



Lord Mayor Nick Reece (front right) was joined by City of Melbourne councillors Andrew Rowse, Gladys Liu, Rafael Camillo and Southbank Residents' Association's Prasoon Thakur and Tony Penna on June 4 to tour Southbank's soon-to-be-completed new Boyd Library. Photo: Hanna Komissarova.

## Bigger and better library coming to Southbank in major community win

“Southbank is finally getting the library it deserves, with the City of Melbourne committing more than \$5.3 million in its draft 2025–26 budget to deliver a larger, modernised facility within the Boyd precinct.”

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



The announcement marks one of the biggest community wins in this year's draft budget, providing a long-awaited upgrade to Southbank's overstretched library services as the suburb continues to grow at record pace. Australia's most densely populated suburb, Southbank is now home to more than 20,000 residents and is

forecast to grow by a further 68 per cent by 2043. The library's expansion responds to strong calls from the community for more space, longer hours and greater access to learning and social infrastructure.

The new library will be located in developer PDG's Boyd Village development—currently under construction at the rear of the existing Boyd Community Hub on City Rd. The council secured 1000 square metres of community space within the new development as part of its planning approval in 2021, paving the way for this much-needed expansion.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said the new facility would help meet rising demand and modern expectations.

“Southbank is one of the most densely populated suburbs in Australia, and it continues to grow – which is why our draft Budget 2025–26 invests \$5.3 million to deliver the library residents deserve,” Cr Reece said.

“Locals have told us they need more quiet study areas, indoor bookable spaces, longer opening hours, and room for events.”

The library upgrade was prioritised following strong community feedback via the council's 2024 neighbourhood survey, which highlighted the need for more flexible spaces, family activities and youth engagement programs. The council said it would release concept plans for public consultation in the coming months.

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City of Port Phillip wins VCAT case, paving the way for new swingers venue

COUNCIL AFFAIRS, PAGE 12

City of Melbourne accused of weak City Rd advocacy

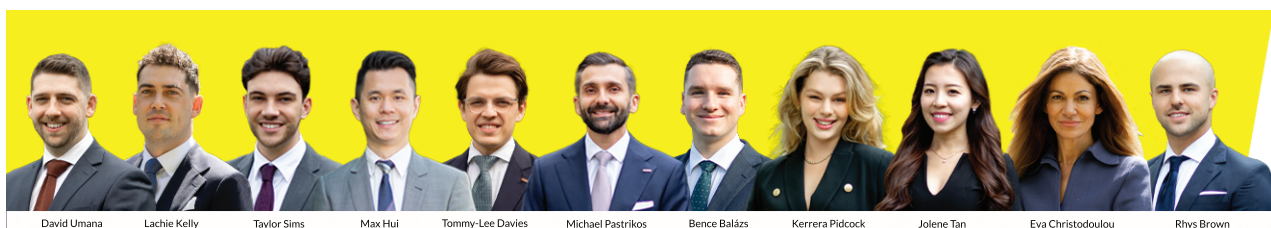
# NEWS



ARTS & CULTURE, PAGE 10

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Bigger and better library coming to  
Southbank in major community win

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The new facility will free up valuable space inside the heritage-listed Boyd Community Hub, where the current library operates, allowing for new uses such as expanded meeting rooms or a larger community event space. The existing Assembly Hall within Boyd has long been considered undersized, with a capacity of only around 60 people seated.

Cr Gladys Liu, who leads the council’s Community Services portfolio, said libraries played a crucial role in community wellbeing.

“We know just how important libraries are for the community – they’re not just places to borrow books, but hubs for learning, connection and belonging,” Cr Liu said. “I’m excited to see how the plans for the new Southbank Library take shape.”

The Boyd Village development itself has not been without controversy. The City of Melbourne sold off a portion of open space at Boyd Park in 2019 to PDG for \$16.5 million, despite strong opposition from the Southbank Residents’ Association and 128 public submissions.

The council defended the move at the time, citing the opportunity to secure high-quality public benefits, including the new library space. The development includes 434 build-to-rent apartments, with 40 set aside for affordable housing, and will feature a range of resident amenities such as a rooftop pool, co-working areas and social spaces.

Speaking at a groundbreaking ceremony for Boyd Village in 2023, then-Lord Mayor Sally Capp acknowledged lingering concerns over open space but reaffirmed the value of the library deal.



“The renovation of Boyd Library was only made possible because of this development – something that unfortunately has been forgotten and lost in the years that have passed since this project was first devised,” she said.

While the library announcement is cause for celebration among Southbank locals, residents continue to push for greater investment in public green space. The council has acknowledged the suburb’s limited open space and has actively sought

opportunities to acquire more land in the area.

For now, the library expansion provides a meaningful step forward in delivering services that match Southbank’s rapidly growing population—adding new life to the heart of the Boyd precinct more than a decade after the original community hub opened in 2012.

The library’s move into the Boyd Village site is expected to open in line with the development’s completion. ●

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# Miles and Dodds upgrade raises questions about the City of Melbourne’s approach to greening Southbank

After three rounds of community consultation, the City of Melbourne has approved the expansion of Southbank’s Miles and Dodds Street Reserve, despite a divided community response.

WORDS BY  
JON FLEETWOOD



Residents have raised concerns about the rationale behind the upgrade and the due process undertaken, questioning how the City of Melbourne can best fulfil its commitment to being a “Garden City”.

The proposed upgrade involves closing the eastbound lane of Miles St between Dodds and Wells streets and removing four car parking spaces, increasing the reserve’s green space from 588 to 1278 square metres. The plan also includes enhanced landscaping and improved infrastructure.

While the third round of consultation showed increased support – 55 per cent of 243 respondents supported or strongly supported the revised proposal – many residents voiced their opposition at the June 3 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting.

The initial two rounds of consultation had returned a largely negative sentiment from a low number of respondents, prompting council management to initially recommend against proceeding with the expansion.

Some residents questioned the necessity of the upgrade, arguing that the existing green space is already “adequate”, and raised concerns around safety, traffic impacts, parking loss and antisocial behaviour.

Local resident Julian Foo, who walks past the reserve daily, said it was rarely used and didn’t warrant the removal of car spaces. “The current seating and space in the park is more than sufficient already,” she said.

“I implore the councillors to take note of the unusually high levels of opposition to this project, instead of spending most of the \$2.5 million digging up the road.”

Jenny Pavlou also opposed the expansion, citing concerns that the space would be misused and not enhance safety or amenity in the area.

She said she had previously felt threatened in the park by people shouting obscenities and often saw young people “preloading” cask wine there.

These concerns resonated with Cr Gladys Liu, Cr Philip Le Liu and Cr Rafael Camillo, who all voted against the motion.



Cr Camilo said progressing with the project undermined the democratic rights of local residents. “I can’t support the motion due to the community divide,” he said.

Cr Liu expressed similar sentiments. “It breaks my heart to know the residents are suffering and continue to suffer because of the prolonged so-called consultation. I can’t pretend that I’m not hearing you,” she said.

Southbank Residents’ Association president Tony Penna had previously criticised the consultation process, telling *Southbank News* that the council must learn from the experience and ensure more comprehensive engagement for future projects.

In the 2024–25 draft budget, the City of Melbourne committed \$44.3 million towards creating more open space and enhancing parks, gardens and streetscapes.

This includes bringing forward funding for several key projects to Southbank, such as upgrading the ACCA forecourt and continuing the transformation of Southbank Boulevard and Promenade.

\$390k has also been allocated for further design and consultation about a park on Normanby Rd. However, with no funds allocated for construction, the council will

struggle to complete this by the end of this term.

Additionally, even though the council has flagged its intent to progress with the Southbank Promenade, there was no money allocated in the budget towards this.

While Mr Penna welcomed the additional green space, he stressed the importance of appropriate consultation for any proposed changes.

At the same FMC meeting on June 3, Cr Davvyd Griffiths successfully passed a motion to further support Melbourne’s “Garden City” vision.

As part of this, the council has requested management to review current policies to identify options for fast-tracking park and greening projects, and to establish both a Garden City Ambassador and a First Nations Garden City Ambassador in unpaid advisory roles.

Further action on this initiative depends on a report to be delivered by early August, and Cr Liu, Cr Le Liu and Cr Camillo also voted against this motion.

Cr Le Liu said that although the Garden City motion initially seemed benign, the community backlash over the Dodds St



project made him question the effectiveness of the council’s engagement efforts.

“We have people in the community who don’t want it, or are fearful of what it could be,” he said.

However, Cr Griffiths defended the motion, saying it was intended to engage and inspire the community. “[The motion] is a way of engaging the community, exciting the community, and getting them more and more involved,” he said. ●

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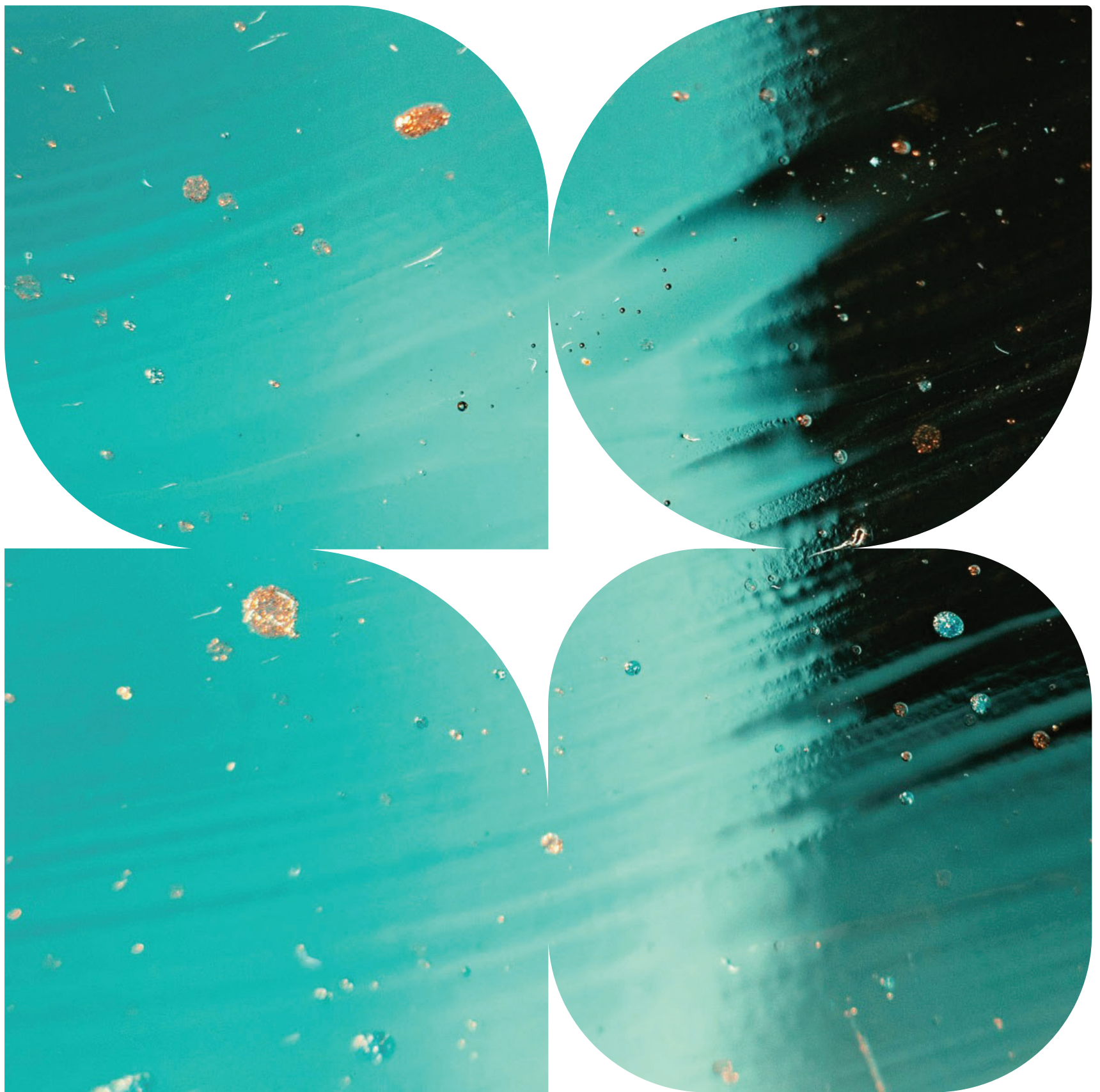
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## Council wins VCAT case over South Melbourne “adult lifestyle” venue

