fact that a higher proportion of traders are open on weekends and spending continues to rise is proof that Melbourne's doors are well and truly open for business."

However, Mr Bracher said that while that was the case in Southbank, a deeper look at bottom lines suggested traders were still navigating a tough business environment.

"While patronage has been good, input costs for food and beverage operators have been high — everything from labour to electricity and produce prices — so the margins are not as strong as they would normally be," he said.

"We are also noticing that corporates are a little more hesitant to commit, and while wedding

trade is reasonably strong, their spending level has reduced slightly."

In response to higher visitor numbers on weekends, the council was set to vote through significant changes to on-street parking in the CBD and a significant part of Southbank.

Free Sunday parking is set to be scrapped, and drivers charged until 10pm (rather than 8.30pm) from Monday to Sunday in both the Hoddle Grid and a significant parcel of Southbank bound by Clarendon St, City Rd and Southbank Boulevard. The Lord Mayor said that feedback from traders was "loud and clear" that they wanted to increase parking turnover to attract more customers on the weekends.

The council did not propose any increase to the current maximum \$7 hourly parking rate, and would implement what it said was "fairer, data-led pricing" with a new off-peak \$4 per hour rate all weekend and after 7pm on weekdays. ●

Your Federal MP for Southbank.

We're here to help.
Please get in touch if you need assistance.

joshburns.com.au

josh.burns.mp@aph.gov.au ✉

(03) 9534 8126 ☎

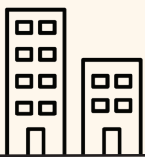
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JOSH BURNS MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MACNAMARA

f t i joshburnsmp





PROPERTY & REAL ESTATE

How would I describe the inner-city apartment market right now? In a word – RESILIENT, and here's why ...



According to PropTrack, while the median sale price in Southbank and the CBD has remained steady, in neighbouring Docklands it's increased by 5.9 per cent to \$635,000 and the feedback we're receiving from buyers right now is that affordability is driving demand.

WORDS BY *Baden Lucas*
LUCAS REAL ESTATE



During the past three months, Lucas Real Estate has received 3599 enquiries from prospective buyers and tenants, and the vast majority of them are attracted to apartment living for these three key reasons.

1 Location, location

One of the biggest strengths of the CBD, Docklands and Southbank is the location. Buyers and tenants are looking for apartments in convenient, central locations with amenities such as shops, restaurants and public transport.

2 Affordability

The rental market has been driven by migration and price volatility, with prices recovering and exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Lucas leases more than 10 properties per week and currently it's taking just 12 days for us to find our newest residents. This demand in the rental market has driven a lot more demand from first-home buyers looking to escape the rental market and who are recognising the incredible value for money our inner-city market commands.

3 Low-maintenance living

Another factor that makes inner-city apartments attractive to buyers is the low-maintenance lifestyle they offer. Living in the heart of the city means having access to an array of cultural and entertainment options, as well as a vibrant and diverse community.

The first three months of 2023 have started with a real sense of positivity in our

marketplace, with urgency from buyers looking to settle quickly. Our quarter to date has seen Lucas's average time to sell drop to 40 days, from 55 inner-city apartment sales with an average settlement period of 44 days.

The most significant impact to our market is interest rates, but how does this impact buyers in the real world?

Well, aside from repayments being higher, the additional challenge that buyers are experiencing is that their loan approval amounts are shifting monthly.

Where a prospective buyer may have been approved in January to spend \$700,000 – experiencing two rate rises in a month will reduce their borrowing power to \$650,000.

According to the Australia Bureau of Statistics, home loan financing has dropped by 35.1 per cent since a high in February 2022. Still, the overall appeal and affordability in the inner-city apartment market have meant strong demand, and volume remains high.

Finally, Lucas was honoured to be recognised for sixth year running as Agency of the Year in both rentals and sales in Docklands, as well as finishing Top 10 in Rentals in Victoria. Thank you, to all our rental providers, tenants, vendors, and buyers – I look forward to updating you at the halfway point for 2023. ●

For more information:
lucasre.com.au



THE NEW-LOOK 2023 SOUTHBANK DIRECTORY

For where to shop, eat, stay and play,
head to southbankdirectory.com.au

To list your business or for advertising enquiries,
Contact: jack@hyperlocalnews.com.au



Docklands and Yarra's Edge
(03) 9936 9999

805/8 Dorcas Street, Southbank

On offer is an 8th level apartment approximately 56sqm in internal size with an exceptionally large terrace.

🛏 1 Bed 🚿 1 Bath 🚗 1 Car

Private Sale
Price Guide: \$345,000

Agents:

Eugene Louey 0401 299 997	Alice Geddes 0421 981 981
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This is what \$23 million will get you in Southbank

It may not have a kitchen, bedrooms, or toilets, but this Southbank property will still set a lucky buyer back \$23 million to call it home.

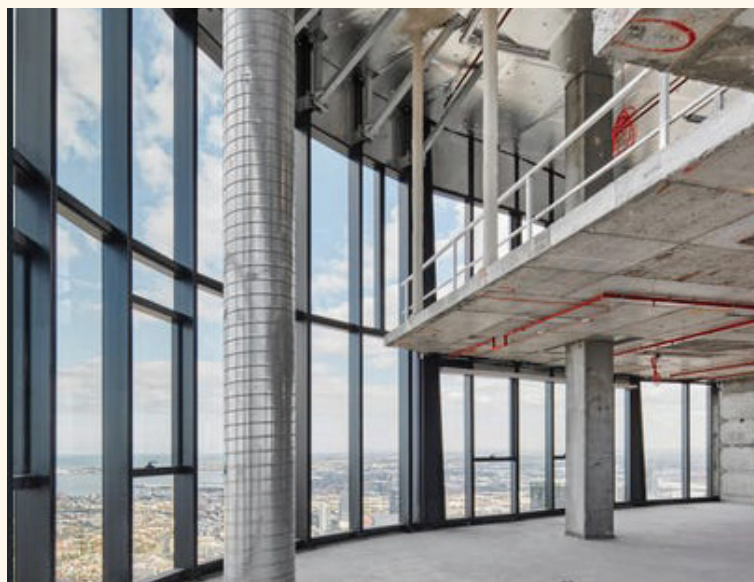
WORDS BY *Jack Hayes*

What do you get for that eye-watering amount of money?

Well, you'll get a concrete shell consisting of a two-level penthouse (67 and 68) in Melbourne Square's east tower covering 1185 sqm; a capacity for eight bedrooms, four bathrooms and eight car spaces, and a \$1 million package to customise the penthouse with leading Australian interior design firm, Coco Republic.

The residence features floor-to-ceiling windows framing 360-degree views across Melbourne, and two dramatic spiral staircases bridging the gap between both levels.

While the \$23 million is a lot of money for any property, it pales in comparison to the recent record-breaking sale of a sub-penthouse in the STH BNK by Beulah tower (completion 2027) which fetched \$38 million. ●



For more information:
melbournesquare.com.au

Exceptional results are why **Michael** is Southbank's most trusted agent

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Michael Pastrikos is hands down the best agent in Southbank. His knowledge of the area and his understanding of the market make him the best there is. In addition, he is supremely professional whilst giving the buyer personal attention. I'm so happy that I appointed Michael and his team to sell my property. In this challenging market, he was able to achieve an excellent result and I'm sure he got me the best deal possible.

Vendor - 1011/163 City Road, Southbank

To learn how to get the most for your property, contact Michael today



Michael Pastrikos
0404 282 864
michael.pastrikos@raywhite.com
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Your City of Melbourne community update



AMBITIOUS WATER PROJECT TO SAVE 60 MILLION LITRES

We're drought-proofing Princes Park for future generations

It's home to the Carlton Football Club, local cricket and bowls clubs and a favourite for families, and now Princes Park is set to become home to our city's next ambitious stormwater harvesting project.

The Princes Park Stormwater Harvesting Project will see excess stormwater harvested from Moonee Ponds Creek and used to irrigate the green open spaces, significant trees and playing fields at the 38.6 hectare site in Carlton North.

Not only will it save more than 60 million litres of drinking water each year, but the system will help future-proof the community's recreational spaces and premier sporting facilities against drought.

The health of Moonee Ponds Creek will also be improved with pollution, litter and sediment removed along with the excess water.

The stormwater harvesting system, including storage tanks and treatment system, will be housed underground with a pump station located alongside existing pump infrastructure in Royal Park.

During a heavy rain event, excess water will be collected and pass through a pollutant trap where litter and large pollution is removed, and then through a chamber to remove coarse sediment.

The treated stormwater will then be transferred to underground storage tanks at McPherson Field in Royal Park.

These tanks will be able to hold five million litres of water to make the most of major rainfall events and store water for drier periods.

The water will be pumped into an underground irrigation tank in Princes Park via a UV disinfection system, removing any pathogens before the water is used to maintain the park's ovals and gardens.

As our climate changes, intense rainfall, flooding, extreme heat events and drought are becoming more common in Melbourne. This project is part of our climate and biodiversity emergency response and will enable us to adapt to the impacts of climate change and improve water quality and green spaces.

The \$7 million Princes Park Stormwater Harvesting Project is supported by the Victorian Government's Integrated Water Management Grant Program.

