



Popular South American bakery opens in Southbank

The bakery known for its South American pastries and unique take on vanilla slice has moved into Southbank with Tribu Coffee at 109 Clarendon St. Owner Eddie Segovia, pictured with wife and business partner Gaby, says the store's popularity so far has been "insane". More on page 3. Photo: Hanna Komissarova.

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"Connecting our neighbourhood": Southbank Residents' Association launches app

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Local engineer's warning to high-rises wanting to go electric

Property developers listed among council's Asia Business Mission delegates

Property developers have been included in the City of Melbourne's civic delegation for the upcoming Asia Business Mission that has a focus on the green economy and health sector.

A total of 24 business civic delegates will also attend. However, while council reports have said the delegates will represent the green economy and health sectors, there is crossover with the property industry.

A list of delegates seen by Southbank News shows that founder of Landream, Kevin Li, who has a \$1.6 billion pipeline of projects, will be a part of the civic delegation for the Japan leg of the trip.

The director of McMahon Property Group, Ben McMahon, will also be a part of the delegation, due to his strong ties with China's business and cultural sectors.

In addition to these developers, there are several delegates who work within the property industry, including Kelvin Cheong, the managing director of Brady Group (capital), a specialist property firm that offers tailored investment and structured funding solutions.

Greg Gong and Kei Kitayama from architectural firm Denton Corker Marshall will also be in attendance.

To select the delegates, there was a formal expression of interest process targeting export-ready businesses and engagement with key industry bodies, and activation of referral networks to broaden outreach.

Delegates were selected through a process involving interviews, due diligence checks, and suitability assessment against key criteria and whether they aligned with mission's objective and sectoral focus.

Continued on page 7.

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



In September, the Lord Mayor Nick Reece, Cr Kevin Louey, Cr Gladys Liu and Cr Philip Le Liu will embark on a trip to Chengdu, Nanjing and Tianjin in China, as well as to Osaka in Japan.

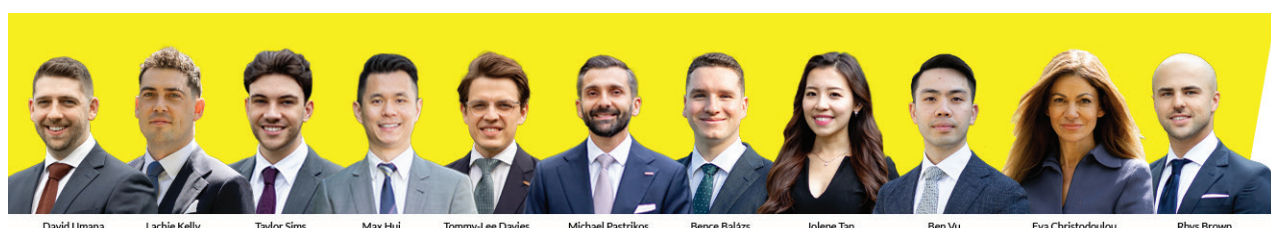
Costing \$20,470 per councillor, the trip is intended to explore opportunities to foster exchange between cities and develop trade and investment links.



ARTS & CULTURE, PAGE 18

Local art club brings creativity and connection to Southbank

A new community art group has taken shape in Southbank, bringing locals together through creativity, conversation and connection.



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The heartline of Melbourne – why the river matters

Birrarung – the traditional name for the Yarra – has always been more than a river.

WORDS BY
LIZ JOLDESKI - EXECUTIVE OFFICER
YARRA RIVER BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

For tens of thousands of years, it has been a place of gathering, sustenance, and connection for the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people. Today, it still flows through the heart of Melbourne, shaping the way we live, create, and celebrate.

Walk along Southbank on any given day and you'll see it: joggers weaving past cafes, tourists pausing for a photo, families strolling the promenade, and office workers catching a quick lunch by the water. The Yarra is the stage on which Melbourne life plays out. And yet, too often, it has been dismissed as little more than a muddy river.

Sydney has its glittering harbour. Brisbane has a subtropical riverfront framed by palm trees and year-round sunshine. These cities are celebrated for their natural beauty.

Melbourne, by contrast, has long been told our river isn't as pretty – that it doesn't photograph as well, that it's not a drawcard. For decades, that narrative has weighed us down. But if we continue to see the Yarra only through that critical lens, we miss its real strength.

Because here's the truth: our city doesn't need to compete on beaches or postcard-perfect views. What makes Melbourne remarkable is what the Birrarung carries along its banks.

The Yarra is not the sideshow – it is the

spine. It connects the National Gallery of Victoria, the Arts Centre, Federation Square, and ACMI. It runs past the Melbourne Recital Centre and Hamer Hall. It links our great sporting arenas – the MCG and Melbourne Park – and it's the backdrop to Moomba, fireworks, and festivals that draw millions.

The Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre brings global conferences to South Wharf, and the area's restaurants, laneway bars, and hotels make the precinct a living room for locals and visitors alike.

In other words: Melbourne's culture, sport, events, food, and creativity don't just sit beside the river – they depend on it. The Birrarung is the spine of our city's identity.

As someone who has spent more than 25 years working in main street economic development, I've seen how places thrive when their defining asset is celebrated rather than overlooked. And as the daughter of small business owners – my parents ran an Eastern European restaurant on Gertrude St in Fitzroy – I know how deeply livelihoods depend on the life of a street or precinct. When people are drawn to a place, when they feel proud to spend time there, everything flows: stronger trade, deeper community, and greater wellbeing.

That's why we need to stop apologising for the Yarra. Instead, we should embrace it, love it, and position it at the centre of our story. Melbourne is a city built on culture, innovation, and resilience – and our river is the canvas where all of that unfolds.

Of course, this doesn't mean ignoring the challenges. Some stretches of the river still feel underutilised or unwelcoming. The water itself needs ongoing care and vision to be cleaner. But none of this is beyond us.

Around the world, cities have proven what's possible when they choose to love their rivers. Paris is investing billions to



make the Seine swimmable. Chicago transformed its once-industrial riverfront into a celebrated promenade. Seoul turned a polluted waterway into a thriving green corridor. If they can do it, so can we.

The Yarra River Business Association (YRBA) believes the time has come to step up our love for the Birrarung. We must treat it as civic infrastructure every bit as important as roads and parks – a place that generates jobs, supports culture, brings joy, and anchors Melbourne's identity. To do that, we need coordinated investment in public spaces, bold activation that celebrates our creativity, and policy that puts the riverfront at the heart of Melbourne's future.

If we see the Birrarung as central to Melbourne and who we are, we'll invest in it, and that investment will repay itself many times over. A loved river makes for a stronger economy, a more liveable city, and a prouder community.

Call to action

This is the first in *The Birrarung Agenda*, a quarterly series on the future of our river and our precinct. I'd love to hear from you: what do you value most about the Yarra, and what would make you love it even more? ●

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Popular South American bakery Dulce Bakehouse arrives in Southbank

The bakery known for its South American pastries and unique take on vanilla slice has moved into Southbank with Tribu Coffee at 109 Clarendon St.