A controversial plan to open a swingers' club in South Melbourne has been upheld by the state's planning tribunal, with VCAT ruling in favour of the City of Port Phillip's decision to grant a permit for the venue.

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



A controversial plan to open a swingers' club in South Melbourne has been upheld by the state's planning tribunal, with VCAT ruling in favour of the City of Port Phillip's decision to grant a permit for the venue.

The decision, handed down on May 5, followed a two-day hearing in April after local residents and business owners sought to overturn the council's approval for the “Pineapples Club” at 427 City Rd.

The venue, described in planning documents as an “adult lifestyle meeting place” that includes a sex-on-premises component alongside a bar and live entertainment, will be permitted to operate seven nights a week, with up to 200 patrons from 6pm to 2am.

VCAT found that the use of the site – currently a disused Federation-era red brick building in an Industrial 1 Zone – was consistent with the Port Phillip Planning Scheme and would not result in “unreasonable amenity impacts”.

The Tribunal rejected arguments that the venue posed unacceptable risks to safety or neighbourhood character, noting that concerns about anti-social behaviour were not substantiated and that the club's ticketed entry system and venue rules provided appropriate safeguards.

While residents argued the development lacked transparency and proper community consultation, VCAT stated that the advertised application documents clearly described the nature of the use and were supported by adequate acoustic and waste management plans.

Tony Baenziger and Sue Coles, who own the nearby architecture practice Baenziger Coles and led the VCAT appeal, had previously described the proposal as “entirely inappropriate” for the area due to its proximity to schools, homes and family businesses.

However, the Tribunal concluded that the site had no direct residential neighbours

and that the nearest homes were more than 100 metres away. It also found that noise impacts would be adequately mitigated through permit conditions requiring acoustic upgrades, noise limiters, and independent testing.

The VCAT decision also addressed concerns about the club's future alignment with changing local planning policy. While the council has adopted a structure plan to rezone parts of the area from industrial to commercial, the Tribunal said this did not justify limiting the club's operations or lifespan, as the venue would remain permissible under the likely new zoning.

Permit conditions will also require real-time patron monitoring, CCTV, staff supervision at exits, and clear operational guidelines to ensure noise and behaviour are managed responsibly. Acoustic reports must be updated and validated post-opening.

Port Phillip Council Mayor Louise Crawford welcomed the outcome, having previously stated that the council supported the application in line with its planning scheme. While not all councillors agreed with the original decision, she said the tribunal outcome affirmed the planning approval.

“Planning assessments must be based on relevant planning controls and whether the application represents an acceptable outcome under these rules. It's not about assessing the morality of the use,” Cr Crawford said.

“Our previous council decided the application met these controls and we note that VCAT has confirmed this reasoning was correct, only requiring minor amendments.”

“While we acknowledge some residents will not be happy about this outcome there are a number of conditions regulating both the management of the premises and patron behaviour.”

VCAT's ruling paves the way for the Pineapple Club to open later this year, bringing a new and unconventional nightlife venue to the area's industrial fringe.

Paralegal Matthew Roberts, who attended both days of the April VCAT hearing, said, “It's very pleasing to see that the City of Port Phillip has defended its decision to allow an LGBTIQ-friendly venue to operate in an industrial part of South Melbourne.”

While he said those in the community who challenged the council at VCAT were “disappointed” with the outcome, Mr Baenziger said they understood the decision was final and that there wasn't much more they could do to oppose the use. ●



## Driven by care: South Port Day Links keeps community connected

For almost 37 years, South Port Day Links has been quietly transforming the lives of some of the city's most vulnerable residents.

WORDS BY  
GEORGIE ATKINS



From humble beginnings as a grassroots initiative, the not-for-profit organisation has grown into a vital community connector.

“South Port Day Links was founded by a social worker, Beris Campbell, and one of her colleagues in the old Port Melbourne council,” general manager Clemens Unger said.

“Beris realised there was a need to connect elderly residents to the community and transport them to certain appointments, medical and others.”

What began with a handful of volunteers using their own cars is now a well-oiled operation, boasting a fleet of six vehicles and a team of more than 100 dedicated volunteers.

The organisation completes around 11,000 transport bookings a year, ferrying clients to GP visits, hospital appointments and essential errands – trips that other services like taxis or ride-share companies may not accommodate.

“Our clients sometimes only go very short distances – no taxi will take you 400 metres down the road,” Mr Unger told *Southbank News*.

“That's where we come in, and our volunteers do that because they want to help people. It's a service with a smile.”

But South Port Day Links is more than just a transport provider. Its reach has extended to three social support programs known

as the “Mates Programs”: Walk Mates, Pet Mates, and Garden Mates.

“They're all about social connection,” Mr Unger said.

“It's a really personal relationship where our volunteers get matched with the client.”

Walk Mates combines gentle exercise with meaningful companionship, offering clients the chance to enjoy a stroll – or simply share a cuppa on rainy days.

Pet Mates steps in when clients can no longer walk their beloved dogs, ensuring their furry companions still get the care and attention they need.

Garden Mates provides light garden maintenance, helping clients keep their outdoor spaces tidy and enjoyable.

“Our volunteers can see the client after hours, or on a Saturday morning, if they both agree to it – it's flexible and builds real connection,” Mr Unger said.

South Port Day Link's community spirit was on full display at the organisation's inaugural fundraiser, held on May 31 with more than 100 guests in attendance – including local business owners and City of Port Phillip councillors.

“We were pleased to see many councillors and community supporters there – it shows that the council has a deep interest in what we do.”

The evening, which featured live music and auctions, raised more than \$13,000 for the not-for-profit.

“It was a really, really good start, and we'll just keep building on that next year.”

When asked what he loved most about what he did, Mr Unger told *Southbank News* it was all about the people.

“You meet a lady who spent her whole life in Port Melbourne. They point out the house where they were born, and you get a real feel for the history and the person,” he said.

“That's a really feel-good thing – money can't buy that.” ●

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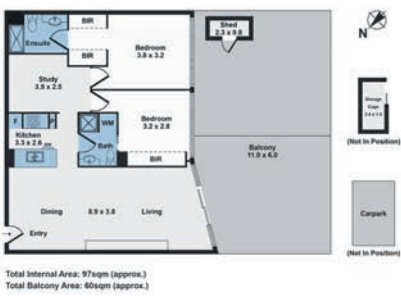
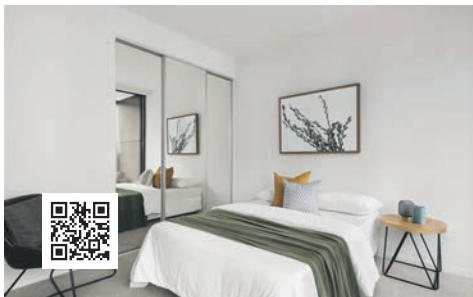
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We're excited to keep working alongside you to shape a stronger and fairer Melbourne that we can all be proud of.

## FIVE HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR DRAFT BUDGET

### 1. Easing the pressure on household budgets

We know every dollar counts. That's why we will add some breathing space to household budgets and keep more money in ratepayers' pockets at a time when they need it the most.

We'll give ratepayers a full rebate on the 3 per cent rate rise for 2025-26, saving the community more than \$10 million.

We're making it easier for people to stay active with free community fitness classes, and by waiving fees for exercise classes held in our public parks and gardens.

We'll help more Melburnians learn life-saving water safety skills, with 600 free swimming courses and \$2 pool entry at selected pools on weekdays.

And by making pet registration free this year, we're supporting 12,000 local pet owners to keep their furry friends safe and well cared for.

### 2. Making Melbourne streets safer and brighter

This draft Budget marks the biggest investment in safety in Council's history, with an extra \$4.5 million in new initiatives.

This will help everyone feel safer on our streets, support local traders and give our city workers the confidence to do their jobs knowing they're protected.

We will boost our frontline safety team and put more boots on the ground. More than 100 additional



Safe City Network CCTV cameras will be activated across the CBD and neighbourhoods.

We will also light up Melbourne, with a \$1 million investment to activate and illuminate our laneways after dark, while upgrading street lighting.

Keeping our city safe means keeping it clean. That's why we're investing \$59.8 million in round-the-clock graffiti removal, improved waste services for businesses, and fewer bins cluttering our laneways – helping the city look and feel its best every day.

### 3. Growing the garden city



In a busy city, green space isn't a luxury – it's a necessity.

That's why we're investing over \$44 million to deliver more open space, improve streetscapes and upgrade the parks and gardens Melburnians love.

We're fast-tracking work in Southbank, including the ACCA forecourt and upgrades to Southbank Boulevard and Promenade.

We're building on the success of pocket parks like Bedford Street in North Melbourne, while progressing stage two of the University Square redevelopment in Parkville, and creating new open spaces along Chelmsford Street in Kensington and at Normanby Road Park in Southbank.

We aim to plant up to 3,000 new trees and boost to the Urban Forest Fund, and Melbourne's greener future is already taking shape.