Design work for the project has begun following community consultation, with construction set to begin later this year and be complete by 2025.

Measures will be in place to minimise disruption to sporting clubs and park users during this time.

To learn more about this project, visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/princes-park-stormwater-harvesting-project/project-overview

BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

- More than 60 million litres of alternate water will be collected each year for Princes Park, saving precious drinking water. That's the equivalent of 24 Olympic swimming pools.
- Litter and up to 20,000 kilograms of sediment and 200 kilograms of nitrogen will be removed from Moonee Ponds Creek each year.
- Soil moisture will be replenished through more sustainable management of the natural water cycle.
- We're helping drought-proof Princes Park by ensuring it can source 80 per cent of its water needs via alternative sources.

DID YOU KNOW?

We have six stormwater harvesting systems that capture and store 230 million litres of rainwater each year which is used to keep our parks, gardens and trees lush and green.

Birrarung Marr, Royal Park, Queen Victoria and Alexandra gardens, Fitzroy Gardens, Darling Street, and Lincoln and University squares are all kept green and lush thanks to harvested stormwater.

Currently 23 per cent of our water use is from stormwater and rainwater harvesting.



Underground storage tanks like this one at Lincoln Square will collect stormwater to ensure Princes Park remains green and lush

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 News* at news.melbourne.vic.gov.au

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Your City of Melbourne community update

NOT TO WATER IT DOWN, BUT RAIN IS THE KEY TO OUR BIG GREEN CITY

Water is essential for improving liveability in Melbourne, keeping our green spaces healthy and cooling the city. Learn how we're creating a more sustainable water system for the city.



We are introducing permeable surfaces to our streetscapes to capture rainwater for reuse

Melbourne's four seasons in one day may dampen the spirits of some, but the truth is our much-maligned wet weather is actually the key to ensuring our city stays cooler and greener in the face of climate change.

Each year enough rain falls in our municipality to fill about 8000 Olympic swimming pools.

Of this rain, a little over half is collected on sealed surfaces, such as roofs and roads.

Which means, more than 10,000 million litres of stormwater literally washes down the drain, taking with it litter and pollution.

So at the City of Melbourne, we're doing everything we can to collect more of it, clean it and store it for irrigation.

Because by 2050, demand for water to maintain our parks and growing urban forest will double.

And while we have been fortunate to have healthy rainfall; we remember the Millenium Drought when we experienced rainfall 14 per cent below average.

This saw our world-renowned parks and gardens significantly impacted, turning to dust and trees suffering from lack of water – not just during the drought but for a decade after.

So we're prioritising water sensitive urban design, especially using stormwater runoff to support our precious trees and gardens.

Historically, cities were designed to be impermeable, and that's the thinking we're now challenging.

Bourke Street Mall, for example, is a traditional streetscape. Rain falls and runs straight off the pavement, into the drain and out into Port Phillip Bay. It's a waste. So we're trying to find more ways to capture and reuse it in a more sustainable way.

This includes introducing permeable surfaces, rather than letting it literally drain away.

We have developed six stormwater harvesting systems across the city collectively storing and supplying an average 230 million litres per year.

Our greening projects across the city are kept green with stormwater, including our raingardens and tree pits, as well as underground soil trenches that increase soil moisture for trees.

We're also encouraging partnerships with private buildings and developers, helping them intercept rainwater from rooftops to irrigate their plants.

Our city's renewal areas are low-lying and flooding is a major challenge.

So we're designing and delivering lush and cool streetscapes that carry out a flood management role.

For instance, in Fishermans Bend, the largest urban renewal project in Australia, we are part of the team implementing the largest water-sensitive urban design project.

The flood management approach will reduce flood risk by increasing permeability, retaining water in the landscape, and capturing water for later use.

These are just some of the elements of our Water Sensitive Urban Design approach.

WATER USE TARGETS

We've set a goal that by 2030, 50 per cent of all council's water use will be sourced from alternative sources - stormwater or recycled water - rather than drinking water.

We want to see 20 per cent of all water use across the municipality sourced from alternative water sources.

To learn more, visit urbanwater.melbourne.vic.gov.au

Meet Melbourne's water guru

When Mohammad Kharouf started as the City of Melbourne's water management expert, he started without a blueprint.

"No one else had ever held a job like this in the municipality," Mohammad said.

"I still remember the excitement when the interview panel said it would be up to me to shape the role."

Australia had just lived through the Millenium Drought, and Mohammad's job was to help Melbourne improve its water management and prepare for future extreme weather events.

At that time, we'd just installed a new central irrigation control system, but its programming needed some finessing.

"No one knew me, so it took some convincing to let them hand over the reins to change the programming," Mohammad said.

With so many of Melbourne's gardens heritage-listed, Mohammad was given access to control irrigation at Kings Domain – which has fewer water-sensitive plants – as a pilot.

"Before coming to Melbourne I'd been managing water and irrigation in Riyadh – the capital and largest city of Saudi Arabia – so I knew I was up to the challenge.

"But everyone was understandably a little wary – our city's water is such a precious commodity."

Fast forward three months, and Mohammad had halved water use in Kings Domain through careful and expert water management, and our plants were flourishing.

"I've been here ever since. It will be 10 years in October."

Mohammad has spent that time building a more refined central irrigation and water management system, and expanding its reach into every City of Melbourne neighbourhood.

Today, Melbourne boasts world-leading water management infrastructure that helps us understand how much water to apply and when.

"Our central system takes into account rainfall in the area and monitors moisture through soil probes hidden throughout our parks and garden beds.

"We also have access to satellite imagery that provides important information on the health of Melbourne's precious plants."

But for Mohammad, nothing beats a site visit.

"The virtual data we can collect is second-to-none, but one of my favourite parts of this job is going out and seeing the plants and gardens thriving in real-time."

Mohammad and our Parks and City Greening team are the careful caretakers of 230 hectares of irrigated space across the city.

"We really care about Melbourne's water, and use every drop sustainably to keep our city green for current and future residents, workers, students and visitors.

"I never take for granted the legacy I've been able to build here over the past decade.

"A lot of what I do is balancing water use behind-the-scenes – monitoring rain and soil sensors, adjusting for seasonal differences and carefully finessing the central control system.

"But the plants don't lie. If they're healthy, then all that hidden work is paying off."

Mohammad works closely with the Climate Change and City Resilience team to use harvested storm water to irrigate our big green city, and enhance drought resistance.

We're now home to six stormwater harvesting systems, that can hold 30 million litres of captured rainwater. Each year we harvest up to 200 million litres of rainwater for irrigation use.

"Hopefully Melbourne will never again experience a drought event like the one that created my role all those years ago," Mohammad said.

"But we are now in a better position to adapt and prepare for extreme climate conditions, and we are proud to keep building this capacity."

Check out Mohammad's work the next time you're enjoying our city's greenery.



Mohammad Kharouf inspects the city's plants and gardens to check they're receiving sufficient water.

Arts Precinct

Renowned New Delhi-based artist celebrated at ACCA

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*

Mithu Sen is one of India's most renowned contemporary artists, and her recent exhibition *mOTHERTONGUE* is officially showing at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA). The exhibition is part of ACCA's annual international series of solo exhibitions by influential artists, and the West Bengal-born, Delhi-based artist surveys works from the past 15 years of her art practice alongside major new commissions. ACCA artistic director and CEO Max Delany, who also curated the work, said ACCA was very excited to be presenting the works of such a distinguished and intriguing artist. "Mithu Sen's practice occupies both intellectual and emotional registers – at once sensual, intimate and bodily, whilst equally conceptual, critical and subversive," he said. "Extending from conceptual art to glitch poetry and performative media interventions, and from daring, libidinous drawings to graphic works which condemn the prevalence of communal violence and marginalisation in Indian and wider global society." Sen is well-known for exploring myths of identity through performative interventions, and ultimately challenging political language and social conventions within the art world.



▲ Artist Mithu Sen.

Photograph: Casey Horsfield.

Through *mOTHERTONGUE*, Sen displays an amalgamation of complex artworks that question social, political, economic, or emotional structures of the world.

Presented as a mind-map, moving between interior states and visible surfaces, the works withstand defined categories and test the relationships between guests and hosts, participants and performers, and the artist and her audience. As an artist with a long list of highly regarded and awarded works around the world, Sen credits moving to New Delhi more than two decades ago as a "defining moment in her artistic journey".

Being the capital of India, New Delhi is home to diverse cultures and populations, including an anglophone art world, and it is Sen's experience and time within the city that has influenced a lot of the works now seen at ACCA.