WORDS BY
SABRINA CAIRES



Owner Eddie Segovia said he and his wife and business partner Gaby tried to open the new location quietly at first.

"We were scared of how busy it was going to be, so we tried to do a soft opening," Eddie told *Southbank News*.

And they were right to be wary – Eddie says the Southbank store's popularity so far has been "insane".

The new location's instant popularity is hardly surprising considering the fact that the bakery's original Delahey location and Essendon outpost (dubbed Dulce Chico) have been using a numbered ticketing system on weekends to manage their perpetual queues for years.

This is even before the business garnered high praise in the *Herald Sun* and *The Age* this year for its vanilla slice, deemed Melbourne's best by food critic Dani Valent.

Eddie, who is of Chilean and Uruguayan descent, said the bakery had a large following within the local South American community, who had been eagerly awaiting the new store's opening.

"The first day was great. People were really anxious to have us here," he said.

"It got busy straight away, because people were waiting for us to open."

The menu includes classic savoury and sweet South American pastries as well as desserts you'd find in a typical country



bakery – but always with Eddie's own unique spin.

There's a not-so-secret sauce that's – literally – at the middle of it all: dulce de leche, made in-house.

This South American caramel is made by slowly cooking sweetened condensed milk.

At Dulce Bakehouse, dulce de leche is piped into Argentinian croissants, sandwiched between traditional Chilean

pastries like chilenitos and milhojas, spread between the layers of the signature vanilla slice and piped into tarts and profiteroles.

For savoury snacks, there are empanadas with fillings like chicken and mushroom or beef with Dulce's special house spice blend.

There is also an impressive range of croissants on offer, both savoury and sweet.

For Eddie, the croissant has been one of the most rewarding dishes to perfect.

"The satisfaction after creating the croissant ... I have literally practised for years, eight years of trying and trying, and when I finally got it, it was such a relief and I felt so proud," he said.

"Seeing customers happy and loving the product, that gives me a lot of joy."

"The end product makes me so proud and is so satisfying for me. That's what drives me."

At Dulce's first two locations, the croissants flew under the radar compared

to other more popular menu items, but Southbankers are loving them.

Since the Southbank store opened, Dulce has started making around 1800 croissants a week.

"That's because they're really appreciated in Southbank. I think people appreciate a high-quality croissant," Eddie said. "I use milk, and I use eggs in the dough, so it's more complicated, but the flavour is quite unique and it's a bit richer."

Eddie said that when he's developing recipes, "my imagination runs wild. My taste buds are kind of my best friend. I don't follow recipes. I have epiphanies. I have moments where I think, 'oh my god, this would go so cool with this product' and I just try it."

"Most of our catalogue, we make it up ourselves. And I think that's what makes us unique, that we invent in the moment, we just trial and error. You don't find our products anywhere else."

Serendipitously, the opening of Dulce's second store in Essendon was exactly two years prior to the opening of the Southbank store, to the day.

"The intention was always to come to the city," Eddie said.

"Our growth has been progressive but slow because we've grown really slowly out of word of mouth, rather than just the hype of marketing. Now we've got the hype, but we've been doing the groundwork for almost nine years," he said.

"We've been super busy for a very long time ... now it's become insane, but we've got the background, we've done the hard yards to get to this."

Eddie calls the decision to move in with Tribu Coffee in its spacious shop on the corner of Clarendon St and City Rd a "no brainer".

"We're really happy with the way things are going. We're grateful that Southbank has welcomed us in a really cool fashion, and we're really excited to be there." ●

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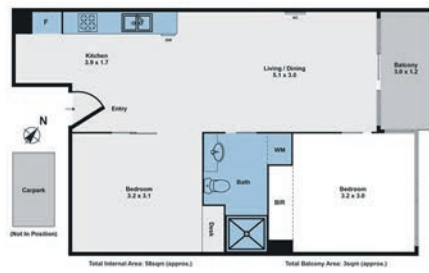
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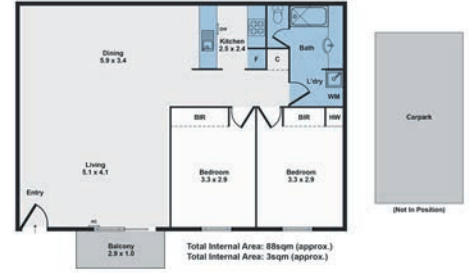
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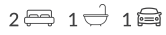
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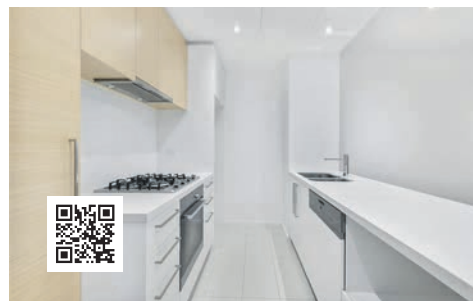
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“You feel like you’re in a canyon”: creating green space in Southbank’s concrete jungle

Dr Yazid Ninsalam, Head of Landscape Architecture at RMIT, spoke at the Southbank Residents’ Association AGM on September 1 about the urban planning opportunities and challenges facing Southbank as the country’s most densely populated postcode.

WORDS BY
SABRINA CAIRES



plans for a multipurpose recreation space with two half-court basketball courts, a bouldering wall and a skateable plaza area. At City Rd Park, there are plans for more greenery, seating and an off-road bike path.

Dr Ninsalam called the project an “amazing opportunity for landscape to exist within this dense urban environment.”

“I think this is a really amazing way for us to rethink the way in which we want to occupy spaces which are deemed to be difficult to access,” he said.

He also noted the successes of the Southbank Boulevard project, particularly the Rocks on Wheels public art playground.

“It also allowed us to be able to reallocate 15,000 square metres of public space, and that’s [nearly] the size of the MCG. And it is amazing for us to be able to reclaim that space in the context of a very dense urban environment,” he said.

Dr Ninsalam also expressed enthusiasm about the landscape architects at ASPECT Studios playing a key role within the design team for the NGV’s upcoming contemporary art gallery, The Fox.

“The opportunities for Southbank are fantastic. At the same time, the City of Melbourne’s development activity model also demonstrates that there is a lot of work, a lot of buildings that are being developed on site,” Dr Ninsalam said.

“It is also key to be able to kind of look at the ground and how we might be able to explore and unpack possibilities.”

“It’s really important to acknowledge how the quality of the built environment and built landscape that we have impacts the way in which we live,” he added.

He described cities as a form of nature in and of themselves, with interconnecting biomes and urban systems.

“If we look at Southbank in itself, some might say Southbank is a precinct of many worlds. You have your waterfront, you have your Arts Centre, you have your residential area. It is in a way fragmented, but also united in essence.”