### 4. Making Melbourne a great place to visit and do business

We're strengthening our position as the nation's business capital – providing generous grants and making it easier than ever to do business in Melbourne.

With Australia's biggest Business Concierge team, we're here to support more local businesses across all our neighbourhoods.

We are also exploring new ways to activate and elevate our unique and diverse neighbourhoods. We've just launched Melbourne's first-ever Koreatown, and we're beginning work to establish a Little India precinct.

We'll also explore a new seafood precinct, expand community markets, and offer business grants for festival decorations.

We also are set to deliver another blockbuster year of major events. Firelight Festival and Now or Never return to heat up the winter months, and we'll pursue how we can make the winter season even hotter next year.



### 5. Building spaces to bring our community together

We're building new neighbourhood facilities and public spaces to help our community feel proud, connected and supported.

This year, we'll start work on a larger, modern library at the Boyd Community Hub in Southbank and begin transforming Southbank.

We're also redeveloping the much-loved North Melbourne Community Centre – a neighbourhood venue cherished by locals.

Our major city-shaping projects are progressing too – with the first stage of the Greenline Project at Birrarung Marr nearing completion, and renewal works continuing at our beloved Queen Victoria Market.

This builds on the success of new public spaces like narm ngarrgu – a library and family services centre in the Queen Victoria Market precinct – and the soon-to-open Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation Centre.

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# “I’m not trying to be popular”: the first-term councillor prepared to rock the boat

“

Liberal councillor Owen Guest has been quick to establish himself as the “enfant terrible” of Town Hall, calling for the City of Melbourne to become more fiscally responsible and transparent.

”

WORDS BY  
JON FLEETWOOD



Cr Guest, who is the portfolio head for Finance, Governance and Risk, burst onto the scene when he called out the council for “selling the farm to pay for the silverware”, following the sale of the eight-storey “Parkade” car park at 34–60 Little Collins St to hospitality billionaire Justin Hemmes.

From then on, his mission has been clear: to reduce the council’s debt and to ensure that it is financially responsible, transparent, and provides vital services for ratepayers.

A troublemaker since his teenage years, Cr Guest said he was happy to rock the boat if it led to better outcomes, and that his decision to become a councillor stemmed from his passion to make Melbourne a better place.

He grew up on leafy streets of East Melbourne and began what would become a successful career in finance in the CBD.

Cr Guest concedes he was slow to start his career, describing himself as a “drifter” in his early adulthood.

However, after completing a commerce degree with First Class Honours, he decided to go the extra mile and earn a PhD in finance – an achievement he downplays, but one that led to a successful career as an options trader and has clearly informed his hawkish approach to advocating for fiscal responsibility at Town Hall.

Before becoming a councillor, Cr Guest was the treasurer of the Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division) and was the Liberal candidate for Macnamara (formerly Melbourne Ports) in the 2016 election, where he narrowly missed out on victory.

However, he told *Southbank News* that his affiliation with the Liberal Party didn’t restrict what he could and couldn’t say on council, and that he endeavoured to play the role of devil’s advocate throughout his term.

Cr Guest believes that if you assess the services provided by the City of Melbourne against the adage that councils are responsible for “roads, rates and rubbish”, it becomes clear there are some serious flaws.

One such example, according to Cr Guest, is the council being placed in a position where it must sell the council-owned waste service, Citywide, to help pay off its \$215 million debt.

The sale of Citywide, alongside Gurrova Place, will provide a boost of more than \$200 million to council coffers and help it edge closer to becoming debt-free, a goal it aims to achieve within seven years.



COUNCILLOR PROFILE

While Cr Guest is pleased the council is working to reduce its debt, he said it needed to become more financially transparent and responsible to ensure it didn’t face similar issues in the future.

For the council to become more effective, Cr Guest said there needed to be a stronger focus on delivering services for ratepayers

and business owners, rather than aspirational projects such as Greenline, which rely on unrealised federal or state funding.

He acknowledges that not everyone will agree with his views but says that the beauty of government is that “opposition” and diverse worldviews lead to better outcomes. ●

## Ray White Southbank gears up for 2025 Vinnies CEO Sleepout

Ray White Southbank is once again stepping up in the fight against homelessness, returning to the Vinnies CEO Sleepout on June 19 with an ambitious fundraising goal of \$25,000.



WORDS BY  
GEORGIE ATKINS



funds for Australians experiencing homelessness.

For Ray White Southbank’s head of property management, Alex Mees, last year’s experience was deeply moving.

“It was actually extremely confronting,” Alex told *Southbank News*.

“I lost a couple of tears that night because it was very different to what I expected.”

In 2024, the team raised around \$18,000. This year, they’re aiming higher, hoping to surpass \$20,000 and ultimately hit their \$25,000 target.

To boost their efforts, the team has doubled in size, with Andrew Salvo, Michael Pastrokos, Seda Erdem, and Georgina Shanahan set to join Alex at the Sleepout.

“We loved the evening last year. We raised a lot of money for Vinnies, and this year we want to make even more of an impact,” Alex said.

The event offered the team a sobering glimpse into the complex and often invisible challenges faced by many Australians experiencing homelessness.

Listening to firsthand stories from people who had turned to Vinnies for support – whether for emergency accommodation,

refuge from domestic violence, or access to basic necessities – it underscored the reality that homelessness can affect anyone.

“I just wasn’t aware how far it went and how many people it impacted,” Alex said.

With more than \$6,000 already raised, the team is now ramping up its community outreach.

Plans include a front-of-office fundraising stall and in-house movie and games nights, with all proceeds going toward their Sleepout campaign.

Working in real estate, the team understands the fundamental importance of safe, stable housing – something Alex doesn’t take for granted.

“We’re from a place of privilege. We’ve grown up with roofs over our heads and good health,” she said.

“It’s kind of up to us to do what we can for those that haven’t had that sort of luck.”

With winter setting in, the urgency to act is growing stronger.

“We just can’t rely on the government to be fast enough. Vinnies are putting it straight back into the community,” she said.

“They’ve got housing options, they provide food, they’ve got soup vans that are driving around.”

“We’re all donating our time and some of our money toward this.”

“Help us help Vinnies – let’s see how many meals we can provide, beds we can provide, and get people the support they need.”

To donate to the Ray White Southbank team or learn more about the Vinnies CEO Sleepout, visit:

[ceosleepout.org.au/fundraisers/raywhitesouthbank](https://ceosleepout.org.au/fundraisers/raywhitesouthbank)

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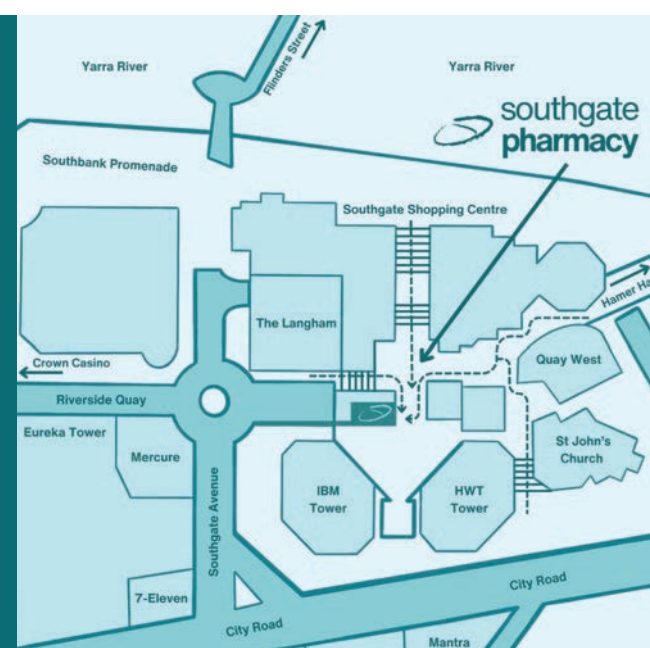
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## My Cousin Frank: powerful solo show to make Melbourne debut for NAIDOC Week

The remarkable story of Australia's first signed Indigenous Olympian, Francis Roy "Frank" Roberts, is coming to Melbourne this July.

WORDS BY  
GEORGIE ATKINS



Written and performed by renowned Bundjalung artist Rhoda Roberts AO, the production will run at Arts Centre Melbourne from July 9 to 12 as part of this year's NAIDOC Week celebrations.

Making its Naarm/Melbourne debut, *My Cousin Frank* offers a moving and intimate portrait of Ms Roberts' cousin Frank – a proud Widjabul Wia-bal and Githabul man who rose from the Cubawee Reserve outside Lismore, New South Wales, to represent Australia in boxing at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

His selection as a welterweight marked a historic moment: he became the first Aboriginal athlete officially chosen for an Australian Olympic team.

Described as an "extraordinary feat of solo storytelling", *My Cousin Frank* has already captivated audiences.

After a successful premiere season in 2024 at the Byron Theatre and Star Court Theatre in Lismore, it sold out again earlier this year during its run at the Adelaide Festival.

A trailblazer in First Nations performance, Ms Roberts said she felt a strong responsibility in

bringing this largely untold chapter of Australian history to light.

"The process of writing this story has been a deeply personal and transformative one, involving extensive research, community consultation and my own reflections," she said.

"It's been a journey of uncovering my family's history and ensuring the authenticity of the narrative, all while aiming to make an impact on the audience. *My Cousin Frank* serves as both a celebration of achievements and a call for deeper reflection on our past and the work still to be done."

The production highlights Frank's resilience both inside and outside the boxing ring, and his commitment to family, community, and cultural survival.

"It struck me that Lismore is home to Australia's first Aboriginal Olympian signed to an Olympic team, a fact that had been largely overlooked. Imagine how proud Lismoreans would be to know this part of their history," she said.

After its Melbourne run, *My Cousin Frank* will continue its national tour, heading to HotHouse Theatre in Wodonga from August 13 to 16, with additional venues to be announced.

"Cousin Frank has become a warrior, a sportsman, a local hero, and his story is no longer overlooked." ●



## The Wrong Gods brings gripping generational drama to the Fairfax Studio

Award-winning playwright S. Shakthidharan returns to Melbourne with *The Wrong Gods*, a stirring new work now playing at Arts Centre Melbourne's Fairfax Studio as part of Melbourne Theatre Company's 2025 season and the *RISING* festival.

Following the critical and popular success of *Counting and Cracking*, which recently won seven Green Room Awards including Outstanding New Australian Writing, Mr Shakthidharan's latest play delivers another emotionally resonant, politically charged story.

This time, the playwright turns his gaze toward a remote valley in India, where ancient traditions meet the pressures of a rapidly globalising world.

Co-directed by Mr Shakthidharan's and Hannah Goodwin (*The Almighty Sometimes*), *The Wrong Gods* is an intense four-hander that weaves lyrical poetry and striking imagery into a narrative about family, identity, and modern intrusion.