Sen's exhibition *mOTHERTONGUE*, commissioned by ACCA and presented in partnership with Kiran Nadar Museum of Art in New Delhi, opened on April 22 and will run until June 18. ●

For more information:
acca.melbourne

Arts Centre Melbourne: The hub for culturally immersive experiences

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*

Melbourne's biggest cultural festivals, *RISING* and *YIRRAMBOI*, are returning to the heart of Naarm (Melbourne) for another year, both with powerful performances scheduled for Arts Centre Melbourne. Renowned First Nations festival *YIRRAMBOI* is already under way, after starting on May 4, with the final weekend of the 10-day festival now approaching. Music, food, art and culture festival *RISING* begins from June 7. As part of *YIRRAMBOI*, Arts Centre Melbourne is excited to invite audiences to immerse themselves within First Nations stories, with a future-driven mindset. "In the local languages of the Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung peoples, 'yirramboi' means 'tomorrow'," Arts Centre Melbourne First Nations executive director Troy Walsh said. "As a First Nations-led festival, Arts Centre Melbourne looks forward to tomorrow; and is immensely proud to collaborate with *YIRRAMBOI* as a culturally immersive experience for participants and audiences alike." From May 11 to 12, accomplished Gunditjmara and Kokatha singer songwriter David Arden will be performing *MEETRA - Rise Up! The Ballad of James Arden* at The Pavilion, where he will bring together a team of artists to perform a piece of powerful truth telling. First Nations artist Maylene Yinarr will then present *Kutjika: Songs Under the Evening Star* on May 13 in The Pavilion, a powerful live music tribute to her late twin sister, which speaks into the depth of healing and grief. This performance, as many others throughout the festival, reflects on and honours the experiences of First Nations people. "*YIRRAMBOI* plays host to a feast of mediums honouring the endurance of First Nations people and voyaging boldly into what is a Blak-led future," *YIRRAMBOI* Festival co-lead and creative lead Sherene Stewart said. "*YIRRAMBOI* is curated in celebration of Blak love, joy and excellence with a stellar line-up of First Nations creatives." Come June, Arts Centre Melbourne and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra will be presenting, as part of *RISING*, a hypnotic live performance detailing the inspiration behind celebrated First Nations singer Dr Gurrumul Yunupingu's innovative album *Djarimirri* (Child of the Rainbow).



▲ *RISING*: (L) Nebbie Burrawanga and (R) James Gurrawiwii. Photo Bungul by Anna Reece.

The album, which was posthumously released, was designed to act as a mediator between two traditions in Australia – European orchestral music and millennia-old Aboriginal song. Designed around the album, the show *Bungul*, translated to "ceremony", will bring song, dance, and ritual together, in a way that celebrates the record's legacy and the singer. The live performance, which will take place from June 14 to 15 in the Hamer Hall, will feature Yolngu dancers and songmen presenting songs, dances, and paintings that inspired the album, accompanied by the MSO. The work was directed by Nigel Jamieson, and senior Yolngu man Don Wininba Ganambarr who said it was a performance with much to show and teach audiences. "To the Yolngu, our songs, paintings, and dances are our books – they tell us where we have come from and where we are going to. They are our maps, our law books, our title deeds, and our family history," he said. ●

For more information:
artscentremelbourne.com.au

CRITIC

Good art stands out

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*

Artists need to create their own street cred and that means taking a few risks so their work stands out. Once you start looking, you can find stand-out artists all over the Arts Precinct. They are not necessarily curated or in advertised exhibitions. They might be in small student spaces, working by the river, or even in gift shops. *Southbank News* went looking and it didn't take long to discover artists who were on the rise or who had gone against the trend. When Deborah Halpern first created *Orphelia*, a large organic, mosaic-tiled form in 1992, she said she was reacting to all of the metal sculptures in vogue. At the time, *Orphelia* seemed cute and popular and, somehow, lightweight but now it appears prescient. "I was grateful to be given the chance," said Halpern, who is currently repairing the work, which has been moved along the riverbank. But really, it was her alternative vision that probably got her the gig as the zeitgeist began moving in a more personal, popular culture kind of direction. Similarly, in these relatively pallid conformist days, the ceramics of Theodosius Ng stand out at the National Gallery of Victoria gift shop as black, prickly, rather menacing vessels. "I started out beige, minimal and speckled like everyone else," Ng said, then he began pushing against this and "added fins and spikes to everything". The NGV commissioned a series in response to the Alexander McQueen exhibition and all but two of the 40 pieces have now sold. Ng's brave move into a more Gothic style reflects the ceramicist's own difficulties in coming out as queer but also acknowledges that your personal history counts for a lot. "My mum went to art school in Singapore. She was an abstract expressionist and had lots of queer friends. That was radical in her day. I didn't have to create an identity. I could just be authentic." Second generation artists can be bolder because they don't have to actually fight the same battles



▲ Cosmic Play School by Kirra Niner.

as their artist parents. Those battles have already been won. That's why un-curated shows can seem fresher than those brought together to convince a sceptical public that a particular art form is worthy. In the VCA Art Space students put on casual weekly exhibitions that aren't afraid to be playful. Kirra Niner's *Cosmic Play School* has been assembled in a corner and it has the power of a painting that really pops. It's perfect for photographing because the actual spatial relations of the hanging objects mimic a painting that is trying to be 3D. The gallery holds weekly openings at 5pm each Tuesday when the next generation of artists is present and the gallery is open during college hours. Good art finds its own opening. Ng was working in the NGV art shop setting up displays for the Picasso exhibition when the director Tony Ellwood looked at images of his work and the rest is history. VCA Art Space, Victorian College of the Arts, 5pm each Tuesday; *Orphelia*, Deborah Halpern, Southbank Promenade; Theodosius Ng, National Gallery of Victoria gift shop. ●



CONOR MCPAUL

Re-telling family history through photographs

WORDS BY *Kaylah-Joelle Baker*

For Photography Studies College (PSC) student Conor McCauley, photography has always been a way of exploring the unnoticed and telling a story. It was what led him into the practice during lockdowns, and what has continued to inspire him through his final year as he works on his year-long project. "I [have] always loved movies and the stories they told, but never had the patience or concentration to make something longform, so I figured photography would be the next best thing, but then as I did it, I found I enjoyed it a lot more," he told *Southbank News*. For Conor's project, which will be shown at the end-of-year exhibition, he is focusing on the objects, personality traits, or religions people inherit from their families.

Working on this project and topic has allowed him to re-tell some of the deeper, more personal journeys that some families go through. "A friend of mine has tattoos of their relatives' handwriting as their relatives have a neurological disease, which means their handwriting is getting messier and messier, so what my friend did is they got the words 'I love you' from their relatives and got them tattooed to give them a permanence," he said. "And, it's this sentiment and the story behind it that I really quite enjoy." As well as getting the chance to tell poignant stories through his photography, Conor also got to live through a "pinch me" moment when, through PSC, as he was one of the students who recently visited Osaka. PSC has a partnership with UEDA, which is an

Osaka-based fashion school and, during the few weeks he was in Japan, Conor was able to collaborate with fashion styling students. "If I told first-year me that I would go to Osaka and meet all these people and take photos, I probably wouldn't have believed myself," he said. "As soon as I got there, everything felt right. I was able to meet new people and connect with them, and even with the language barrier you could feel a sense of everyone trying to work towards the same thing." This international opportunity has "opened up a door" for Conor that he didn't know he was originally interested in, and now he is feeling more inspired to achieve his dreams of working with magazines, becoming a published artist, and continuing to make more photo books. "As time has progressed [at PSC], processes

that I thought would be hard have become easier and boosted my confidence, and now I trust myself to do the process and have realised my identity in photography," Conor said. "There is also a community here and it is very important in photography to know people and to have friends in the industry." As Conor continues to work on his final project, he is also asking people to reach out to him personally so he can help to tell more stories surrounding what different families inherit and their significance. ●

[instagram.com/conradgraphie](https://www.instagram.com/conradgraphie)

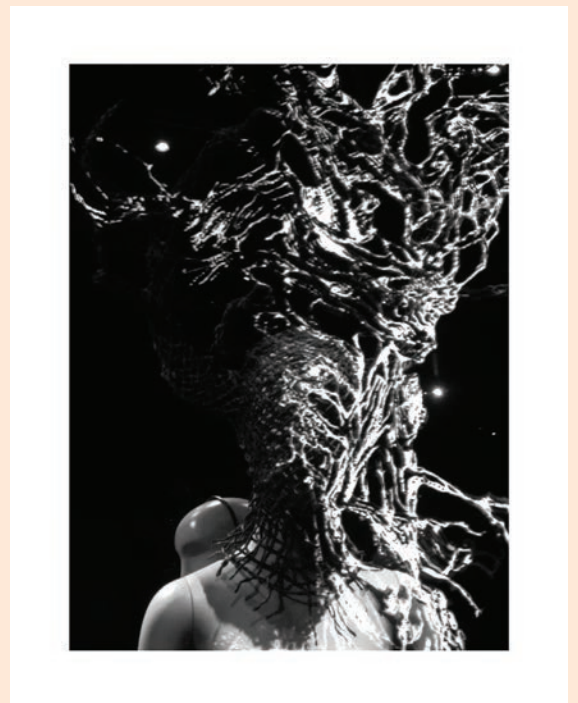
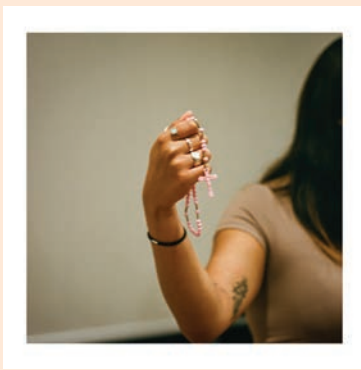
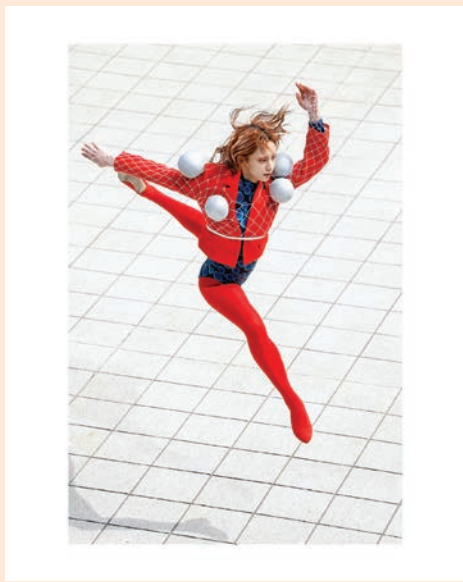


Image by Dora Wu



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Speeding bikes and scooters see more than 1100 sign petition calling for greater pedestrian safety measures

More than 1100 residents have signed a petition calling for greater safety measures to be implemented for pedestrians as the number of electric vehicles on footpaths increases.