“Looking at various biome systems and urban systems which interconnect I think is important for us to be able to understand that when we improve a particular region, it will have cascading impacts through the rest of the area. I think this is a really important way of looking at how we might be able to engage the future of Southbank.” ●

Dr Ninsalam said landscape architecture would play a crucial role in improving livability within Southbank as the precinct’s population continues to grow.

“In 2015, Southbank had over 19,000 residents, and by 2035 it’s projected to double to 45,000. This makes Southbank one of the densest precincts within the context of Australia itself,” Dr Ninsalam said.

According to Dr Ninsalam, a major challenge facing Southbank is the way in which the sheer amount of development happening in the area may impact residents’ and visitors’ visual experience of the suburb, which he described through the concept of a “visual bowl”.

“The visual bowl is a 3D bowl of space around a person and is defined by what they can see in all directions,” he said.

“For example, in Southbank the bowl is dominated by tower walls and sharp skyline cuts that might make you feel like you’re in a canyon more than a plaza.”

He said the sky ratio – that is, the amount of sky that’s visible from a given point – isn’t the only factor which impacts a person’s experience of an urban landscape.

The amount of space that is meaningfully engaged with on a ground level and utilising areas to offer visual complexity are also important.

“We live in a new type of urban landscape, a landscape that’s surrounded by skyscrapers,” he said.

Dr Ninsalam said that due to the scale of high-rise development in Southbank, it was these factors outside of the sky ratio that would be key to improving the “visual bowl” for the people of Southbank.

One project that he believes is a promising development which would improve this “visual complexity” is the Kings Way northern undercroft and City Rd Park project.

The draft design for the project, which was endorsed by the City of Melbourne in May this year, plans to reallocate 5000 square metres of public space under the Kings Way overpass on the northern side of City Rd.

The northern undercroft concept includes



Birrarung Riverfest returns with biggest program yet



One of Melbourne’s most loved eco-festivals is set to make a splash this spring, with the *Birrarung Riverfest* returning for its third and biggest year yet.



WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Running from Saturday, September 6 to Sunday, September 28, the festival will host more than 60 events over 23 days along the full length of the Yarra, Birrarung River – from its upper reaches to the city’s heart.

Presented by the Yarra Riverkeeper Association (YRKA), *Riverfest* has quickly grown into a major cultural and environmental celebration, connecting thousands of Victorians to Country, encouraging action for the river, and fostering collaboration across communities.

This year’s program offers everything from platypus-spotting tours and sunset paddles to art-led sensory walks, live music, and family-friendly activities. Festival highlights include:

- **Wurundjeri-led events** such as Bushfood and Bush Medicine in Abbotsford, offering cultural insights and knowledge sharing.

- A **sensory sunrise walk** over the Birrarung at Dights Falls with artist Kate Gorringer-Smith.
- **Habitat planting** for critically endangered species like the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leadbeater’s Possum at Yellingbo Nature Conservation Area.
- A **morning gathering** at the Liwik Barring Landscape Conservation Area with guided walks, morning tea, and stories of the land’s history and biodiversity.
- The **World Rivers Day Finale** at Federation Square, featuring a flotilla of boats, music, art, ceremony, and cultural performances.

YRKA president Janet Bolitho said the timing of the festival was perfect after a cold Melbourne winter.

“From educational and cultural events to outdoor adventures, the *Riverfest* program has something for everyone,” she said.

Alongside its celebrations, *Riverfest* 2025 will shine a spotlight on stormwater pollution – one of the biggest threats to the river’s health.

“Birrarung is under pressure from city growth, climate change, and stormwater pollution,” Ms Bolitho said.

“With everything that washes down our street drains ending up in a local waterway, it’s important we understand and reduce the impact of litter and pollution on our beloved river.”

This year’s major partners are the Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo collaboration and Melbourne Water, supporting YRKA’s vision for a healthy, protected and loved river.

“Everyone can be a Riverkeeper,” Ms Bolitho said. “It’s up to all of us to help the Yarra.” ●

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“Connecting our neighbourhood”: Residents’ Association launches app

The app, which has been in development since 2023, aims to connect Southbank residents with exclusive offers from local businesses and increase visibility for community groups.

WORDS BY
SABRINA CAIRES



Southbank Residents’ Association (SRA) president Tony Penna announced the launch of the app at the committee’s AGM on September 1.

The app will feature a directory of local businesses who will be offering exclusive deals for SRA members.

“The deal with the businesses that want to be part of this app is they have to make us an offer that is exclusive to the residents of Southbank. They can’t give us an offer that’s available to anybody that walks in off the street,” Mr Penna said.

The app will officially launch and be available for download at the start of October, once businesses are signed up over the next month.

Users will be able to “like” their favourite businesses, which means they will be notified when that business creates a new offer.

The app will also include a section listing local community groups.

Mr Penna said the app would be a place for community groups to get the word out about what they did and expand their reach, calling it a “game-changer” for local groups that currently relied on word of mouth to connect with new members.

“What we’re trying to do with connecting our neighbourhood is to find those little

micro groups,” Mr Penna said.

“You might have the crochet club or the bridge club which happens in your building. But it doesn’t need to be exclusive to your building. The problem is these little groups of five, 10, 15 people don’t have the ability, they don’t have the reach to tell the world that they exist.”

“[The app] will give them an opportunity to put themselves in there and tell the world that ‘Hey, we’re here, if you want to connect with us, please come and find us,’” Mr Penna said.

“We’re trying to make it a one stop shop.”

Lord Mayor Nick Reece was also present for the app’s launch.

He congratulated SRA on the initiative, saying, “It takes real vision and hard work to deliver something like that.”

“I think it’s going to be a really innovative platform for connecting people and communities across Southbank,” Cr Reece said.

Access to the app and its exclusive offers will be available as part of an SRA membership, which costs \$15 per year.

There is no cost to the businesses who elect to be part of the app.

The SRA is spending \$55,000 on the app’s development, with the funding coming from membership funds, which are the SRA’s primary source of income. ●

Property developers listed among council’s Asia Business Mission delegates

Continued from page 1.

However, Tran Siu, a former Brimbank councillor convicted in 2011 of giving false information and authorising unregistered how-to-vote cards during a 2008 election campaign, is also among the delegates.

Mr Siu will travel to both China and Japan in his capacity as director of Pacific Trading Alliance (EBOS Group) – Australasia’s largest diversified healthcare and animal care distributor.

The remaining 19 delegates are predominantly from the health and education sectors, including Frank Mcguire from Global Village Learning and Mish Eastman from RMIT University.

The Australian Chinese Business Council also has a strong presence on the trip, with the president Rhys Roberts, vice president Celina Yu and Phoebeanca Luong all taking part. According to the council’s election donation returns register, Ms Yu donated \$600 toward Nick Reece’s Lord Mayoral tilt.

It is also understood that on the trip, there are networking events that people not on the official delegate list have been invited to, which includes businesspeople from the property, health and education sectors.

All official delegates are participating on a fee-for-service basis and are responsible for arranging and funding their own flights.