At its heart is Nirmala, a matriarch whose ancestral homeland has resisted centuries of foreign domination – until her daughter Isha dares to dream of life beyond the valley. When a stranger appears with offers of electricity, medicine and modernity, the emotional and moral cost of progress becomes devastatingly clear.

"*The Wrong Gods* is a fiercely resonant



story of a mother and daughter, and the choices that shape generations," MTC artistic director Anne-Louise Sarks said. "Shakthi [Shakthidharan] has such a gift for epic and emotional storytelling."

The production explores themes of capitalism, environmental fragility, and the illusion of freedom. With a stripped-back cast and intimate staging, the story unfolds with potent simplicity, relying on powerful performances and an evocative production design by Keerthi Subramanyam.

Lighting by Amelia Lever-Davidson,

original compositions from Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, and sound design by Steve Francis deepen the immersive experience.

Praised as "rich, evocative and unflinching" by *TimeOut* and "absorbing" by *The Guardian*, *The Wrong Gods* stands as a bold continuation of Mr Shakthidharan's mission to centre underrepresented voices and complex cultural stories on the Australian stage.

*The Wrong Gods* runs until Saturday, July 12 at the Fairfax Studio, Arts Centre Melbourne. Tickets: [mtc.com.au](https://mtc.com.au) ●



## Blockbuster art and timeless textiles headline winter at the NGV

A new wave of international art and cultural prestige has arrived at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), as this year's Melbourne Winter Masterpieces exhibition brings more than 100 works by the world's most celebrated Impressionist painters to local audiences.

Running from June 6 to October 5, *French Impressionism from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* is being presented exclusively in Melbourne, offering art lovers the rare chance to view masterpieces by Monet, Renoir, Degas, Pissarro, Cassatt and Morisot – many of which have never been seen in Australia.

The exhibition traces the development of the radical 19<sup>th</sup> century movement that upended traditional academic painting and celebrated the fleeting beauty of everyday life. Featuring immersive gallery design and intimate curatorial storytelling, the show includes key moments and places in the Impressionist narrative, from the streets of Paris to the gardens of Giverny. One highlight will be a dedicated gallery featuring 16 Monet paintings, painted over a 30-year period, showcasing his profound influence on the movement.

NGV director Tony Ellwood said the exhibition was a long-awaited second chance for Australian audiences, after the original 2021 Melbourne showing was cut short by COVID-19 lockdowns.

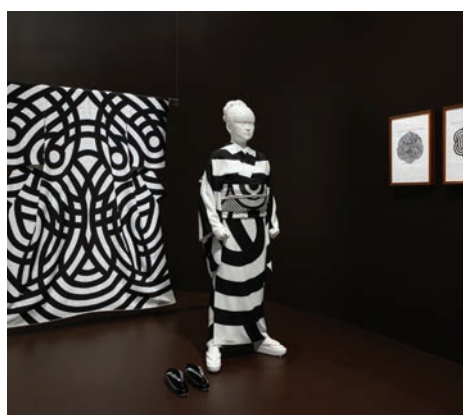
"More than 150 years after the first exhibition of French Impressionist paintings in Paris, the movement remains a beloved and powerful drawcard. This exhibition brings the freedom of brushwork and vivid colour to life in a spectacular and moving way," he said.

The exhibition also marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874 and will include rare works by artists such as Victorine Meurent, a painter in her own right and best known as a model for Manet, and Jean-François Raffaëlli, who captured scenes of Paris's working-class outskirts. Additional Australian connections include three Impressionist works from the NGV Collection, giving visitors the opportunity to see them within the broader international context.

While Impressionism takes centre stage, another standout exhibition has quietly taken over the upper galleries: *Kimono*, a stunning celebration of the artistry, history and cultural power of Japan's most iconic garment.

Open since June 4, the NGV-curated exhibition features more than 70 exquisite kimono, including 30 newly acquired pieces, as well as a wide-ranging collection of woodblock prints, paintings and fashion artefacts. From Edo-period wedding robes to 21<sup>st</sup> century streetwear, *Kimono* showcases both tradition and reinvention.

Visitors can admire delicate silk kimono adorned with hand-painted wisteria, cranes,



and maple leaves, and encounter standout designs by leading contemporary Japanese designers such as Jotaro Saito and Hiroko Takahashi, whose work blends centuries-old textile techniques with modern aesthetics.

The exhibition also highlights the global influence of kimono design, with works by Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto, Alexander McQueen, and John Galiano, alongside examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Western fashion influenced by Japanese silhouettes. Sydney-based designer Akira Isogawa is also featured for his distinctly Australian take on the tradition.

The NGV's expansive winter program reaffirms Melbourne's reputation as Australia's cultural capital. Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks praised the exhibitions for "drawing global masterpieces and art lovers from around the world to experience everything our city has to offer."

With *French Impressionism* and *Kimono* offering radically different yet equally compelling windows into the past and present, visitors can expect a rich, sensory experience this winter – no passport required.

For more information: [ngv.melbourne](http://ngv.melbourne) ●

## MAPCO



## Experience the story of the Birrarung, through a new sound and video installation celebrating the Woiwurrung language at Fed Square

If you've walked through Fed Square or along Birrarung Marr Walk recently, you may have heard a gentle voice carrying a story older than the city itself, along the river's edge.

*wurrung dhumbunganjinu* (we speak language) is a new sound and video artwork by Wurundjeri artist and language specialist Brooke Wandin. Commissioned by Melbourne Arts Precinct Corporation (MAP Co), the work is part of an exciting public art program exploring the ways we connect with nature in urban spaces.

Launched in April and running daily, the sound installation can be experienced as you walk past The Edge theatre and along Birrarung Marr Walk through discreet speakers. A family recording in Woiwurrung language can be heard, speaking the story of the Birrarung, its ancient place names across Country, and the way it flows.

For Brooke Wandin, the work is deeply personal. Created in collaboration with members of her family, it's a living recording of conversations at weekly language classes she holds at Coranderrk – a place that once actively suppressed the language. Together, they write and record their conversations and collective memory, passing it on to future generations to come.

"Language is carried along Birrarung from Coranderrk downstream to Fed Square," Brooke explained. "This sound work rejuvenates our ancient oral tradition and strengthens our undeniable connection to Country."

The project was born from an extensive research fellowship Brooke conducted, along with significant community work to piece back together parts of the Woiwurrung language. As the 2022 recipient of the Indigenous Victorian Aboriginal Cultural Research Fellowship at the State Library of Victoria, Brooke has been dedicated to reviving the Woiwurrung language – pouring through countless records, family knowledge and archival audio, and recording thousands of lost words into a database.

Now at Fed Square, this powerful story is extended onto the Big Screen through a film created by filmmakers Rhian Hinkley and Isaac Winzer.

Featuring Brooke's hand-drawn ochre maps of the river and its tributaries, the video work brings viewers along a journey, travelling along the river and its place names, through plants and water. Accompanied by family recordings and sound design by Sean Kenihan, the film screens to the public nightly from 6pm-7pm.

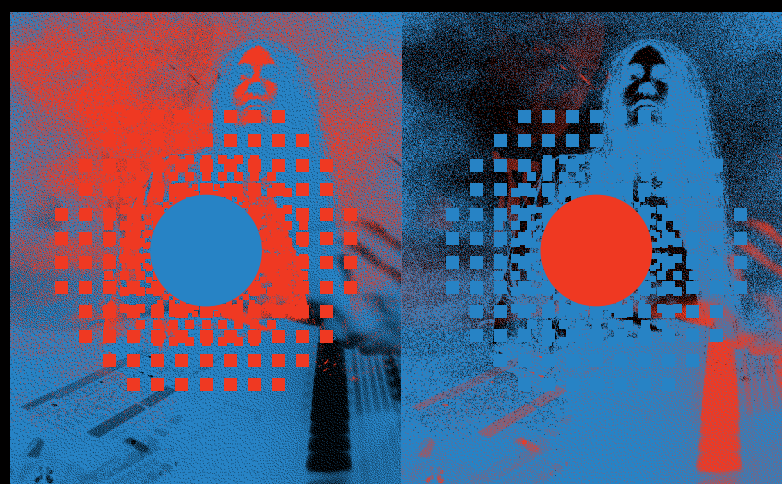
*wurrung dhumbunganjinu* is part of a series of works and events at Fed Square that encourages connection to nature in urban environments, to complement the new Test Garden. The Test Garden is a pop-up garden on the rooftop of Fed Square's carpark that gives a glimpse of what's to come with Laak Boorndap, part of the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation.

As Southbank continues to evolve, Brooke's artwork offers a moment to pause, listen, reflect, and reconnect with the layered stories of this place.

To learn more about the work, visit [fed-square.com](http://fed-square.com) ●

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# City of Melbourne accused of weak City Rd advocacy efforts

The City of Melbourne has come under scrutiny for its “flimsy” approach to advocacy for the City Road Master Plan, which according to some locals, has set a “dangerous” precedent.

WORDS BY  
JON FLEETWOOD



At a Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting on August 20, 2024, the council voted to update its budget submission to the Victorian Government for the City Road Master Plan, with the updated version to be prepared for submission by the Lord Mayor in November 2024.

However, only four days after the decision was made, Lord Mayor Nick Reece provided Premier Jacinta Allan with the budget submission.

Following this meeting and the submission to the Premier, the budget submission was not resubmitted in November 2024, and the actions taken in August were deemed sufficient.

However, *Southbank News* understands that what was submitted had not incorporated the necessary revisions that would have presented a more compelling case to the Victorian Government.

It's understood that the submission was also premature, with a November submission better aligning with the state government's budget process.

*Southbank News* understands that given the state government's budget constraints, funding is unlikely, however, some within council believe the failure to advocate more comprehensively have further reduced the chances of success.

Following the absence of further funding, at the FMC meeting on June 3, the council voted to consider including the City Road Master Plan in the upcoming development of a new Advocacy and Partnerships Plan, as well as in the State Budget submission process for the 2026–27 Budget.

This outcome has left *Southbank Residents' Association* (SRA) president Tony Penna dumbfounded by the council's process, believing that it has set a “dangerous precedent”.

Speaking at the meeting, Mr Penna shared his concerns with the council.

“Did they look in the crystal ball? We can't help but feel we are being treated like fools,” Mr Penna said. “Is it really normal process for others to arbitrarily override council motions at a whim?”

“A failure to follow through on such an important issue for the *Southbank* community erodes our trust in this council, and a failure to communicate only accentuates that lack of trust.”

General manager of infrastructure and amenity at the City of Melbourne Rick



Kwasek said the decision to provide the documents earlier was due to the Lord Mayor being “fortunate” to secure a meeting with the Premier.

“It was seen as appropriate that the documents we had in place ... were suitable to take to the Premier at that time,” he said.