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
SAFETY & SECURITY

The petition has highlighted the prevalence of shared and privately owned e-scooters being used on footpaths, including food delivery bikes, cyclists, and motorbikes; all of which are causing grave concern for many residents.

Through the 1103-strong petition, which was lodged with the City of Port Phillip and considered by councillors at their May 3 meeting, residents from the City of Melbourne and the City of Port Phillip have called for their respective councils to “clearly articulate” to users that they cannot ride on footpaths, and to implement an education program.

The City of Port Phillip acknowledged the petition and has promised to work with residents including advocating to the state government for clear communication of the road rules in relation to the use of bikes, motorbikes and e-scooters on footpaths and other public spaces.

The petition would also see the council support a partnership with Victoria Police and Department Transport and Planning in promoting education programs, surveillance, enforcement, and compliance measures to improve road user behaviour and safety.

“It is really our responsibility to look out for the safety of pedestrians,” Cr Tim Baxter said at the council meeting.

“Obviously there is an issue with new forms of micromobility and transport and a limited amount of space in the inner city of where conflicts are becoming more common.”

Two of the three petition organisers, Diana Andrews and Barbara Thom, who, remarkably, obtained all of the signatures in person as the petition was not circulated online, told *Southbank News* measures must be taken to reduce the risk of pedestrians being hit by motorised vehicles or bicycles after they had experienced near misses.

“It’s not only us, we hear people telling us that they used to walk along the Yarra River but it’s too dangerous now because there are so many speeding bikes and scooters going along Southbank or other paths,” Ms Thom said.

“I feel as though I have to look behind me on the paths because of speeding cyclists, and some scooters, and also the food delivery riders on motorised bikes.”

The pair, both aged in their late 80s, said that while most cyclists abided by the road rules, it was the delivery bikes that posed the biggest concern because “they’re the ones in a hurry to deliver food”.

“We want to feel safe. If you can’t feel safe walking on a footpath, where can you feel safe?” they said.

In May, shared electric vehicle company Lime announced it would provide insurance protection for third parties even in instances where a rider violates road rules such as riding on footpaths or neglecting to wear a helmet; a measure which comes after being pushed by residents in the April editions of *Southbank News* and *CBD News*.

Lime Australia general manager Hugo Burt-Morris said, “Safety comes first and foremost at Lime and we’re proud to demonstrate that with our insurance improvements and our latest campaign, Lime Responsibly.”

“We will continue to look for ways to provide an even safer experience as we educate our riders to drive behaviour change.”

Tim Norman, secretary of the Beacon Cove Neighbourhood Association (BCNA), which represents some of Port Melbourne’s community views as well as those of the Montague precinct, said while their group played no formal role in the petition, it acknowledged both the benefits and dangers of e-scooters.

“We believe a regulatory response will be most appropriate, meaning a review of existing laws and assessing police capability to enforce those and any new constraints that may be imposed,” Mr Norman said.

“In particular, we are concerned that persons legally using footpaths must be protected from wheeled vehicles through physical separation and relevant laws.”

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the council would focus on safety and education as part of the shared e-scooter trial extension, while working closely with Victoria Police, the state government, and neighbouring councils.

“We know Melburnians love the shared e-scooter scheme. This green, sustainable, and easy-to-use mode of transport has become a unique way to experience everything Melbourne has to offer while boosting our city’s economy,” she said,

“We look forward to working with Neuron and Lime to investigate what further safety measures we can build into the scheme.”

Victoria Walks executive officer Ben Rossiter



said, “Everyone in our community should be supported to get around without fear, regardless of age or ability.”

The state government said the shared e-scooter trial scheme, which has been extended by six months and allows the use of private e-scooters, would see a primary focus on safety for riders, other road users, and pedestrians.

Meanwhile, Melbourne e-scooter operator Neuron announced it would roll out its new N4 e-scooter across May with an initial 1000 devices to replace their current model in the city, which it said was the “most rider-focused, sustainable and toughest e-scooter ever built”. ●



Port Phillip Bay swim trail could become an Australian first

WORDS BY *Brendan Rees*
COMMUNITY

A unique idea to create a swimming bay trail at Port Phillip, complete with wayfinding and motivational quotes on markers, could become an Australian first if approved.

In what is being billed as a “good activation initiative”, the City of Port Phillip will consider the proposal, which would create a swimming route off St Kilda by using existing navigational yellow markers across the bay.

“Hundreds of people are swimming daily in groups along our foreshore and this initiative is aimed at attracting people into the water and to our local area,” Cr Marcus Pearl said, who pitched the proposal in a notice of motion at the council’s meeting on April 4.

Cr Pearl said the novel idea, which was “potentially a first for Australia and maybe a first for the world”, would involve swimmers following yellow markers (that would be named, and affixed with motivational quotes) which would also help track how far they’ve swum.

“It’s a thought bubble idea. What we have seen is a significant increase in swimming across the municipality in the post-COVID environment including myself,” he said.

“A number of people are meeting very regularly as a way of exercise but also as a community connection to swim in our bay.”

The proposal, which would see council officers conduct a preliminary investigation

including any safety implications before providing a report back to the council, was unanimously endorsed by councillors at their meeting.

According to a council report, “the idea is to explore the feasibility of utilising these boating zone markers to create a swimming trail with small signs on the navigation markers giving each a name, having a quote for motivation then a distance meter to the next beacon. It is understood some of these beacons are already named”.

The council’s investigation would consider whether a partnership and approvals would be required from Parks Victoria, Maritime Safety Victoria and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, who are the governing authorities for the bay and coastline.

“I freely admit that is a novel idea, but I hope you will feel comfortable and confident to be able to support it,” Cr Pearl told councillors at the meeting.

He said while the plan would be a “challenging one”, “what we’re asking officers here is to allocate a small amount of our precious resources to come up with a report”.

If the plan did come to fruition, Cr Pearl said it would bring a “number of benefits” not just to the community but “from an economic point of view by attracting more people to the City of Port Phillip to come and swim and spend their money on our wonderful foreshore”.

The cost of the proposed project is unknown at this stage. ●

Residents feel financial pain as interest rate rises add stress to households

Continued from page 1.

“We’re okay because we planned ahead years ago before we had kids, and we put money aside,” she said, but added “we are getting to the pointy point because we are on one income, and I don’t have a job to go back to.”

Resident Daniel Emerton and his partner moved out of their Southbank home after deciding not to pay an extra \$100 a week for a one-bedroom apartment.

While they were lucky enough to secure a 12-month lease for a two-bedroom Southbank apartment in May, it came after attending multiple inspections which “were way too competitive”.

“There were so many people. It was just crazy,” Mr Emerton, who opened the Mr Summit Café with two business partners last year, said.

Southbank-based mortgage broker Jason Dullard said many homeowners had “felt the squeeze” since last year with more to be further impacted once they come off fixed-rate loans in the back half of the year.

“The best thing you can do is contact your lender directly and ask for a discount and/or cashback to stay with them. If you aren’t happy with their offer, you should reach out to a mortgage broker to see if we can save you money,” he said.

“Given the 11 rate increases, as well as lenders increasing minimum cost of living in their serviceability calculators, most people’s borrowing capacity has dropped approximately 40 per cent (assuming no salary increases), so if you’ve purchased towards your maximum borrowing capacity in recent years, and your incomes haven’t increased, it’s unlikely you’ll be able to move lenders.”

Ray White Southbank sales manager Michael Pastrikos said the Southbank property market had demonstrated significant strength in 2022, resulting in prices recovering to near pre-COVID levels – with the rebound expected to continue into this year.



▲ *Mother of two Caitlin said her family were doing okay amid high interest rates, but there was “not much buffer left” to put away savings.*

“Buyer motivation and sentiment in 2023 is favourable for sellers; buyers are no longer holding off because of rising interest rates. They have adjusted to the new norm and pricing in a buffer for any future rate hikes while being mindful of their lower borrowing capacity,” he said.