Cr Andrew Rowse will also travel to Shanghai to participate in the 2025 World Top-Performing Incubator Forum (WTIF), taking place from September 22 to 23.

Additionally, the City of Melbourne has announced that the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor Roshena Campbell and Cr Rowse will represent the council on a business mission to India in November.

In the same month, the Lord Mayor is also expected to travel to Brazil for the World Mayors Summit and Local Leaders Forum.

“Too much is done here with scant regard for those who are paying the bill,” Cr Owen Guest told *Southbank News*. “Where’s the value and respect for the ratepayers here?”

Cr Guest stated that there was no proven case for all the trips and expressed disappointment at the lack of information provided.

According to council reports, it is expected that around \$80,000 will be spent on the councillors alone. However, Cr Guest said that he had so far been unable to obtain any accurate costings.

Uncertainty surrounding the rationale for the trip also led Cr Davydd Griffiths to abstain from voting on a motion for the Asia Business Mission at the September 3 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting.

He said he would like more detail before voting – particularly greater specificity around the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to be signed, as well as a complete list of delegates, which at the time of the meeting had not been provided to councillors who were not taking part of the mission.

As part of the business mission, councillors will attend a number of networking events and on Friday, September 19, a “Friends of Melbourne Night” will be held.

At the event, the Lord Mayor will deliver a speech, a networking dinner will be hosted, and an MoU signing ceremony will take place.

The council hasn’t confirmed who will be in attendance at this event, however some sources have indicated that around 120 will be invited, with property sector representatives among them. ●

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Est. 2019

“Plan now, pay less later”: local engineer urges Southbank high-rise owners to prepare for electrification costs

Howard Barnes has spent the past decade studying the guts of his building. A mechanical engineer and Tower 3 resident at Yarra’s Edge since 2013, he has a message for communities living in Melbourne towers built around 20 years ago or more: start planning – and saving – for electrification now.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Mr Barnes’s owners’ corporation (OC) is investigating how to future-proof Towers 2 and 3 as Victoria transitions away from gas, and as apartment living absorbs new electrical loads, from induction cooktops to heat-pump systems and electric vehicles.

His assessment is blunt but measured: making space for a larger substation and a new motor control centre, then switching plant and apartments over, is likely to be a long, staged project. The working estimate, he says, is from \$8 million up to \$12 million across both towers, spread over about 20 years.

“We’re at the very beginning of a long journey,” Mr Barnes said. “The project itself is probably five years of design and logistics once you’re ready to go, from finding a location, purchasing the space and redesigning services, to the tricky changeover from the old system to the new.”

Like many buildings completed during the gas-first era, Yarra’s Edge was designed with electricity for lighting and “secondary”

functions, while space for future electrical expansion was limited. As gas becomes more expensive and electrification accelerates, that design legacy is now a constraint.

Independent engineering advice commissioned by the OC in 2019 found the main distribution board was already operating beyond its safe cable rating, and that the car-park boards had only enough spare capacity for a handful of low-power EV chargers.

When the building trialed two EV chargers anyway, the garage experienced nuisance tripping and overheating; the chargers were removed.

A subsequent meeting and discussions with CitiPower/Powercor in 2024 clarified responsibilities. The distributor can deliver more power to the property boundary, but space for larger equipment is an OC responsibility.

CitiPower indicated there may be limited spare capacity of 770–820 amps without rebuilding the substation, but anything beyond that would require a larger

transformer, a new or upgraded main switchboard and building modifications. Under current rules, connection upgrades are customer-funded.

“CitiPower provides the power; we have to provide the space,” Mr Barnes told *Southbank News*.

In practice, that likely means purchasing and reconfiguring ground-level commercial space shared by the two towers, undertaking civil and structural works, and sequencing a changeover while keeping the building running. Mr Barnes noted the existing motor control centre would also be due for renewal within the timeframe.

For owners, the obvious concern is affordability. Mr Barnes argues the best protection against future shocks is time.

The OC has engaged a consultant to produce a realistic 20-year maintenance plan using current market pricing, including allowances for cranes, logistics and construction. Spread over two decades, he believes contributions can remain in “the realm of the doable” – roughly 10 to 15 per cent higher than current maintenance fund inputs – rather than the 40 per cent uplift a shorter program might require.

He also wants the state government’s current review of the *Owners Corporation Act 2006* to consider how maintenance funds are set up. In his view, many plans escalate original developer estimates by a flat percentage each year without testing present-day costs, and they don’t account for the crane and logistics premiums that high-rise plant replacements inevitably attract.

“After COVID, labour jumped sharply, and big lifts add hundreds of thousands of dollars to individual jobs,” he said. “If funds aren’t calibrated to reality, owners get hit with special levies,” Mr Barnes said.

While electrification is often discussed in

terms of rooftop solar or community batteries, Mr Barnes is pragmatic about scale. Solar on his complex’s garage roof covers only about 10 per cent of common-area power when new.

Community batteries, like those the City of Melbourne is rolling out through its Power Melbourne scheme, he quips, are “mustard after the meal” if the fundamental issue – getting more supply capacity into dense inner-city streets – isn’t addressed.

He expects new cables will ultimately be needed along many streets to serve multiple towers – a long-term city-building task.

For now, his advice to other OCs is practical and calm: audit today’s load and space, engage early with the distributor, stage upgrades sensibly, be transparent with residents and plan EV charging realistically.

Mr Barnes says the conversation is only just beginning across many inner-city towers. His message is not alarmist; it is simply a call to get ahead of the curve.