Additionally, Mr Kwasek said that the advocacy and funding proposal being developed would aim to engage *Southbank* residents more closely in future.

Adopted by the council back in 2016, the original timeline outlined in the City Road Master Plan earmarked full completion by 2025. However, progress on revitalising the state-managed road has been much slower than anticipated.

While the council has delivered on Action 5 of the Master Plan – connecting City Rd to the gardens, thanks to upgrades along *Southbank Boulevard* and *Kavanagh St* – the remaining action items remain either partially completed or untouched.

However, progress is being made on the northern undercroft on City Rd due to the Commonwealth committing \$4 million as part of its Thriving Suburbs Program, which aims to support local councils and organisations to upgrade essential local infrastructure.

Located under the Kings Way overpass on the northern side of City Rd, the northern undercroft will be transformed into 5000 square metres of public space.

The Lord Mayor told *Southbank News* that it is “unacceptable” that there was a multi-lane highway in the middle of Australia's most densely populated suburb.

“It's crucial that we ease this congestion and turn City Rd into a beautiful high street – like *Lygon St* or *Smith St* and other much-loved high streets in Melbourne,” he said.

“I've had productive conversations about City Rd at a state and federal level, and I'll continue to advocate for further investment in our plans to help *Southbank* reach its full potential.” ●



## MCEC unveils new Changing Places facility to enhance accessibility

The Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has unveiled a new Changing Places facility, furthering its commitment to accessibility and inclusivity for people with high support needs.

WORDS BY  
JON FLEETWOOD



Developed in collaboration with Folk Architects and funded by a Changing Places grant from the Victorian Government, the state-of-the-art bathroom facility has been designed with direct input from people with lived experience to ensure it meets the diverse needs of its users.

Featuring warm materials, soft lighting, and an inviting colour palette, the new facility prioritises comfort and dignity. Bespoke elements, such as bench seating for carers and thoughtful textural finishes, offer both aesthetic appeal and practical support.

The new facility will better support children, young people and adults with profound or multiple disabilities to attend events at MCEC and marks a significant milestone in the centre's Trust's Accessibility Action Plan, which was launched earlier this year.

MCEC chief executive Natalie O'Brien said that “as an iconic venue, MCEC is committed to creating accessible and inclusive spaces, enabling everyone to meaningfully participate and engage in events that provide important social and economic value.”

“We're proud to unveil our new Changing Place, providing a safe, hygienic and welcoming bathroom facility. The thoughtful

design elements and attention to detail prioritise accessibility and comfort for all users.”

Universal Design principles underpin the entire space, with hygienic and functional fixtures including a height-adjustable adult change table, ceiling track hoist system, and a centrally located peninsula toilet to ensure accessibility for all.

Alongside the Changing Place, MCEC has also upgraded its adjoining Parents Room, maintaining the same warm, inclusive aesthetic and providing accessible amenities for people of all ages and abilities.

This project was close to the heart of Folk Architects director, Tim Wilson, who, as a parent of a child with complex additional needs, said he was excited and proud of this project.

“It sends a message that people with disability, their families, friends and support networks can be included in all aspects of society and engage with the vibrant city of Melbourne,” he said.

The facility is located near the Plenary Theatre, Goldfields Café and the Exhibition Centre car park, the Changing Place is easily accessible from both the venue and the surrounding retail and dining precincts.

In the next year, MCEC will host key disability-focused events like the Melbourne Disability Expo, Disability Connections Expo, Source Kids Disability Expo, and the Variety Kids Christmas Party.

The Minister for Disability Lizzie Blandthorn said that the opening of the facility was an important milestone that reinforced Victoria's commitment to inclusion.

“Accessible facilities are essential to creating an inclusive and comfortable experience for all Victorians and visitors, and we're proud to support another Changing Places site,” she said. ●

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## Melcorp Luxe unveiled to meet growing demand for premium rentals

Melbourne-based real estate agency Melcorp has launched a new sub-brand, Melcorp Luxe, aimed at bridging a clear and growing gap in the city's rental market: tailored leasing solutions for premium properties and discerning corporate renters.

Built on more than 20 years of experience in the inner-city property market, Melcorp has long understood the nuances of Melbourne's rental trends. But in recent years, the agency observed two significant shifts – one from renters, and another from property owners – that prompted a strategic evolution.

"On one hand, we've seen a growing demand for high-quality residential rentals – particularly from individuals and corporate renters seeking alternatives to traditional hotels," head of department Allison Osborne said. "On the other hand, many property owners have unique homes that are lost in the general leasing pool without expert positioning and aren't receiving the attention – or returns – they truly deserve."

Melcorp Luxe has been developed to address these challenges. It offers a specialised leasing model that prioritises discretion, flexibility and convenience, and focuses on matching well-appointed properties with reliable, high-calibre renters.

Unlike traditional rental models, Melcorp Luxe provides a turnkey solution for renters – fully furnished properties with flexible lease terms, fast approvals and thoughtful presentation. Lease terms can start from as little as three months, catering to professionals on temporary assignments, those relocating for work, or residents displaced during home renovations.

"Our typical renter is a corporate executive, an international professional, or someone relocating for work," Ms Osborne said.

"They're looking for a high-quality, well-presented home in a great location, usually fully furnished and ready to move into. Convenience, comfort, and privacy are key."

"They want a stress-free experience. This means a well-furnished property, flexible lease terms, fast approvals, and support when needed. Most are busy professionals who value quick solutions, quality accommodation, and reliable service."

For owners, the value proposition is just as strong. Amid rising property taxes and increasing pressure to maximise returns, Melcorp Luxe offers a reliable path to better yields with renters who are both financially stable and respectful of high-end homes.

"We help owners present their properties in the best light and attract the right renters – often corporate or executive renters – who are happy to pay more for quality and convenience. We also look after the property carefully, so it stays in great condition," Ms Osborne said.

Importantly, Melcorp Luxe maintains a strong emphasis on discretion, with many listings handled privately or off-market. The service is boutique in feel, but backed by the scale, networks and local knowledge of the broader Melcorp Real Estate brand.

"Melcorp Luxe is about taking our service to the next level. It reflects where the market is heading – towards more premium, tailored experiences," Melcorp's Mark Giuliano said.

"It also shows our commitment to offering specialised solutions for both investors and renters in the executive space."

With Melcorp Luxe, the agency is charting a clear path forward – meeting a growing need for executive rental solutions while elevating leasing standards across the board.

[melcorpluxe.com.au](http://melcorpluxe.com.au) •



Leading Melcorp Luxe: Mark Giuliano and Allison Osborne.

## Queensbridge Building tops out as Southbank's transformation gathers pace

A new landmark has officially joined the Southbank skyline, with developer Time & Place announcing the topping out of its 65-storey Queensbridge Building – a major milestone for the inner-city residential tower set for completion by the end of 2025.



At 209 metres tall, the Queensbridge Building is the only high-rise residential development in Southbank on track to finish this year, delivering 353 apartments and a 188-key boutique hotel – Hannah St. Hotel – as part of its premium offering.

Built by Hickory and backed by MaxCap Group, the \$5 billion development boasts high-end design by Fraser & Partners and interiors by Flack Studio, alongside resident amenities such as rooftop terraces, a lap pool, co-working space and wellness studios.

"This is a momentous step towards delivering The Queensbridge Building," Time & Place founder Tim Price said. "Reaching this point gives buyers confidence that their home will be delivered on time, meeting the high expectations we've

communicated from the outset."

Hickory managing director George Abraham said the topping out milestone was a testament to the quality and pace of the project: "We're on track to deliver a transformative living experience in an iconic building."

The hotel component – operated by TFE Hotels as part of its Collection portfolio – will introduce a new layer of hospitality to Southbank, integrating a restaurant, hotel lobby and premium concierge services into the residential experience.

While the tower marks a major vertical achievement for the precinct, the surrounding area at its doorstep is also set for a horizontal transformation.

Located just metres from the Queensbridge Building's entrance, the long-overlooked Kings Way

undercroft is set to be revitalised into 5000sqm of public open space, thanks to a joint investment by the City of Melbourne and the federal government.

Dubbed a "massive win for Southbank" by Lord Mayor Nick Reece, the new space – part of the council's City Road Master Plan – will include recreational facilities, art installations and safer pedestrian links.

The council allocated funding in its 2025–26 budget to progress the long-awaited renewal, with detailed design work now under way.

Together with the new and expanded library and soon-to-be renovated Boyd Community Hub opposite on City Rd, the Queensbridge Building and undercroft renewal signal a new chapter for the heart of Southbank. •

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR





**KATHERINE COPSEY**  
MP FOR SOUTHERN METRO



**STEPH HODGINS-MAY**  
SENATOR FOR VICTORIA

**CLIMATE  
HOUSING  
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Authorised by S. Hodgins-May, Australian Greens Canberra



# Engaging the community and commemorating National Volunteers Week

The crunch of autumn leaves and the golden sun on the Boyd Community Hub sign at the City Rd/Kings Way junction is captivating. Every autumn, we eagerly anticipate seeing the changing tree colours at this spot.

WORDS BY  
DR SEEMA MISRA THAKUR

As we entered the second fortnight of autumn, the anticipated rains arrived, providing our community garden beds with a thorough watering and offering respite to our volunteers managing the watering roster.

The unusually warm days during the first fortnight of May were conducive to outdoor activities. Our senior gardening team has compiled a season-specific planting list since the first week of autumn.

The diligent efforts of the volunteer team are now visible in the garden beds, with fennel, radish, carrots, leeks, beetroot, turnips, broccoli, and more thriving. Look for signal rocks (red, yellow and green) in the garden beds to know when they are ready to harvest.

The notice board has been updated, and the working bee dates are displayed along with the Southbank Sustainability Group (SSG) contact information.

At the recent working bee session, we had an excellent turnout of around 18 to 20 volunteers who contributed significantly. We were also visited by a few four-legged family members, who provided support to



our hard-working volunteers with affectionate paw shakes and cuddle time for the young community members accompanying their parents.

On May 10, the City of Melbourne's urban forest team of conducted a workshop as part of the community consultation process. Members of the Southbank community contributed their opinions both in person and online.

The health and wellbeing of the community are significantly influenced by green spaces, especially in the context of a changing climate. The selection of appropriate tree species is crucial and requires an assessment of community values, neighbourhood character, climate suitability, and biosecurity risks within the evolving climate landscape.

The previous 10-year draft plan for the Urban Forest in Southbank emphasised that the "Urban Forest in Southbank will feature water-sensitive and innovative green corridors for pedestrians and wildlife that

seamlessly integrate both public and private realms".