Mr Pastrikos said the rental market was still on the rise due to continuing migration from interstate and overseas, but stock levels had dropped as landlords were either moving back into their properties or selling their investments to owner-occupiers.

“This is putting further pressure on the rental market and encouraging many tenants to enter the property market as buyers,” he said.

“If you have plans on selling this year you might want to consider bringing those plans forward while supply levels are still down by approximately 15 per cent and buyer activity is high, this is an opportune time to be a seller in the market.”

Australian Council of Trade Unions secretary Sally McManus said the latest interest rate rise in May was the wrong decision as “ordinary Australians are struggling to pay the bills every time they go to the supermarket, mortgages and rents have gone up an extraordinary amount as well”. ●



From “sangas” to all-day Mediterranean, here are Southbank’s best new venues

With Southbank’s ever-growing pool of cafes, bars and restaurants continuing to expand, Southbank News has picked three up-and-coming venues to add to your “must try” list.

WORDS BY *Jack Hayes*

First, in what will come as welcome news to many Southbankers needing a new all-day local, is Chessell and Clarke, a slick Mediterranean-style breakfast and lunch bar on the border of Southbank and South Melbourne.

Located on the corner of Chessell and Clarke streets, the peach hues and marble interiors of the Flack Studio-designed space provide a perfect vehicle for what is an exercise in simplicity.

Leading the menu are dishes like swordfish spiedini (skewers) wrapped in guanciale, gnocchi with honey-roasted parsnip, and Turkish eggs with yoghurt, brown butter, and semi-dried tomatoes.

Chessell and Clarke is another product from co-owners Murat Ovaz (previously Yagiz, South Yarra) and Serge Thomann (i Carusi I, St Kilda), steered by head chef Frank Berardi (previously The Melbourne Club).

“I wanted to create something a little bit different to what I’m used to and partnering with Frank allowed us to create something unique centred around a full-day Mediterranean restaurant,” Mr Ovaz told *Southbank News*.

“There is nothing complicated on the menu. It’s modest, fresh, quality ingredients are priced at a point that doesn’t break the bank given the tough economic times.”

“Our dishes are an interpretation of the food from my homeland and its surroundings; combined with Frank’s Italian training, we have created a menu that celebrates a myriad

of cultures. We heavily focus on herbs, spices and fresh ingredients cooked simply and served generously.”

Over the coming months, Chessell and Clarke will branch out for weekend and dinner dining, focused on a wine bar-styled menu with a wine list featuring picks from local boutique wineries and international regions including Italy, Turkey, France and beyond.

Next on this list comes Southbank’s newest entrant to the Melbourne sandwich craze in Olmate’s, a new “sanga and coffee” in the Arts Precinct.

Sitting at 20 Kavanagh St, across the road from the ABC, you’ll find this almost hole-in-the-wall serving menu highlights like Roast Beef Sanga with rogan josh dipper or the roast cauliflower Turkish roll layered with date and tamarind chutney, pickled onions, rocket and green chilli sauce.

Olmate’s is a partnership between industry veterans, Annie and Andreas Martinu (founders of Reverance Coffee Roasters), and Martin McEvoy and Nicholas Tan, with guidance from Palermo head chef, Michael Dalton.

“As we head into the cooler months, Melburnians will appreciate this mighty combination of flavours warding off the autumn chill,” Ms Martinu said.

From the coffee machine, the team unsurprisingly pours cups of Reverance coffee, along with a selection of craft beers from Hop Nation, Balter and Bodriggy.

The last venue on this list is one you won’t find walking the streets of Southbank.

Strato Melbourne will take you 139 metres off the street to its 40th-floor restaurant and cocktail bar.

As part of the Oakwood Premier Melbourne hotel on Normanby Rd, Strato Melbourne offers up a pretty unique vantage point to enjoy the best from renowned producers from places like King Island and Mount Zero.

Standouts on the menu include Blackman Bay Oysters with ponzu dressing, char-grilled tuna, pickled carrot, cucumber and wasabi, and Black Angus rib eye with caramelised onion puree and tarragon jus. ●

CommVision: Increasing communication in residential buildings and communities

If you live in the City of Melbourne, it’s more than likely that you’re one of the 80 per cent who live in a high-rise apartment. But how well are you currently notified of critical issues and important updates affecting your immediate community?

WORDS BY *Sean Car*

While mailbox drops and printed notices in the foyer are among the most common methods in which strata communities are kept up to speed by their owners’ corporation (OC) and building managers, these measures lack immediacy and are too often prone to be missed, as well as not being environmentally friendly.

In today’s ever-evolving technological landscape, these measures have become increasingly antiquated in the face of fast and permanent communications solutions.

Despite many other developed countries around the world adopting this sort of sustainable technology in high-rise settings for many years, Australia has yet to fully embrace these simple, efficient, and cost-effective solutions, particularly in residential buildings. That is, perhaps, until now...

Having dedicated much of his career to the body corporate sector in Australia and overseas, Alex L. Smith founded CommVision in 2014 with a simple mission in mind; to utilise today’s technology in ensuring residents are kept fully informed (in real time) of everything that’s going on in their building, and local community.

How? Through the provision of digital signage, media screens (digital noticeboards) installed in lifts, lobbies mailrooms, or any other common area.

Through a centralised, fully integrated operating system, an OC and/or building manager is able to remotely share updates concerning everything from meetings, cleaning and maintenance to police, local council, news and weather instantaneously throughout the building.

With lift screens starting from as little as \$59 per month (with advertising) and \$123 per month (without advertising), Mr Smith told *Southbank News* OCs now had the opportunity to evolve and make the transition to technology without breaking the bank.

“The technology was created to increase awareness and communication in residential and mixed-use developments to ensure that residents in these buildings are being provided up-to-date information at all times by those that are managing the site,” Mr Smith said.

“The Australian market is very behind with



technology. We haven’t adapted as quickly as other countries in terms, of where we use this technology which ultimately makes us more efficient in our overall day-to-day operations.”

Having originally become involved with the technology while working on large-scale developments in Dubai, Mr Smith has since trialled and tested software from a range of the world’s leading signage companies.

The company partnered with Canada’s fastest growing indoor OOH media network, UB Media, which has enabled CommVision to increase its offering to provide touch screen ability in lifts, together with a bespoke management portal which enables managers to curate professional notices and schedule them in advance.

With some OCs resistant to advertising material in the buildings, CommVision has importantly split the content being published on the screens, which prevents important building notices from being overlaid with advertisements. It also offers two separate price structures (with and without advertising) which include the operating system, technical/customer support, insurances and warranty.

While the business model is focused strongly on community and not solely on advertising like its competition, Mr Smith said that being first to market had enabled the company to curate the best service offering available in the market, to suit the building and benefit its residents.

“I think the big ticket here is that committee members need to be open minded when it comes to advertising – it’s a word that people are scared of, but we should be calling it promotions; promoting local and national businesses, as ultimately it’s supporting and helping the community they live in,” he said.

“If a building doesn’t want advertising, we can facilitate that. But the focus should be more about providing a seamless communication platform that increases awareness in buildings at an affordable price, while at the same time promoting its local community.” ●

For more information:
commvision.com.au

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Two to a scooter

“

There are a few things a Southbanker needs to make an impression on the promenade – a dog, a scooter and a view.

”

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge

Grant Richards has all three plus an insider's knowledge of the built form that gives him tower cred.

Toby the Pomeranian travels with Grant in a pouch so he attracts most of the attention.

But behind the scenes, his “dad” scores a few points as well with his office in the clouds.

Grant works as a crane driver and his view on the world has been captured in video from Australia's tallest building, Australia 108, while under construction.

“It's a good office,” he said, of his high-flying perch. “It's different. It's close to the clouds.”

Australia 108 took five years to build and while he was working on it, Grant moved into the suburb he was building.

It's his day off and he has just come back from the CBD, crossing the river on the historic Queens Bridge.

Toby is enjoying the ride and responds well to strangers who can't resist a pat.

Like many dogs in Southbank, Toby is not that keen on the dog park and has his own way of letting off steam.

“He chases the birds at Crown. They should pay him,” Grant said. “He also chases rats and doesn't like swans.”

Grant lives on the 20th floor of the Shadow Play hotel on the corner of City Rd and Clarendon St.

“The fireworks aren't bad,” he said. “It's handy to the footy. I've been there five years, and everyone knows Toby.”

Grant is now working on a building in A'Beckett St in the CBD and he films the sunrises from his perch, posting the video on Instagram to show his vision of the city as it grows.

After they spoke to *Southbank News*, Grant and Toby went for a spin along Southbank Promenade.

They make a fine couple, two to a scooter without breaking the law. ●



SOUTHBANK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Vale Lynne Lumsden

It is with the greatest sadness that I write this month.

On Monday, April 24, 2023, one of our much-treasured past committee members Lynne Lumsden passed away after a long illness.

Lynne joined our committee in 2016 and made an impact right away, offering to clean up and sort all of the files since the inception of Southbank Residents' Association (SRA) in the old office, back when we had a space in the now demolished school building at Boyd. The files had been neglected for years, but Lynne wasn't daunted by the task ahead.

During the lead-up to the SRA 20-year anniversary, Lynne volunteered to research and write up the history and accomplishments of the SRA. It was a mammoth task which Lynne embraced with infectious enthusiasm.