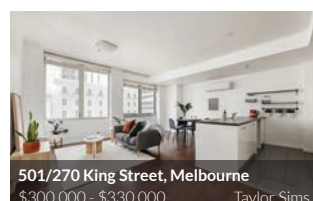
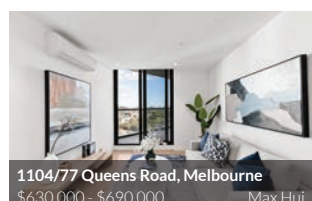
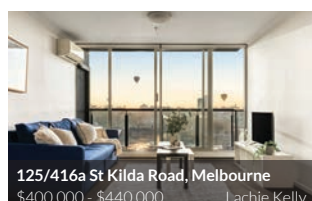
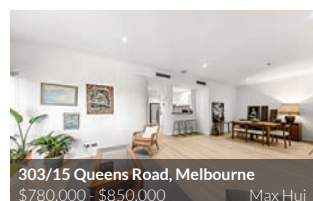
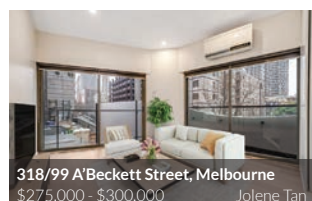
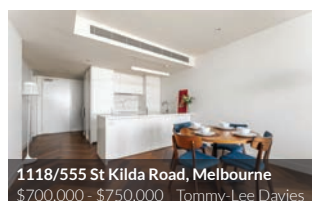
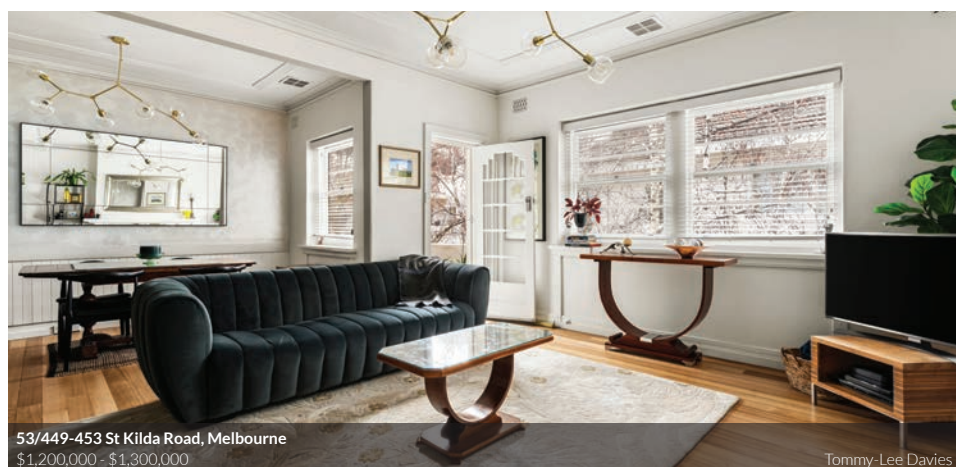
“We probably have around 20 years,” Mr Barnes said. “If buildings start now – on the engineering, the space planning and a realistic, long-term funding model – they’ll be ready when the time comes. If they don’t, costs will only go up.”

Victorian MP for Albert Park Nina Taylor said, “We know that more work needs to be done to make this a simpler, smoother process” and that the state government was currently undertaking a review of the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program “to make sure the program continues to be fit-for-purpose and accessible.”

She added that high-rise residential buildings were eligible for bespoke incentives for electric appliances through the VEU, and that she would soon be hosting a round table in Southbank for local OCs to discuss these issues further. ●

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May Wang brings Southbank and CBD expertise to Jellis Craig

Southbank and CBD residents may soon notice a new – yet familiar – face in the local real estate scene.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Local resident and experienced property professional May Wang has joined the team at Jellis Craig Port Phillip, bringing with her more than a decade of experience in high-end residential sales and a strong connection to the community she now calls home.

For Ms Wang, Southbank isn't just where she works – it's where she lives. After previously residing in both Bayside and the Yarra Valley, she downsized to Southbank and has embraced the energy and convenience of inner-city living since 2022.

"I was drawn to this part of Melbourne because of the arts and culture, the food, the concerts and events – everything happens here," Ms Wang said.

"Southbank gives you the best of both worlds: you're right in the heart of the city, close to the Yarra, the bay and amazing parks like the Botanic Gardens, Albert Park and Fawkner Park. For me, that balance between urban energy and access to nature is perfect."

That personal insight gives her an edge when working with buyers looking to make the move into the inner city. She understands what attracts a wide range of people – from downsizers after a low-maintenance lifestyle, to professionals who value proximity to work, interstate buyers looking for a city base, and international purchasers drawn to Melbourne's vibrant living and modern amenities.

"Every building has its own energy and attracts its own community," she said. "Some people want resort-style amenities like gyms and pools. Others prefer boutique Art Deco apartments with a more intimate feel and a sense of history. Then there are those who want skyline views stretching from the city to the bay and the mountains. My job is to help people find the property that suits their lifestyle and their aspirations."

Ms Wang's arrival strengthens Jellis Craig's presence in the inner-city market, complementing the agency's established reputation and market share especially after a recent merge with RT Edgar Albert Park and Chisholm & Gamon. With her background in project marketing with Colliers and her knowledge of the apartment market, she adds depth to the team's coverage across the full spectrum of property around the Port Phillip Bay area.

Fluent in both Mandarin and Cantonese, Ms Wang also brings cultural affinity that is vital in today's increasingly global market. With Melbourne continuing to attract strong international interest, her ability to connect with overseas buyers and understand their expectations offers real value to local property owners.

"For me, real estate is about relationships, about understanding people's stories and bridging cultures," she said. "You have to understand what buyers from different backgrounds value most – whether it's location, amenities, investment potential or lifestyle."

"When you walk into someone's home, you see their life – the art, the pets, the family memories. I feel privileged to help people navigate big life transitions – whether it's buying their first apartment, downsizing, or investing. It's about finding the right fit and plan well ahead."

Jellis Craig is widely regarded as one of Melbourne's leading premium real estate groups, acclaimed for its renowned



reputation, extensive network and community focus. Ms Wang said joining Jellis Craig felt like a natural progression. "It's a premium brand with a strong reputation and values that align with mine," she said. A connected network and more than 2.4 million clients on the open database, Jellis Craig is also backed by cutting-edge technology. Just as importantly, the team genuinely cares about the community – they're involved in local charities and neighbourhood initiatives. It's more than selling homes, as it says in its brand claim: Your

connection to something greater.

With her combination of local knowledge, industry expertise, global perspective and people-first approach, May Wang is set to play a key role in Jellis Craig Port Phillip's continued growth in Melbourne's dynamic property market.

And for locals, Ms Wang is more than a property expert – she's a neighbour who truly understands what makes this part of Melbourne so special.

Follow her Instagram @PortPhillipMay [jellisraig.com.au/office/albert-park](https://www.jellisraig.com.au/office/albert-park) ●

What lies behind Melbourne's slow uptake of EV chargers in apartments?

Jamie Schachter and his wife are proud electric vehicle (EV) owners, and when they decided to relocate from Queensland to Melbourne, they discovered it wasn't easy to find an apartment with EV charging stations.

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



They inspected roughly 20 properties around Melbourne, and not a single one had EV chargers. In the end, they moved into Focus Apartments in Southbank, a building completed in 2022.

However, despite being thrilled with their purchase and enjoying the Southbank lifestyle, they had to compromise by choosing to live in an apartment block without EV charging facilities.

Since moving in, they've been unsuccessful in getting a charger installed, despite making multiple enquiries with their building manager, Melbourne Inner City Management (MICM).

After waiting four months for a response, they were told that to explore the option of installing a charger, they would need to seek

approval from the owners' corporation (OC).

Southbank News contacted both MICM and the OC at Focus Apartments for comment.

Employees at MICM advised that this was a question better directed to the OC. However, when a member of the OC was contacted, they said that MICM, as the OC managers, should be able to assist.

In August 2023, MICM's Owners Corporation Electric Vehicle Guide recommended that OCs should delay installation until federal government EV standards were introduced.

"Currently, the insurance and fire risks are high, and for this

reason we suggest the Owners Corporation Committee put any EV projects on hold until we have further information from the government on how they would assist in putting out fires within vertical high-rise buildings," the guide stated.