A network of diverse and vibrant public spaces aims to provide an immersive sensory experience both at street level and from elevated viewpoints. This vision is gradually being realised, as demonstrated by the children's park at Kavanagh St and Southbank Boulevard, and the linear park at Dodd and Miles streets. These open spaces are worth visiting and enjoying while exploring the neighbourhood. An essential factor in our planning for the next ten-year tree planting initiative was the local biodiversity connectivity and preservation of existing species.

Residents with an interest in wetlands are invited to participate in a City of Melbourne survey (<https://forms.office.com/r/NweCxRFkLC>) regarding the floating wetlands established since December 2022 along the Yarra Rive / Birrarung and Victoria Harbour. The aim of this survey is to assist researchers and town planners in comprehending the social impacts and

community value associated with the floating wetlands trial.

National Volunteer Week in May acknowledges the contributions of the Southbank Sustainability Group community and volunteer team. They collaborate to maintain and develop a garden space for the Southbank community. This year, the theme for National Volunteer Week – Connecting Communities – celebrates the power of volunteering in bringing community together. SSG wholeheartedly embraces this message, as it has been integral to our values since our inception.

World Environment Day on June 5 called for collective action to end plastic pollution. SSG brought attention to this in our August 2024 article in Southbank News:



### About the group

SSG is a solution focused group of Southbank residents working to bring positive change in sustainability practices. Reach us at

[SouthbankSustainability@gmail.com](mailto:SouthbankSustainability@gmail.com) or [FB/SouthbankSustainabilityGroup](https://www.facebook.com/SouthbankSustainabilityGroup) or on [Instagram @SouthbankSustainabilityGroup](https://www.instagram.com/SouthbankSustainabilityGroup).

If you are interested in getting involved, join us at our upcoming June meetup on Saturdays, June 7 or 21. ●

# Table Tennis @Boyd serves up community spirit in Southbank

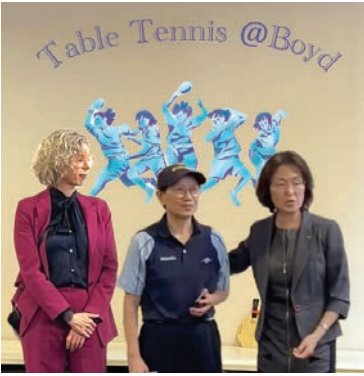
Southbank's newest community sport initiative, Table Tennis @Boyd, officially launched in April and is already proving a smash hit with locals.

WORDS BY  
CHAU GIANG & ARTEMIS PATTICHI

Southbankers of all ages and abilities to come together over a fun, low-impact game that's accessible to everyone.

The launch event saw strong community turnout, with local MP for Albert Park Nina Taylor and the City of Melbourne's portfolio lead for community, health and city services Cr Gladys Liu, among those attending. The program also received valuable support from the council's Southbank neighbourhood partner Ash Lee.

The project is the brainchild of Southbank resident and Table Tennis Australia registered coach Chau Giang, a long-time advocate



for the sport. With accolades including a silver medal at the Australian Corporate Games and

podium finishes at the 2019 World Veteran Tour in Townsville, Ms Giang said she wanted to bring something active, inclusive and community-driven to Southbank.

"I truly believe that table tennis is a sport for everyone," she said.

Recognising a lack of accessible sporting activities in Southbank, Ms Giang applied for and received a City of Melbourne Connected Neighbourhood Small Grant to launch the initiative. Her vision is to provide residents with a fun and healthy way to connect, while offering free professional coaching.

Recent junior and open

championships showcased at Table Tennis @Boyd were enthusiastically received by the community, with support from local businesses including Mr Summit Café & Bar, Woolworths, and Arts Centre Melbourne.

Participants have included local families, international students, and even interstate and overseas visitors from countries including India, Indonesia, Sweden and England. "It was a delight to attend and see this terrific initiative take off," Nina Taylor said.

To learn more or get involved, visit: [participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au](https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au). ●



# Your State MP for Albert Park

Please reach out if you need any help.

 (03) 9646 7173  
 [nina.taylor@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:nina.taylor@parliament.vic.gov.au)  
 PO Box 235, Port Melbourne 3207

   [NinaTaylorMP](#)  [Nina TaylorMP.com.au](https://www.NinaTaylorMP.com.au)



**ACTION** not words.



# Delivering for Albert Park in the Victorian Budget

In May, the Allan Labor Government handed down the 2025–26 Victorian Budget – a Budget that delivers real support for households across Albert Park and continues our commitment to investing in the things that matter most: education, community safety, and cost-of-living relief.

**WORDS BY**  
NINA TAYLOR  
STATE MP FOR ALBERT PARK



We want every young Victorian to have the opportunity to thrive – and that starts with great schools. That's why this year's Budget includes \$2.63 million for planning and design work on an expansion of South Melbourne Primary School. It's an investment in our growing community – ensuring local students have the modern, high-quality spaces they deserve.

To help keep our community safe, the

Budget also delivers \$3.5 million for new CCTV cameras across the City of Melbourne, including Southbank and surrounding areas. This builds on the work we've done to ensure our community remains a vibrant and welcoming place for everyone.

We're also supporting our local sporting clubs, with up to \$275,000 allocated for lighting upgrades at Albert Park – Oval No.

11, the home of South Melbourne Football Club. This investment will mean safer and more accessible facilities for players and supporters alike.

Like households across Australia and the world, families in Albert Park are feeling the pressure of rising costs. This Budget delivers direct, targeted support to help ease the burden.

That includes:

- Free public transport for Victorians under 18
- Free weekend public transport for all Victorians aged 60 and over
- Additional funding for food relief organisations
- Faster, cheaper access to medications, with pharmacists now able to provide scripts for certain treatments
- Free mental health support via an expanded network of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals

We know energy bills put real pressure on household budgets. That's why we'll be launching the fifth round of the \$100 Power Saving Bonus for eligible households holding a concession card.

If you hold a concession card, you'll be able to apply for the \$100 Power Saving Bonus online at the Victorian Energy Compare website or through a participating community organisation.

This is a Budget – and a government – focused on what matters most to Victorians.

Please feel free to contact my office if you need any help with a Power Saving Bonus application or if you have a constituency question – we're happy to assist. You can email me at [nina.taylor@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:nina.taylor@parliament.vic.gov.au) or call **03 9646 7173** to make an appointment. ●

## ST JOHNS SOUTHGATE

# We are what we wear

Clothing not only covers and protects our bodies; as a merging between our internal and external worlds it also communicates our identities and the rich, continuing stories that form them.

**WORDS BY**  
PASTOR JAMES WINDERLICH

Writing in *Forbes*, Joan Mitchelson quotes Delia Ephron, "If you ask women about their clothes, they tell you about their lives."

Clothing isn't only an artifact of "how" we have come to be; it is the continuing, externalising performance of who we are ... a performance that is always under revision in our changing contexts. This is captured by stylist and publisher Rachel Zoe Rosenzweig's famous quotation, "Style is a way to say who you are without having to speak".

While I lack any credible fashion sense, my parents did all that they could to ensure that I and my siblings dressed well. We had "good or special clothes," which my mum often sewed for my sisters to make sure they had something "new". Sewing for a boy was a little more difficult, so my good clothes were purchased with a significant impact on our meagre

family income.

My parents showed us that it was not only a matter of dressing respectfully to fit in at social and cultural occasions, but that dressing well was also a matter of self-respect and personal pride. It was important. To feel good in our clothes was to also feel good in our skin, and in our own company and in the company of others.

This connection between identity and clothing is expressed in the Christian scriptures when St Paul writes, "As God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience" (Colossians 3:23). When it comes to God we don't virtuously dress to impress. God loves us already. We clothe ourselves with, and

practice the virtues that St Paul describes because we are externally loved. That love from outside is our identity, expressed by us in the care of others in grounded performances that, like all fashion, are always under dynamic revision and renewal. God dresses us with love to live.

Textiles and fashion also make a major contribution to Australia's economy. It is reported that they add in excess of \$27 billion to Australia's economy with more than \$7 billion of that amount coming from exports. These industries provide employment to almost a half a million people in Australia (Australian Fashion Council, 2021, *From high fashion to high vis: The economic contribution of Australia's fashion and*

*textile industry*), thereby supporting many people and families to meet their daily needs. Textile and fashion industries impact and benefit all of us.

At St Johns, Southgate we are celebrating a thanksgiving service that focuses on fashion, clothing and national costume. With a sense of fun, we are calling it, "St Johns International Fashion Festival."

The service will be held from 9am on June 15 and we'd love to include you. Come along, wear your cultural dress or something fabulous and join our celebration as we thank God for the gifts of garments, those who provide them and the deep individual and cultural stories and identities that emerge as we wear them. ●

**Sunday 15th June 9am**  
**Thanksgiving Celebration**  
Followed by morning tea

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FASHION  
FESTIVAL**



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Southgate

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**Wear your fashion finest**



# Council shame on City Road Master Plan

At the last Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting on June 3, Southbank Residents’ Association (SRA) made a submission questioning council process and authority.

FMC meetings are generally held every two weeks where councillors consider and approve items related to the Council Plan. This is where most items, including planning applications, are considered.

At the meeting of August 20, 2024, there was an agenda item for the City Road Master Plan and SRA made a submission reminding councillors that the plan encompassed so much more than the northern undercroft, which seemed to have been receiving all the attention.

The City Road Master Plan was endorsed in 2016 and was supposed to be completed in 2023. Year-in, year-out SRA has been lobbying the council to keep this plan on the agenda.

During the August 20 meeting, it was resolved to make a submission to the state government for funding and a draft submission was submitted for consideration. From this, five motions were moved.

A key motion that was resolved from the meeting was, as deemed by former Cr Rohan Leppert, that the draft funding submission for the state government was insufficient and certainly wasn’t competitive or robust enough. Three months was allocated for council officers to improve the draft for submission in November 2024.

In that draft was stated, “New traffic surveys undertaken in July 2022 verify that the Master Plan continues to meet the needs of current traffic conditions”. I think we are all on the same page with agreeing that this is fundamentally wrong and a travesty to think as such.

City Rd is a significant concern to the community as its safety continues to be an issue. City Rd is responsible for fatalities and many pedestrian injuries from accidents involving vehicles, yet after almost 10 years of the City Road Master Plan very little has been incorporated.

About a month ago in early May, SRA decided to ask the council for an update to the resolutions from that meeting. We forwarded a series of questions four days prior to the first FMC meeting for May in anticipation of detailed answers for when we asked our questions at the meeting. Unfortunately, we only received answers to some of our questions and, what we thought were the most important ones on the draft submission, were taken on notice. We expressed our dismay that after giving advance notice of our questions that they were taken on notice, we submitted the question early deliberately so there was no need to take the questions on notice.