It took several years to research and compile the history in time for our 20th anniversary and Lynne spoke with many past committee members and Southbank movers and shakers in order to fill in the gaps. Lynne enjoyed meeting the many and varied stakeholders and it elevated her passion for the project to which she graciously volunteered so much of her time.

In April 2021, *Tall Storeys & True Tales – The First 20 Years of the Southbank Residents' Association* by Lynne Lumsden was launched at our “Southbank – Where to From Here?” community event to a rousing reception.

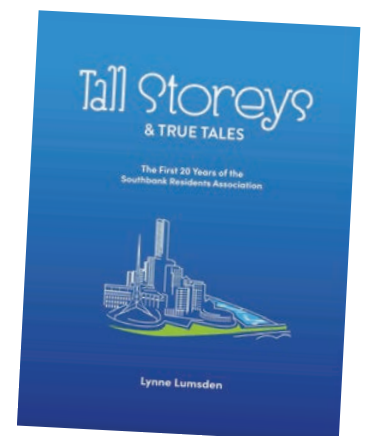
In addition to her book, Lynne was a fantastic representative at many of our SRA events. She may have welcomed you to a New to Southbank event, greeted you at a trivia night, sold you a raffle ticket at the Boyd Christmas function, or perhaps you were in the audience for her book launch.



Lynne was sometimes outspoken (our meetings were too long, I talked too much and we should have snacks) but was always ready with a laugh or an opinion on what could be done better. The committee members who volunteered alongside Lynne remember a wonderfully positive and outspoken woman who was proud to live in Southbank and had much to give to our community.

In acknowledgement of her contributions to SRA, Lynne received a lifetime membership award in 2019, one of only three issued in SRA's history.

Lynne served on our committee from October 2016 to the end of 2019, staying involved right up until the launch of the book in 2021. During this time Lynne's contribution to the SRA committee and our wider community



was immeasurable. Lynne made a huge impact during her tenure and beyond and has left us with a lasting legacy. Lynne was dearly loved and respected by all, and we will miss her dearly.

The thoughts and prayers of the entire SRA community are with Lynne's husband David and their family at this time and I'd like to thank Tracey and Dan for their assistance writing this tribute.

If learning about Lynne's passing has motivated you to read her book, copies are at the Boyd Library or can be purchased from SRA for \$10. If you've been inspired by Lynne's selfless dedication to community, we hope you'll consider volunteering your time and joining our SRA committee, just as Lynne did all those years ago. We would be delighted to have you!

Feel free to reach out to us at info@southbankresidents.org.au, we would love to hear from you. ●



Tony Penna
PRESIDENT
PRESIDENT@
SOUTHBANKRESIDENTS.ORG.AU



Southbank3006 is holding a forum on strata reform on May 28 at Boyd Community Hub – here’s why you should care ...

Today almost every resident in Southbank lives in a strata scheme as do the majority of people in the City of Melbourne and an increasing number in inner and middle suburbs. The Age’s recent series on the future of Melbourne and its population centres brings this change to top of mind.

WORDS BY *David Hamilton*
PRESIDENT - SOUTHBANK3006

In fact, most buildings in Southbank contain more residents than many rural towns in Victoria. These are multi-million-dollar businesses that rely on a small committee of volunteers to make the decisions about the building assisted by a part-time owners’ corporation (OC) manager.

But how many of us understand what the structure is that we live in, and how much attention is paid by governments to the social and community needs of residents in strata? Strata is a creation of the *Subdivision Act 1988* which provides the framework of ownership, and the *Owners’ Corporation Act 2006* merely provides the management and regulatory framework.

Strata is an unusual concept. People think of their OC as a company, an association or a cooperative, but it is none of these. It is really a

collective where ownership of common property is vested in us all and no-one actually has a share in anything, and the OC doesn’t own fixed assets.

Despite a rapidly increasing number living in this strange collective world where we live in a vertical village there is scant thought to the social development requirements of this community by developers or government. Once a building is completed people are just moved in and it is assumed that a community will function. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Owners discover that fees are undercooked by developers wanting to sell stock. They think that properly funding the operating expenses of the building and its maintenance plan from the outset will be a “speedhump” to sales. Besides, they are long gone when the reality of the holes in their budget become apparent, leaving the committee of volunteers on the OC with the task of budget repair, facing upset owners, politicisation, and the potential for conflict across the OC – none of which is good for residents or fostering the social and community development across a building of “strangers”.

Unfortunately, strata and OCs have become a backwater of government policy and public administration. The approach is purely regulatory, and the assumption is that a regulator can or will generate public policy other than regulations. Worse still, strata sits in the same regulatory bucket as motor car traders, sex workers, and real estate agents.

A consequence of this is that too frequently key government policy initiatives, whether around sustainability or housing policy, are focused on single dwellings, so the needs of strata dwellers are not even considered.

In fact, over the years there have been a number of initiatives that have specifically excluded OCs and treat them like a company, which they are not. Today, the policies about electrification have been framed without any thought how an apartment building can meet those outcomes, much less how that can be funded.

So, what can be done? Some starters to consider ...

- At a micro level we all need to learn and understand just what is required of us, whether we are a renter or an owner, to live in a shared community. This requires no sense of entitlement and a commitment to work and live harmoniously with others.
- Perhaps the Neighbourhood Partner program should be expanded by the City of Melbourne to play an active role working inside buildings in Southbank to foster the social and community development of the vertical villages.
- Responsibility for strata needs to be removed from its current policy backwater. Whether it should become part of Families, Fairness and Housing, or the Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action, or Department of Transport and Planning is open for debate. It definitely doesn’t belong where it is languishing at present.
- A series of administrative reforms should be considered such as having the initial budgets and long-term maintenance fund provided to owners by developers independently audited to certify it is funded fully and will not leave a budget shortfall from day one.
- Strata Community Association (SCA), the



peak body for OCs, needs to be embraced by OC committees for its training and resources and advocacy with government on the issues that impact on our daily lives in strata living.

Consistently, people tell Southbank3006 that strata issues such as short-term accommodation is a key liveability issue to them.

Southbank3006 community event: Strata, Reform and Liveability - May 28

If this affects you, join us via southbank3006.com and come to our May 28 (2pm to 4pm) event at the Boyd Community Hub on strata and reform to discuss these issues vital to all residents in Southbank. We shall have representatives from Strata Community Association (VIC) speaking, including Tim Graham on strata law reform, and Nick Abbey on governance reform. ●

SOUTHBANK SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

Don’t be caught out by greenwashing

We often have quite interesting discussions with residents of Southbank as they consider their impact on the environment and ways to reduce it.

WORDS BY *Maria Tarrant*

What is clear in these discussions is the desire of people to learn more about sustainable living, and at the

same time, they have questions about where to get reliable information.

Many people are now aware of the concept of “greenwashing”; that is, where organisations and companies suggest they are being environmentally responsible but, in fact, are not.

What can we do so we are better equipped to know whether what we are hearing and reading is accurate? First and foremost, we can be critical thinkers.

Critical thinking starts simply with “thinking”. We all have busy lives so it is all too easy to accept blanket statements about sustainable objectives or achievements without considering

that it may not be a truthful statement.

So, if it sounds a bit too good to be true, stop for a moment and ask yourself: what is the evidence for what is being said; who else is saying the same thing; who benefits?

In other words, don’t assume what you have read or heard is accurate and instead be sceptical and consider the unbiased probability of the claim being true. Consider the science behind the claim. Look to what sources and references are being used to back up any claim. You should be able to check any claim with credible experts. Make sure you use the resources available in the library at the

Boyd Community Hub or go online to sites such as CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology, and Choice.

And, if you want to know more about your own carbon footprint, there are organisations such as Carbon Positive Australia that have online tools to help you calculate your carbon footprint.

As the number of residents in Southbank grows so does the membership of Southbank Sustainability Group and many are attending the Saturday meetups at the Boyd Community Hub. We will be meeting at 10am on May 13 and 27 for some gardening and a catch up. ●



For more information: facebook.com/southbanksustainabilitygroup

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METRO TUNNEL

Final tracks laid through the Metro Tunnel

Test trains will soon be running through the Metro Tunnel after the final tracks were laid through the new tunnels for this city-shaping project.



Crews put down the final lengths of Australian-made steel rail on the tracks just a few weeks ago, finishing nine months of work along the twin nine-kilometre tunnels and stations.

It's a major milestone for the project as teams prepare to run the first test train in the second half of 2023, kicking off a meticulous testing period to ensure the Metro Tunnel is safe and ready for passengers in 2025 – a year ahead of schedule.

Before the track could be laid, crews had to install 4000 high-performance concrete panels to create an even base for the rail and ensure it was properly aligned.

The panels were cast in 300 different shapes to match the curvature and elevation of the tunnels as they wind from Kensington to South Yarra, up to nearly 40 metres underground. The 236 lengths of steel rail are extremely strong, but flexible enough to curve along the tunnels where needed.

The lengths of rail – each measuring 165m – were installed by clipping them to the concrete panels and welding them together to form a continuous line.