"We see additional research from other countries that are five-plus years ahead of Australia, which are now dealing with fire and explosion issues. They are producing specialised fire equipment and considering alternative locations to charge vehicles."

Since then, federal government EV standards have been introduced. Under the National Construction Code 2022 energy

efficiency requirements, new builds must include provisions for EV infrastructure.

All parking spaces in new residential apartment buildings must have EV charging capability, and 10 per cent of spaces in new office and retail buildings must also be equipped.

Former Electric Vehicle Council energy and infrastructure head, Ross De Rango, said that installing the infrastructure needed to charge EVs is often placed in the "too hard basket" by OCs and building managers.

"Owners' corporations are responsible for all manner of things within a building, and EV charging is not necessarily at the

top of their list today," he said.

However, as the number of EV drivers increases, Mr De Rango believes it will naturally become a priority.

"The total that we spend today on liquid fuels for road transport is about \$50 billion a year," he explained.

"It'll take something like 30 years to shift the vast majority of the fleet to electric. Once we've done that, we'll be using about \$20 billion a year worth of electricity instead of \$50 billion a year of liquid fuels."

Mr De Rango believes it won't be long before the availability of EV charging in strata buildings starts to affect both rental returns and property desirability, due to it being considered essential by prospective buyers and renters.

EV sales in Australia hit record levels in 2024, with more than 114,000 units sold, accounting for 9.7 per cent of all new car sales. However, despite this growth, internal combustion engine vehicles are still more widely used.

As an early adopter, Jamie Schachter is glad to have made the switch to an electric vehicle, but it hasn't been without its challenges, and he would like to see chargers become more accessible.

"Either let residents install standard outlets in their parking spots or offer a few shared EV chargers in common areas," he said. "Meter it or charge us for it – just give people the option." ●

Melbourne Recital Centre launches bold new classical season

“

Melbourne Recital Centre (MRC) has unveiled its 2026 International Classical Season, promising audiences a program that pushes the boundaries of tradition while celebrating the art form's rich heritage.

”

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Titled *Heritage to Horizon*, the season will bring world-class artists to Southbank in a program that fuses masterworks with contemporary innovation.

The announcement follows the appointment of Iain Grandage AM as MRC's new director of programming, alongside guest curator Matthew Hoy, building on the legacy of former programming director Marshall McGuire.

Mr Grandage said the season represented a chance to reimagine what classical music can be.

"This program is a thrilling mix of the known and the new, featuring artists of the highest quality from around the globe," Mr Grandage said. "As I begin my journey at the Melbourne Recital Centre, I'm inviting everyone to continue theirs by joining us for this season."

Audiences can expect performances that reflect classical music's evolving global story. In February, the Brodsky Quartet will join forces with yidaki virtuoso William Barton for a cross-cultural performance responding to Australia's bushfire crisis. In March, Scottish composer and electronic

innovator Anna Meredith brings her acclaimed reimagining of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* into the 21st century with ANNO, weaving electronica into a familiar orchestral canvas.

Other highlights include Bryce Dessner of indie-rock band The National collaborating with musicians from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in September, blurring the lines between pop culture and chamber music, and British pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason, who will make her long-awaited MRC debut in October.

MRC CEO Sandra Willis said the season was about more than programming concerts: it was about charting the evolution of classical music for today's audiences.

"We're not simply programming a season at Melbourne Recital Centre – we're charting classical music's evolution with our audiences," Ms Willis said. "*Heritage to Horizon* embodies our belief that the future belongs to artists who honour tradition while speaking to today's world. This is how we create lasting impact: by making space

for voices that matter."

The full season spans continents and centuries, with performances from Roomful of Teeth, violinist James Ehnes with pianist Orion Weiss, the Attaca Quartet, pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and many more. Each artist has been chosen for their ability to bridge tradition and modernity, showing that "the future is classical."

Located at 31 Sturt St, Southbank, Melbourne Recital Centre continues to champion both international artists and Australian voices across its celebrated performance spaces: Elisabeth Murdoch Hall and Primrose Potter Salon. The 2026 season builds on MRC's reputation as one of the country's most adventurous and acoustically acclaimed music destinations.

Subscriptions for *Heritage to Horizon* went on sale on 26 August, with discounts of up to 25 per cent for multi-event bookings. Single tickets will be available from 6 October.

For more information and bookings, visit melbournerecital.com.au ●



Dog Man bounds into Arts Centre Melbourne for school holidays

One of children's literature's most unlikely superheroes is leaping from the page to the stage, as *Dog Man: The Musical* comes to Arts Centre Melbourne this September school holidays.

Based on the wildly popular graphic novel series by Dav Pilkey, the musical adventure will run for 10 performances at the Playhouse from September 30 to October 4. Following sold-out seasons across Australia and a celebrated run at New York's Lucille Lortel Theatre in 2019, this marks *Dog Man*'s first outing at Arts Centre Melbourne.

Part dog, part man, and all heart, *Dog Man* is a canine crime fighter who can't resist chewing the furniture even as he battles the forces of evil. Audiences will follow his escapades as he takes on Flippy the cyborg fish and an army of Beastly Buildings, outsmarts the dastardly Petey the cat – who has cloned himself for revenge – and races to see if George and Harold can finish their show before lunchtime.

With original book and lyrics by Kevin Del Aguila, music by Brad Alexander, and orchestrations by Lloyd Kikoler, the musical brings Pilkey's zany characters to life in a bright, laugh-out-loud production full of mischief, music, and mayhem.

Arts Centre Melbourne's creative producer for families and children Mary Harvey said the show continued the centre's focus on celebrating the stories that get kids reading.

"It is always such a pleasure



Photo: Peter Wallis

staging much-loved book adaptations in our Families and Children's program and celebrating the stories and superheroes – like *Dog Man* – that help children fall in love with reading," Ms Harvey said.

The season also reflects Arts Centre Melbourne's commitment to accessibility. An Auslan-interpreted performance will run on Thursday, October 2, while a Relaxed Performance will take place on Saturday, October 4, designed for children and families who may benefit from a sensory-adapted experience.

For the Relaxed Performance, house lights will stay dimly on, theatre doors will remain open, and sensory effects such as bright lights or loud sounds will be softened. A quiet area will be available in the foyer, and audience members are encouraged to bring headphones, sunglasses, or fidget toys.

"We're proud to ensure everyone can experience the joy and wonder of the performing arts," Ms Harvey added.

Tickets for *Dog Man: The Musical* are on sale now via Arts Centre Melbourne. ●

NGV reimagines the everyday in new design exhibition

From edible coffee cups and seaweed straws to leather made from mushrooms and seafood waste, the National Gallery of Victoria's latest exhibition is shining a spotlight on how design can transform daily life for the better.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Now open at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, *Making Good: Redesigning the Everyday* brings together more than 50 Australian and international designers who are rethinking the products and systems we use every day. The exhibition, which runs until February 1, 2026, with free entry, explores how design can improve human health and wellbeing while also addressing urgent environmental challenges.