After some time we eventually received a response, but only after I requested the intervention of the CEO to hurry it along, to learn that the two days after the FMC meeting on August 20, 2024, when the motion was resolved the Lord Mayor met with the Premier and submitted the council’s funding submission. However, it was not an

updated version – it was the original version, which was deemed insufficient at the FMC meeting two days prior. No wonder the council didn’t want to answer my questions!

And so, we found out last week at FMC the submission was unsuccessful and no funds have been allocated from the state budget. No wonder it was unsuccessful since the draft was not updated, as Cr Leppert predicted.

This is what made me question the council’s processes and authority at that meeting. I asked who deemed that the submission didn’t need to be updated considering it was a resolution from the August 20 FMC meeting (and the motion was passed unanimously with the backing of all councillors). I was informed that “at the time the meeting between the Lord Mayor and the Premier was considered both constructive and positive. As such, it was viewed by the Lord Mayor’s office and the advocacy team as fulfilling the intent to advocate for the City Road Master Plan budget submission”.

This meeting with the Premier was only two days after the FMC meeting where the motion was moved. They talked about their decision to submit the submission being the positive and constructive nature of the meeting, but the Lord Mayor went into that meeting with the submission.

Clearly, they had already made a decision to present the submission as they furnished the Lord Mayor with the submission for the meeting. It would appear the atmosphere of the meeting had no bearing on their decision not to update the submission. How were they to know the meeting was going

to be so positive and constructive? What confidence can the community have in the council’s processes if council officers can arbitrarily override council meeting resolutions?

Today it was a state government funding submission, tomorrow it could be that development next door that the community objected so strongly about, which was rejected by councillors.

What’s the point of even holding council meetings if the council officers have the authority to override decisions made by councillors? Why even have elected representatives if the officers can arbitrarily call the shots?

This was an appalling act by the council, which has likely cost Southbank its desperately-needed funding for the City Road Master Plan. The council has not even guaranteed future advocacy actions for the 2025/26 annual plan.

If you would like to help us with our advocacy efforts, we would love to have you on our committee. If you would like to know more, please reach out at [info@southbank-residents.org.au](mailto:info@southbank-residents.org.au) ●

Tony Penna  
PRESIDENT



# From dated to digital: an apartment building’s journey to a smarter, future-proofed future

Cobwebs in the walkways, lift buttons that had seen better days, and internet speeds that felt like a relic from a bygone era – that was everyday life in one of Melbourne’s well-known 1990s apartment towers, before our committee decided to act.

Like many older buildings, we faced the challenge: how do you bring a classic structure into the 21<sup>st</sup> century without overwhelming the committee or the budget? This is our story of transformation.

**The ticking clock: why modernisation became non-negotiable**

We had grappled for years with the hallmarks of ageing infrastructure. Our original lifts, well past their typical 20- to 25-year service life, were a constant source of frustration, with “buttons falling out or becoming completely non-operational, to lift doors jamming,” as noted in our upgrade logs.

This wasn’t just an inconvenience; across Melbourne, ageing lifts pose real risks – in 2018 alone, the Melbourne Fire Brigade rescued more than 15 people each month from lift entrapments in the city. Residents, understandably, were losing patience.

But the lifts were only half the story. Our building’s internet still ran on fibre-to-the-basement (FTTB) copper, throttling every apartment to a theoretical 100 Mbps – and often far less at peak times.

In practical terms, that meant choppy video calls for residents working from home, endless buffering when families tried to stream a Friday-night movie, and overnight uploads for anyone dealing with large design files or cloud backups.

In a post-COVID world where “home” is also the office, the classroom and the media hub, sluggish internet wasn’t a mild annoyance; it was a daily productivity drain felt by almost all 200 residents.

Silence isn’t golden; it’s costly. Relying on

lobby posters and elevator notices meant the owners’ corporation (OC) committee never had a clear picture of what was broken or who’d been told. Updates went up hours late, got covered by older sheets, and reached owners who rarely visited the building but not the tenants actually living with the problem.

With a steady churn of residents and a maze of stakeholders – building manager, OC manager, security, cleaners, trades – maintenance became guesswork and frustration mounted, all because our only “system” was a corkboard no-one could keep current.

**Embracing the future: a strategic tech overhaul**

To address these pressing concerns, OCs often embark on a strategic tech overhaul. Unreliable lifts are typically the first priority. A complete modernisation, culminating in **touchscreen lifts**, is a popular choice. This isn’t just about dependable mechanics and a sleek, intuitive interface; it’s about enhanced safety and reliability.

As lift consultants highlight, ensuring even the door sensors are upgraded to the correct specification is crucial. Modern lifts like these can also contribute to smoother operations and a more premium feel for the building.

Recognising that existing copper NBN lines are a major bottleneck, many committees initiate the upgrade to **Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)**. This decision, often involving a clear five-phase process with NBN Co. and a co-contribution from the OC (starting from around \$275 per lot), is about future-proofing. FTTP unlocks gigabit-speed potential essential for modern digital demands and, as NBN Co. suggests, can make properties significantly more attractive to up to 75 per cent of renters, potentially boosting a building’s appeal.

Finally, to tackle communication gaps and streamline building management, we embrace a digital solution: the **NEX2US** mobile app. This type of platform can revolutionise how residents report issues, book shared amenities and receive real-time building notifications. It addresses a key



OC challenge by creating transparency – everyone can see what’s reported and its status, fostering accountability and ensuring everyone is kept in the loop.

**The digital difference: a connected and efficient community**

The journey from dated to digital demonstrates that modernising an older Melbourne building is not only achievable but profoundly impactful. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Residents appreciate the “smooth, modern, and – most importantly – “safe and reliable” lifts and the ease of communication. Problems are now “addressed in a timely manner,” and there’s a palpable sense of a “well-maintained and connected” community.

While we experienced a significant boost in resident satisfaction, broader research indicates such tech upgrades can also positively impact property values – for instance, FTTP connections have been linked to

increases of three to seven per cent in some markets.

This shift to proactive digital management has also freed up valuable committee and building manager time, previously spent chasing issues, for more strategic planning.

For other OC committees in Melbourne considering similar upgrades, our experience shows that strategic investment in technology pays dividends. Resources from bodies like Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) or industry groups like Strata Community Association (SCA) Victoria can offer valuable guidance.

Platforms like the NEX2US app, for instance, also offer practical insights and tools for committees fostering better engagement and managing their buildings more effectively on their own path to a smarter future.

For more information: [nex2.us/blog](https://nex2.us/blog) ●



## New voices at Southbank3006 and thoughts on council budget

One of the guiding principles of Southbank3006 is a commitment to welcoming new talent onto our operations team with the goal of turning over leadership positions every few years.

We are grateful for years of contributions made by co-founders Trisha Avery and Jannine Pattison who have transitioned away from the committee. In their place, we have gained two talented Southbankers who bring unique skills and perspectives that will be a great asset as we continue to evolve in our advocacy for Southbank.

**James Avery** has lived and

thrived in Southbank for 15 years and contributes to Southbank 3006 through his experience of over four decades of creating, producing and promoting entertainment, events and festivals in Australia and across the globe. The organisations James has worked with include local and international brands such as the City of Melbourne, Franco Dragone Entertainment, AEG, Frontier Touring, Live Nation, Grande Experiences, Universal Studios, Warner Bros., Carols in the Domain, and the Olympic Games. He has managed productions in Australia, China, United Kingdom, United States of America, Singapore, Japan, Korea, South America, Malaysia, New Zealand, Honk Kong, Central Europe, the Philippines, and more.

**Roy Byrnes** has called Southbank home since 2016 and is passionate about building a stronger

community. While we're more connected than ever, many people are experiencing loneliness on a scale not seen before. Roy is committed to fostering a sense of belonging and connection.

### Council's budget: a step forward

This year's Council budget is a significant step forward, demonstrating the ability to do more with less. It delivers on key areas that will benefit our community:

Firstly, the budget allocates \$70.6 million, a 20 per cent increase in funding, to make the city a safer, cleaner, and refreshed urban environment. The focus on graffiti and safety is essential for both residents and visitors, making Melbourne an enticing place to live. Southbank will be a beneficiary of many of these initiatives.

Secondly, the projected three per cent rate rise will be rebated to all owners, and an additional three per cent will be passed

through as a saving on residential waste charges. This rate saving will benefit all residents by reducing pressure on residential rental increases by landlords and providing relief for retailers. Additionally, all pensioner ratepayers in Southbank will benefit from an additional 25 per cent discount. The forecast is that rate increases are likely to be contained between two and 2.5 per cent for the following three years.

Thirdly, the Southbank Undercroft Open Space Project has been "greenlit" with the council committing the funds needed to unlock the federal government's funding this year. This will ensure the establishment of a major active recreation centre.

Additionally, the Boyd Community Hub project has been funded with \$5.3 million for a new library, and funding for the ACCA Forecourt redevelopment is being

brought forward this coming year.

For the long term, the council has moved decisively to bring debt levels under control with a plan to reduce borrowings from the current \$216 million to \$77 million in FY27.

This year's budget not only focuses on delivering essential council services but also strengthens the underlying financial position enabling Melbourne to grow and innovate in the future. The council should be congratulated for this vital outcome in its planning. ●

**MaryKay Rauma**

CO-FOUNDER

COMMUNITY@  
SOUTHBANK3006.COM



### FEDERAL POLITICS

## A progressive Parliament: Greens hold the key

Thank you, Southbank. In the recent federal election, your overwhelming support propelled the Greens to achieve our highest-ever vote share in this community. This trust you've placed in us is both humbling and a strong signal of your desire for progressive reform.

One of the most significant outcomes of this election is the Greens holding the sole balance of power in the Senate. This position offers a unique opportunity: Labor can choose to collaborate with us to enact transformative reforms that genuinely improve lives or align with the Liberals for more of the same policies that have failed many Australians.

Southbank residents have consistently voiced their concerns about climate action, housing affordability, and social justice. With the Greens' pivotal role in the Senate, we are committed to translating your concerns into tangible outcomes.

Over the next parliamentary term, crucial nature protection bills will come before the Senate. Our environment is in crisis, and with the Greens holding the balance, there's a powerful opportunity to halt biodiversity loss, protect threatened species, and ensure a safe climate future. Labor can choose to back real climate action and meaningful environmental protections or revert to token gestures that fail our planet. This means healthier, greener spaces for Southbank residents and a cleaner, safer Yarra River environment.

But this opportunity isn't just about the environment. With housing affordability at crisis levels across Melbourne, including here in Southbank – where more than 60 per cent of residents are renters – we need immediate, bold action. The Greens are committed to legislating rent freezes, strengthening renters' rights, and investing in genuinely affordable public and social housing. These policies will directly benefit our community, providing relief to thousands currently struggling with high rents and insecure housing.