This track design being used on the Metro Tunnel is similar to the City Loop tracks but more advanced and is being used on major rail projects across the world. It requires less maintenance than conventional tracks and is therefore ideal for tunnels.

The testing phase will make sure the Metro

Tunnel's complex systems are working together with the new bigger, better trains, alongside the wider network's existing signalling system – an incredibly complex process.

Meanwhile, work will continue to fit out the five new underground stations with lifts, escalators, security systems, CCTV, passenger information displays and emergency phones.

Parkville Station will be on the doorstep of Victoria's world-renowned education, health and research precinct, providing rail access to the University of Melbourne, The Royal Melbourne Hospital, the Royal Women's Hospital and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre for the first time.

Once complete, the Metro Tunnel Project will create capacity for more than half-a-million extra passengers each week during peak times and save passengers in the suburbs up to 50 minutes a day on a return trip. ●

For more information:
bigbuild.vic.gov.au

HISTORY

Southbank swamp

Like other parts of inner Melbourne, such as Port Melbourne and West Melbourne, the area that became Southbank was swampland, with low-lying wetlands that were eventually reclaimed for manufacturing businesses, warehouses and wharves.



However, the soil and the shallow water table made building difficult.

The Yarra River was known as Birrarung. Aboriginal tribes occupied the area for thousands of years, camping on both sides of the generally quietly flowing river, and managing the trees in the landscape with fire.

They found an abundant source of food and materials among the teeming wildlife along the tidal estuary, swamps and sand ridges. A bar of rock, located opposite today's Crown Casino, banked up water and regularly flooded South Melbourne and kept much of the land south of the Yarra as an almost permanent swamp.

Early colonial development of Southbank (pre-1870s) saw numerous floods to the south of City Rd and east of Kings Way, down to Albert Rd, where Victoria Barracks stands today. One report noted flood debris as high as 13 metres above river level.

Early Melbourne was built on the higher northern banks, while the south bank was dominated by tea-tree scrub, salt marsh, swamp and sandy waste with small stands of trees.

The swamps harboured a variety of species of plant, animal and insect life. Clouds of birds

were commonplace and invariably blocked out the sun, blackened the sky and turned day into night.

The local tribes caught fish and eels in the swamps and lagoons of the river and fished using funnel-shaped fish pots, referred to as eel traps. In the early 21st century, a bridge was established across the Yarra, resembling an eel trap, and celebrating its history.

Nearby Albert Park was once a lagoon, described as a marshy place with brackish water, while nearby Emerald Hill was composed of a rich, black soil, thinly wooded with honeysuckle and she-oak.

But colonial society, with an emphasis on agricultural development, regarded wetlands as representing an obstacle to prosperity and the swamplands had become a nuisance, offensive to the eyes and nose. They were methodically drained – a back-breaking exercise undertaken through the 1880s. ●



Robin Grow
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OWNERS' CORPORATION LAW

Lot owners should choose wisely and seek advice before filing VCAT proceedings

There has been a sharp rise in the volume of cases filed in VCAT by lot owners against owners' corporations (OCs) and managers.

The increase in the volume of cases is partly explained by the COVID-19 lockdowns, which required most Victorians to work from home over the past two winters. There has been a great deal of frustration from lot owners and occupiers about the response time of managers and from OCs in responding to lot owners' queries and follow-ups for maintenance requests, inspections, levy enquiries and the like.

However, what is more apparent in reading some of the latest judgments coming out of VCAT is that a number of litigants are seriously fed up with the quality of service they have been receiving from managers, and are seriously fed up with the lack of response/compassion from managers and committee members.

This has prompted a large influx of applications to VCAT, and these cases are clogging up the caseload management of Victoria's largest tribunal.

If I can offer some timely advice to owners and occupiers before any more VCAT proceedings are filed, please take heed of the following ...

OC levies and fees do need to be paid on time. If these fees can not immediately be paid, the lot owner needs to agree a payment plan with the OC. It is not appropriate to apply some form

of "set-off" for a perceived claim against the OC for property repairs or maintenance.

All that will happen is that the matter will most likely end up in VCAT if the OC brings fee recovery proceedings, and interest, filing fees, administration fees and legal fees will be added to the costs that will be found to be payable.

If a lot owner has a serious claim against the OC for some other perceived slight or injury, this will always require a cross-claim which will be decided separately. There will be no set off applied, so a lot owner will always be saddled with the interest and other fees described above.

Furthermore, litigants do not have a right to bring proceedings against managers of the OC (aside from very limited rights prescribed under the *Owners Corporation Act*).

This is because there is no contractual agreement between a lot owner and a manager. The manager's contract of appointment is a contract between the OC and a manager.

Accordingly, there is no basis on which a lot owner can seek compensation or damages for breach of the contract between an OC and its manager.

Good advice taken from a specialist lawyer in OC law should be sought before potentially expensive mistakes are made by unrepresented litigants. ●



Tom Bacon
TOM BACON IS THE PRINCIPAL
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Renting shouldn't be a nightmare



Affordable housing needs to be more than a dream.



Dreams by Fleetwood Mac. *Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This)* by the Eurythmics. *Don't Dream It's Over* by Crowded House. *Wildest Dreams* by Taylor Swift. *California Dreamin'* by the Mamas and the Papas.

So many classic songs about dreams. Some uplifting, some soul-searching, some mournful, some painful. Some dreams brought to life; others illusory.

Young Australians know all too well about painful and illusory dreams. While home ownership was traditionally seen as "the great Australian dream", for so many it is so distant from reality that the dream is well and truly over.

An increasing number of young Australians cannot afford to buy their own home, forcing them into the challenging and uncertain rental market. Across Australia, more than a third of people are renters. In my electorate of Macnamara, this is more than half as people return to inner-city areas, a surge accompanied by a sharp rise in rents and a shortage of new rental properties.

For too many, the rental market is a nightmare. Young renters in my community regularly tell me that they are paying exorbitant rents for sub-standard properties, or that they cannot find rental properties they can afford anywhere



▲ Federal, State and local representatives at the opening of social housing in Balaclava. (L-R) Josh Burns MP, Federal Minister for Housing, Homelessness and Small Business Julie Collins, CEO Housing First Haleh Homaei, Victorian Housing Minister Colin Brooks MP and Ryan Batchelor MLC.

near where they work or study. High demand for rental housing has given landlords too much power and tenants too few rights.

We badly need action to rebalance our housing market, increase the supply of rental properties, and give renters more power and more rights. Action is required at state and federal level. While tenancy law is a matter for the states and territories, the federal government has an important leadership role to play in promoting uniformity, providing finance, and increasing incentives to build more rental housing.

As the main source of housing funding for the states and territories, the federal government must make sure that they take the necessary action to improve both tenants' rights and the availability of affordable rental properties.

That's why Housing Minister Julie Collins announced last week that she will meet with state and territory housing ministers to discuss a uniform national approach to strengthening tenants' rights.

The Prime Minister also met with state and territory leaders to discuss joint action on housing affordability, including measures designed

to increase the number of properties available for rent.

The Housing Australia Future Fund could fund 30,000 social and affordable rental homes in its first five years. This investment would be the single biggest investment in social and affordable housing in more than a decade. Yet these plans are being stifled by the Liberals and the Greens in the Senate. Their decision to stand in the way is hurting people, including sole parents and women fleeing domestic violence, who have been neglected by the federal government for a decade.

Every home matters. And while I agree we always need to push for as much as possible, blocking the construction of social housing only exacerbates the supply issues.

Despite this, our government continues to work cooperatively across the country to provide housing help. An additional \$2 billion of extra financing for the National Housing Finance Investment Corporation will provide up to 7000 more social and affordable homes.

The Albanese Government is serious about tackling Australia's housing problems and making sure renters get a better deal and more choice, because renting shouldn't be a nightmare. And we are determined to keep the dream of home ownership alive so all Australians can dream big and turn those dreams into reality. ●



Josh Burns
FEDERAL MP FOR
MACNAMARA
JOSH.BURNS.MP@APH.GOV.AU

10 YEARS ON

Looking back at Southbank News - 10 Years On

MAY 2013 | ISSUE 19 |



Lord Mayor's commendation sweet for any local business

Do you feel like your business has become a special part of Melbourne, even in just a small way? This could be your chance to make it official, with nominations for the Lord Mayor's commendations open until the end of May.



Suzie Wharton has run her Chocoholics tours from in and around Southbank since 1995. In 2010 she was awarded a Lord Mayor's commendation and said it's fantastic recognition for her humble business, especially because the city held such a special place in her heart.

"I just love Melbourne. Southbank is such a special part of that too, it's a great place to do business," Ms Wharton said.

"Receiving the award was just lovely. As a smaller company, when someone puts your name up in lights like that, it's a really nice feeling, and justification for all the hard work too!"

The Lord Mayor commendation program rewards City of Melbourne businesses for loyalty and longevity.

Lord Mayor Robert Doyle said the awards were an important recognition for the hard

work of small business within the city, and highlighted its importance. "There are over 12,600 small businesses in the City of Melbourne, employing around 75,000." Cr Doyle said.