Visitors will encounter a striking mix of innovations across industries. In building and construction, Canberra glass artist Matthew Curtis has created architectural blocks from recycled TV screens and waste float-glass, while Sydney studio Besley & Spreser turns discarded oyster shells into

terrazzo-like surfaces. Singaporean paint brand Gush has developed a formula that purifies the air, and Melbourne's Other Matter offers a recyclable signage film designed to replace single-use vinyl.

Healthcare and wellbeing are also central themes. Highlights include Hoopsy's plastic-free pregnancy tests, Modi Bodi's First Period Kit, and Melbourne label Bed Intentions, which has created a microbiome-safe water-based lubricant enriched with prebiotics. In global health, OOXii Global's Vision Kit offers an affordable, portable solution to eye testing and eye-wear in low-access regions, while the Light Phone III provides a minimalist alternative to modern smartphones.

The exhibition also responds to consumer concerns around fast fashion. UK-based Petit Pli has engineered children's clothing that grows with its wearer, reducing textile waste. New York designer Allina Liu presents garments crafted from TômTex, a mushroom – and seafood waste – derived leather substitute, while Kiki Grammatopoulos' running shoes scatter seeds with every step, supporting urban rewilding.

Food innovation adds another dimension. Melbourne-based Good-Edi produces edible coffee cups from locally sourced grains, while US company Loliware offers biodegradable seaweed straws and Great Wrap presents compostable cling film made from food waste.

NGV director Tony Ellwood AM said the



Photo: Sean Fennessy

exhibition captured a critical moment for contemporary design.

"The innovations presented in *Making Good* reflect a pivotal moment in how designers are conceptualising their work, going beyond function to consider the social and environmental impact of products," he said.

RMIT's Deputy Vice-Chancellor design and social context Professor Tim Marshall added: "*Making Good* showcases forward-thinking design that will inspire

creativity, spark conversations and most importantly, drive change towards a more regenerative future."

By reimagining the most ordinary objects – from clothing to coffee cups – *Making Good* offers a glimpse into how design can create healthier, more sustainable ways of living. For Melbourne audiences, it's both a provocation and an invitation: to see the everyday differently, and to imagine a future designed for good.

ngv.vic.gov.au ●

Arts Centre Melbourne expansion hits major milestone with underground works complete

A major step forward has been reached in the \$1.7 billion transformation of Melbourne's Arts Precinct, with excavation works behind Arts Centre Melbourne's iconic Theatres Building now complete.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The excavation, which removed more than 15,600 cubic metres of earth – enough to fill six Olympic swimming pools – has dug down to a depth of 14 metres, paving the way for a significant basement extension that will expand the building's footprint by 16 per cent.

The additional underground space will house an expanded loading dock twice the size of the current one, fitted with two new scenery truck lifts to improve safety and efficiency when moving sets and equipment. It

will also include a new rehearsal space and studio the same size as the State Theatre stage, complete with an adjoining function room, alongside a new accessible stage door.

Arts Centre Melbourne CEO Karen Quinlan AM said the works would transform how productions are brought to life.

"Crews will be able to bring sets, costumes and equipment into the building more safely and efficiently, and performers will have a new rehearsal space right next to the State Theatre stage for the first time," Ms Quinlan said.

"The refurbishment will bring the State Theatre to 21st century standards, while restoring its heritage features for the next generation of artists and audiences."

Upgrades to the State Theatre itself are also under way, with improvements to accessibility, acoustics, technology, and audience comfort. Heritage protection works, including the replacement of ageing anode wells in the Cathodic Protection System, are being carried out to safeguard the foundations of the 41-year-old theatre. Visitors can also look forward to new and improved dining options.

Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks, who met workers on site this week, said the project reinforced Melbourne's reputation as Australia's cultural capital.

"Melbourne's State Theatre holds a special place in Victorians' hearts. The upgrades will allow this 40-year-old icon to serve Victorians for many years to come, in the heart of our transformed arts precinct," he said.

"This major infrastructure project will further cement our reputation as Australia's cultural capital, while offering exciting career pathways and opportunities for Victorians – and a rare chance to shape the future of a Melbourne icon."

More than 100 apprentices, trainees, and cadets have worked on the project so far, including Connie Tropea, who made a career switch from hairdressing to civil construction. "Every day on site is a new challenge, and I love that I'm constantly learning and improving," she said.

The Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation, delivered in partnership by MAP Co, Creative Victoria, Development Victoria, the NGV, and Arts Centre Melbourne, is expected to create 11,000 jobs across its lifespan, while reshaping the city's cultural heart for decades to come. ●



Wax Music Lounge

Step into the forefront of sonic euphoria that is Wax Music Lounge, the brainchild of the trailblazing team behind Melbourne's legendary Wax Museum Records store.

Nestled in the basement of the Bounce Melbourne, opposite the iconic Flinders St train station and one door from Degraives St, Wax Music Lounge is more than just a place—it's an auditory odyssey.

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GREEN LIGHT FOR GURROWA PLACE



Major development to help ease the housing crisis

The groundbreaking transformation of Melbourne's iconic Queen Victoria Market is one step closer, with the new precinct Gurrowa Place granted federal approval in August.

In Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung language, the word 'Gurrowa' means a place of exchange and interchange.

This \$1.7 billion development, managed by Lendlease, will include a mix of build-to-rent, student accommodation and affordable housing across three towers.

The 3.2 hectare site will sit at the southern edge of the Queen Victoria Market, and will be the largest ever urban renewal development delivered for the City of Melbourne.

Site works are expected to start next year.

As part of the development, the City of Melbourne will partner with Lendlease to deliver a new public park.

Market Square will transform the city's north with 1.8 hectares of open space – the largest addition of green open space to the central city in decades.

Gurrowa Place will also include a new underground car park – with more parking available for customers on weekdays.



Historic renewal of Queen Vic Market gets the green light



DISHING UP A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Change is on the menu at the Queen Victoria Market, with sustainability being baked into everyday experiences.

The City of Melbourne is teaming up with not-for-profit STREAT to deliver its second Circular Economy Precinct, transforming the Vic Market into an industry-leader in sustainability.

As part of a three-month pilot, vendors have single-use food packaging in their sights, with many making the switch to reusable crockery.

The Circular Economy Precinct has **three main goals** during the pilot:

- reduce the use of disposable packaging
- tackle food waste by giving unsold food to students in need
- host events to show the community how to reduce waste.

VIC MARKET CIRCULAR ECONOMY FUN FACTS:

- more than 16,000 single-use items kept out of landfill so far
- volunteers wash up to 200 dishes an hour
- 20 vendors have signed up to reduce their single-use packaging
- QVM has 800 tonnes of unsold or overripe produce annually.

Visit the Purpose Precinct at Queen Victoria Market to see the reuse pilot in action.