Labor also faces a clear choice on inequality. The Greens' proposals – like a billionaire wealth tax, closing corporate tax loopholes, and ensuring multinationals pay their fair share – could fund essential services, ease the cost-of-living crisis, and help lift millions of Australians out of poverty.

Southbank residents would see real improvements in local amenities, health-care access, and education quality, funded by making sure big corporations contribute fairly.

This parliament can be remembered as one of the most progressive in Australian history. Labor's willingness to collaborate with the Greens can deliver a future where our Southbank community thrives, our natural world is protected, and the economy works for everyone – not just a privileged few.

Your voices shape our actions. Together, let's hold Labor accountable and choose progress over politics. Join us to build a fairer, greener future right here in Southbank.

We're always here to listen – please reach out to share your concerns and priorities with your local Greens representatives. ●

*Senator Steph Hodgins-May & Katherine Copsey, MLC for Southern Metro*

### METRO TUNNEL



## Unlikely WWII heroes celebrated at Anzac Station

**Two unlikely World War II heroes lauded for their bravery under fire have been immortalised in bronze at the new Anzac Station, built as part of the Metro Tunnel Project.**

Part of an artwork located at one of the station's entrances on the outer edge of the Shrine of Remembrance Reserve, these decorated heroes are a little different to most. The Victorian-bred carrier pigeons, known as "DD.43.T.139" and "DD.43.Q.879" – were awarded the Dickin Medal for Bravery, the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross.

DD.43.T.139 served in New Guinea with the Australian Army Signal Corps. In 1945 during a severe tropical storm, he delivered a message from a foundering army boat: "Engine failed. Wash on to beach at Wadai owing very heavy seas. Send help immediately". Successful delivery of the message summoned help and meant the boat and its valuable cargo of equipment and ammunition was salvaged.

DD.43.Q.879 served with the Australian Army Signal Corps and allied American Forces on Manus Island. In 1944 during a

Japanese attack on a U.S. Marine Corps patrol, he was one of three pigeons released under heavy fire to carry a message back to base warning of an imminent enemy counter-attack.

The first two pigeons were shot down immediately, but DD.43.Q.879 delivered the message, allowing Allied Forces enough time to mount a defence.

The artist behind the work, Fiona Hall, said she hoped that visitors moving through Anzac Station on their way to the Shrine of Remembrance "will look up at the pigeons, read the descriptions of what they achieved, and be totally amazed by their heroic acts".

The artwork also includes images of plant species that have symbolic connections with military service, etched on glass wall panels located on either side of the pigeons. The plant species include Lone Pine, Gallipoli Oak, Gallipoli Rose, Flanders Poppy, Lombardy Poplar and Rosemary – all species that grow where Australians fought at Gallipoli and on the Western Front during the First World War. The avian heroes are ready to greet Shrine of Remembrance visitors, who will be able to catch a train to the war memorial for the first time when the Metro Tunnel opens later this year. ●







## WHAT'S ON June



Find out what's on in  
postcode 3006 this June.



### ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE BAND PRESENTS... APPARITIONS

Join for a captivating concert of contemporary music. The program features a dynamic selection of technically brilliant and emotionally evocative works.

Iwaki Auditorium, 130 Southbank Blvd

SUNDAY 29 JUNE, 2PM – 3.30PM



### MSO MORNINGS: PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

Experience Mussorgsky's vivid musical translation of watercolours and drawings by the composer's friend, Viktor Hartmann.

Hamer Hall, 100 St Kilda Rd, Southbank

FRIDAY 27 JUNE, 11AM – 12PM



### GREENLINE PROJECT HUB

Explore how the north bank of the Yarra River – Birrarung will be transformed into an unmissable, bucket-list destination for locals and visitors through the Greenline Project. Site 1 will come to life this year.

Princes Walk, Melbourne

UNTIL 26 JUNE, 1PM – 3PM



### MY COUSIN FRANK

Frank Roberts, Australia's first signed Indigenous Olympian, stepping into the boxing ring at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Meet Frank through the eyes of preeminent cultural figure Rhoda Roberts.

The Show Room, Arts Centre Melbourne

9 – 12 JULY



### ST JOHNS INTERNATIONAL FASHION FESTIVAL

Thanksgiving gets a stylish twist as St Johns Church transforms into a fashion runway featuring meaningful outfits, red carpet arrivals and a bold catwalk celebration.

St Johns Church, Southbank

SUNDAY 15 JUNE, 8.30AM – 10.30AM



### TGIF! WITH CHARLIE PICKERING

Thank God It's Friday! is a weekly comedy radio show airing every Friday, live from the ABC studios. Be part of the studio audience for Charlie and his guests for an hour of laughs to kick start the weekend.

ABC Southbank Studios, Southbank

UNTIL 27 JUNE, 4.30PM – 6PM



### THE SUNDAY MARKET AT SOUTHGATE

Come and explore, meet the makers and artists face-to-face and learn about their products and what inspires their work. Stallholders are positioned in marquees along the Yarra River.

Ground Level & Promenade, Southbank

SUNS UNTIL 28 DECEMBER, 10AM – 4PM

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CBD - 5 MINUTES TO YOUR DOOR  
たくさんの美しい女性  
日本語を話します

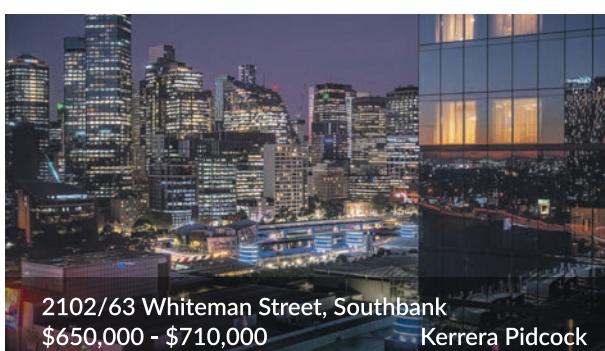
We have survived COVID-19 AND ARE STILL HERE TO HAVE  
BEAUTIFUL LADIES PRIVATELY TO YOUR DOOR 24/7



# Here today, gone tomorrow

**RayWhite**

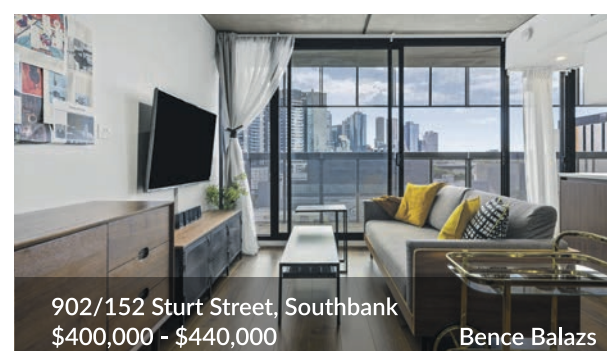
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southbank.vic@raywhite.com to book an appraisal for sale or rental.  
Visit raywhitesouthbank.com.au for more details.



2102/63 Whiteman Street, Southbank  
\$650,000 - \$710,000  
Kerrera Pidcock



921/65 Coventry Street, Southbank  
\$650,000 - \$700,000  
Kerrera Pidcock



902/152 Sturt Street, Southbank  
\$400,000 - \$440,000  
Bence Balazs



1904/58 Clarke Street, Southbank  
\$400,000 - \$440,000  
David Umana



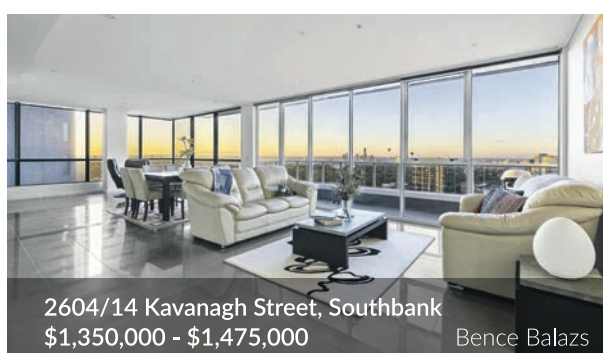
1015/31 City Road, Southbank  
\$298,000 - \$327,800  
David Umana



2204/250 City Road, Southbank  
\$420,000 - \$460,000  
Max Hui



523/85 Market Street, South Melbourne  
\$595,000 - \$625,000  
Taylor Sims



2604/14 Kavanagh Street, Southbank  
\$1,350,000 - \$1,475,000  
Bence Balazs



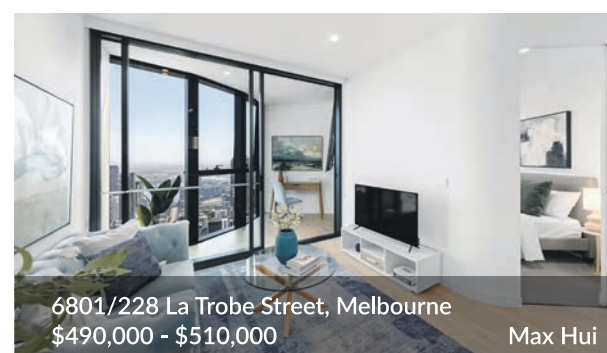
37/70 Albert Road, South Melbourne  
\$700,000 - \$770,000  
Lachie Kelly



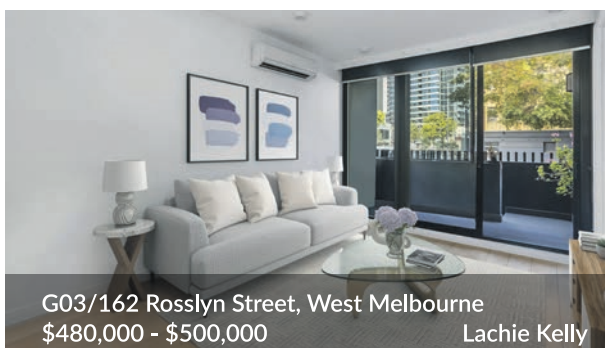
904/22 Kings Place, South Melbourne  
\$1,500,000 - \$1,600,000  
Tommy-Lee Davies



1408/25 Wills Street, Melbourne  
\$330,000 - \$360,000  
Kerrera Pidcock



6801/228 La Trobe Street, Melbourne  
\$490,000 - \$510,000  
Max Hui



G03/162 Rosslyn Street, West Melbourne  
\$480,000 - \$500,000  
Lachie Kelly



E322/11 Flockhart Street, Abbotsford  
\$380,000 - \$410,000  
Max Hui

Michael Pastrokos: 0404 282 864  
Max Hui: 0430 238 021  
Tommy-lee Davies: 0416 823 173  
Taylor Sims: 0403 485 210  
David Umana: 0481 222 376  
Kerrera Pidcock: 0422 261 527  
Bence Balázs: 0411 758 859  
Jolene Tan: 0466 366 041  
Lachie Kelly: 0411 446 204

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