"Our city's entrepreneurs have adapted and prospered, creating jobs, boosting the economy and playing a vital role in making Melbourne the world's most livable city," he added. "Melburnian's respect and support the hard work and contribution of small business. These commendations recognise the achievements of small business proprietors." ●

SOUTHBANK NEWS

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What's on: May 2023

Community Calendar



UNTIL DECEMBER 2023, 10AM - 4PM

Arts Centre Melbourne Sunday Market

Featuring local designers and artisans, discover handcrafted treasures made by local artisans at Arts Centre Melbourne's Sunday Market.



THURSDAYS, 10.30AM - 11AM

Stompers at Southbank Library at Boyd

Come along for an energetic 30 minutes of stories, songs, rhymes, music and most of all, fun. Ages 18 months to 3 years; no bookings necessary. 03 9658 8300

SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2PM - 4PM

Strata, Reform and Liveability
Free community discussion about strata reform and its impact on liveability in Southbank. Representatives from Strata Community Association (VIC) will speak on a range of issues.
Southbank3006.com



SATURDAY, MAY 20, 11AM - 2PM

Mithu Sen: mOTHERTONGUE

Join ACCA Education for its free, drop-in program for children and their families to enjoy art-making (inspired by Mithu Sen). Register your interest on the website.



UNTIL MAY 31

Moon Dog Paradiso at the Arts Centre
Melbourne brewery, Moon Dog, is bringing cold drinks, a food truck and live entertainment to the riverfront terrace. Children and dog-friendly.
artscentremelbourne.com.au



SATURDAYS, 10AM - 12PM

SOUTHBANK SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

Join a group of green sustainability enthusiasts who meet fortnightly each month. Specific dates can be found on facebook.com/SouthbankSustainabilityGroup

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about how to customise your campaign to our audience every month.

Here today, gone tomorrow

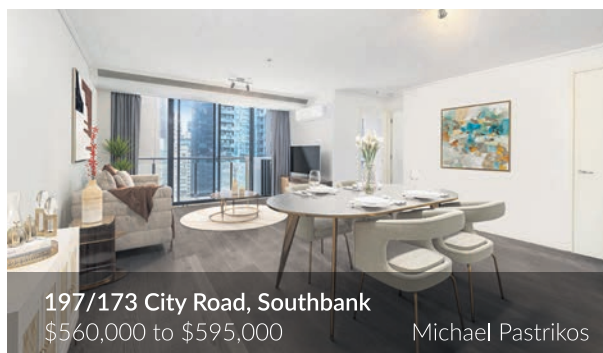
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Scan QR for further details. Call us on 8102 0200 or email us via southbank.vic@raywhite.com to book an appraisal for sale or rental. Visit raywhitesouthbank.com.au for more details.



2705/241 City Road, Southbank
\$530,000 to \$580,000 Michael Pastrikos



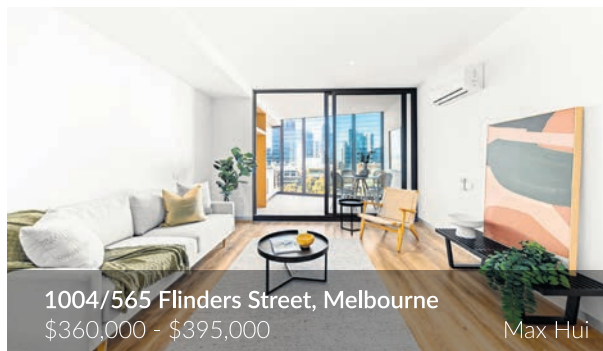
197/173 City Road, Southbank
\$560,000 to \$595,000 Michael Pastrikos



1606/50 Haig Street, Southbank
\$540,000 - \$590,000 Austen Kosasih



403/211 Dorcas Street, Southbank
\$600,000 - \$620,000 Trent Bonnici



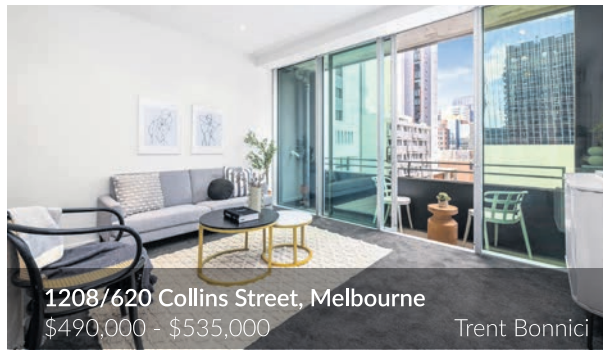
1004/565 Flinders Street, Melbourne
\$360,000 - \$395,000 Max Hui



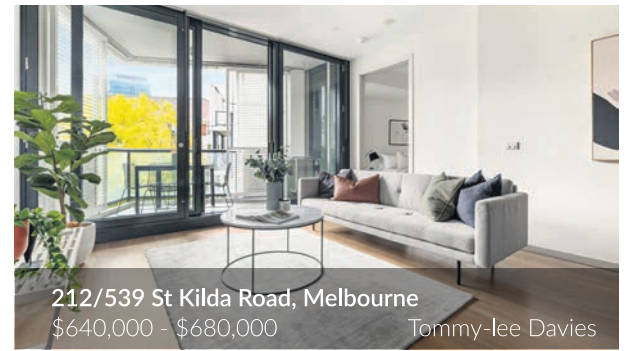
3303/601 Lt Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
\$390,000 - \$425,000 Max Hui



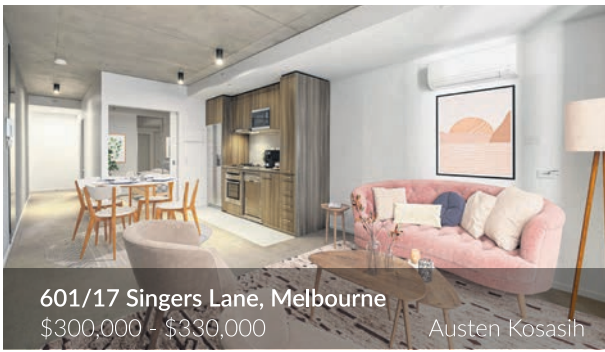
601/233 Collins Street, Melbourne
\$380,000 - \$418,000 Max Hui



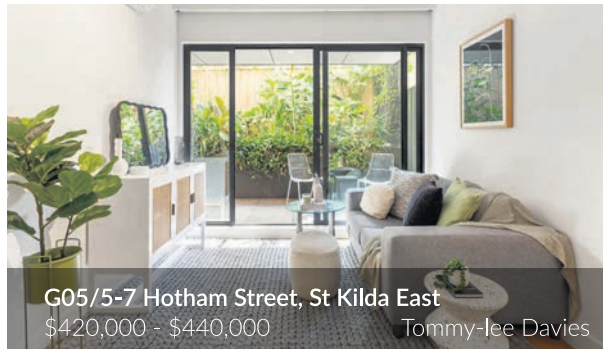
1208/620 Collins Street, Melbourne
\$490,000 - \$535,000 Trent Bonnici



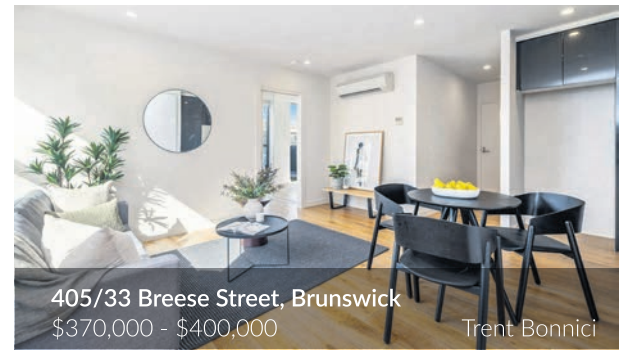
212/539 St Kilda Road, Melbourne
\$640,000 - \$680,000 Tommy-lee Davies



601/17 Singers Lane, Melbourne
\$300,000 - \$330,000 Austen Kosasih



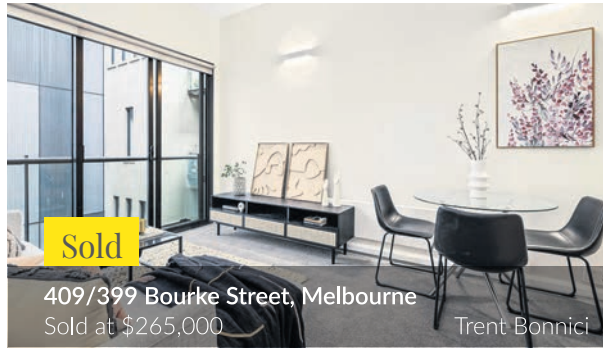
G05/5-7 Hotham Street, St Kilda East
\$420,000 - \$440,000 Tommy-lee Davies



405/33 Breese Street, Brunswick
\$370,000 - \$400,000 Trent Bonnici



1304/60 Kavanagh Street, Southbank
Auction Sold at \$585,000 Austen Kosasih



409/399 Bourke Street, Melbourne
Sold at \$265,000 Trent Bonnici

Michael Pastrikos: 0404 282 864
Max Hui: 0430 238 021
Tommy-Lee Davies: 0416 823 173
Trent Bonnici: 0402 670 441
Austen Kosasih: 0422 396 900

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