Read the full story at melbourne.vic.gov.au/news

Scan here to find out more about the Queen Victoria Market Circular Economy Precinct



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Mystik River Gallery welcomes Indian exhibition *Tree of Life*

Mystik River Gallery at Southgate Melbourne has unveiled *Tree of Life*, a striking new exhibition by acclaimed Indian artist K.G. Narendrababu, on display until November 2.

WORDS BY
XIANGHAN MENG



Launched on August 30, the exhibition invites Melbourne audiences into the richly symbolic world of one of South India's leading contemporary artists. Known for blending traditional narratives and folk motifs with vivid modern visual language, Narendrababu has won numerous accolades, including the 48th National Academy Award.

At the heart of the show is the image of the tree – a universal symbol of life, connection and growth. In Narendrababu's hands, the motif becomes both a personal and cultural axis, drawing on Hindu myths and folklore to explore humanity's relationship with nature and time. His colourful Aari embroideries, acrylic paintings and graphic works transform the gallery into a dreamscape of myth and memory.

Gallery director Lolita Romanoff said the exhibition reflected Mystik River's mission to present art forms that were both transformational and rooted in tradition.

"*Tree of Life* is a symbol found across many cultures, but in K.G. Narendrababu's interpretation it is infused with the rich symbolism of Indian folklore," she said.

"His works carry a sense of innocence, naivety and joy. This exhibition offers visitors a chance to reconnect with their



childlike nature, to embrace curiosity, playfulness and the freedom of expression."

Curator Elena Nekliudova described the show as "a journey through Indian myth and enchanted dreams", adding that each piece serves as a portal into the artist's fantastical world.

What makes the exhibition particularly special for Mystik River is Narendrababu's presence in Melbourne during its opening weeks – his first visit to Australia. To mark the occasion, the gallery has programmed a series of interactive events, including Meet the Artist sessions and a Spontaneous Expression Workshop.

"These are rare opportunities for our

audience to connect with the artist in person, explore his techniques, and gain deeper insight into his creative process," Ms Romanoff said.

Since its opening, Mystik River has established itself as a Southbank destination for cultural exchange, showcasing international artists whose work bridges tradition and contemporary practice. Romanoff believes *Tree of Life* embodies this ethos.

"Cultural exchange is rooted in curiosity and appreciation for one another," she said. "Exhibitions like this remind us that while every culture is unique, we are united by universal questions – how we express care, love or friendship. Art becomes a window

for understanding these connections in profound ways."

Mystik River's vision is to build a community of "like-minded hearts", united through art and creativity. With *Tree of Life*, the gallery continues that journey, inviting visitors to pause, reflect and find inspiration in Narendrababu's richly imaginative works.

As Nekliudova put it: "we hope each visitor will find something for themselves here – for some it will awaken long-forgotten images, and for others it will open something completely new and inspiring."

Tree of Life runs at Mystik River Gallery, 3 Southgate Avenue, Southbank, until November 2, 2025. ●



Federal government to fund new exhibition at the Shrine of Remembrance



A new exhibition exploring the role of animals in war will be delivered at the Shrine of Remembrance following federal investment.



WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



\$150,000 in funding has been allocated through the latest round of the 2024-25 Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program.

It will be used to deliver an exhibition titled *Animal Heroes* that will not only look into the role of animals in war but the Australian Defence Force personnel who are responsible for training and handling these animals.

Federal Member for Melbourne, Sarah Witty, said, "it's fantastic to see The Shrine of Remembrance be supported to deliver this program which will see the legacy and stories of our local veterans, and their animals, live on."

"I know that this project will be cherished by our community, and I thank everyone who has worked to advocate for such an important project."

The Shrine of Remembrance Trustees are one of seventy-seven organisations across Australia who will share in more than \$1.4 million of funding through the latest round of the grants program.

This funding has been awarded to a range of projects designed to commemorate our military history and ensure the legacy of Australia's veterans is preserved for generations to come.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Keogh said, "these projects not only honour past service and sacrifice but also foster a greater understanding of our country's military history."

"The 77 projects share a common goal," he said. "To ensure the next generation knows the tales of our service."

"The diverse submissions reflect the many stories of Australia's service personnel, and the passionate communities who are committed to preserving their legacy."

The Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program is an ongoing program that promotes greater understanding of the role of service personnel and their experience of service.

The 2025-26 Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program is currently open for applications.

For more information about the program, including applying for the current round please visit dva.gov.au/STSGrants ●

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“Athens on the Yarra”

In the recently released City of Melbourne report on the 2050 Summit our democratic heritage is described as “Athens on the Yarra”.

WORDS BY
MARTIN BRENNAN

The report is littered with similar hyperbole, misinformation and a lack of clarity on the powers, the role and responsibility of the Melbourne City Council in the governance of the City of Melbourne. The future remains blurred despite the participation and commitment of many from the city and no doubt from across metropolitan Melbourne.

The 2050 Summit report conflates the obvious distinction between the City of Melbourne with a projected population of 290,000 and the metropolitan region of Melbourne with a projected population of nine million. Is this a slip of the pen or an ongoing marketing of “Brand Melbourne” by the City of Melbourne?

The Summit took place as a result of an election promise that brought with it no detail and was signed off with a lack of council oversight of the agenda, and importantly, its value to the City of Melbourne in addressing current and future issues and priorities together with its governance.

The powers of the Melbourne City Council as proscribed in the *City of Melbourne Act* are limited and were never addressed. Its representational role set out in the electoral provisions of the Act were buried beneath the lanyards and presentations by invited luminaries.

The electoral provisions proscribe a bias toward a CBD council at the expense of residents through a two for one gerrymander in favour of non-resident property owners and business, postal voting only, no wards and no limits or real time disclosure of election funding and the election of the Lord Mayor through a popular vote and not by the council. The council has subsequently called for a review of the electoral provisions of the *City of Melbourne Act* and its democratic underpinnings by the state government.

However, the review requested is so limited it is unlikely to address the need to democratise the electoral provisions and lead to transparency, local representation and accountability. At best it will result in a band aid response.



The Lord Mayor has described the request as “neutral”. The democratic underpinnings of the council are fundamental to engaging the community on a 2050 vision.

The summit participants were not provided with information on the City of Melbourne’s jurisdictional role as a city government municipality, no context in relation to metropolitan Melbourne and the 30 city councils that have jurisdiction, no context in relation to its resident population demographics nor of its non-resident property ownership and businesses that operate in the City of Melbourne.

There was also no context in relation to the priorities identified by the summit as to the current role of the City of Melbourne and the outcomes achieved to date, nor its collaborative or cooperative role with other metropolitan city councils, the state government and federal government. Many of the priorities are not within its jurisdictional powers and are priorities that are needing to be addressed by other levels of government if they are to be advanced or achieved at all.

The Melbourne City Council summit failed to be an honest broker on its role and responsibilities including the urgent need for its reform and for metropolitan Melbourne to have a governance structure much like the Greater London Council. We can then establish a City of Melbourne vision that reflects its core role and responsibilities along with all other 30 metropolitan cities and with a Greater Melbourne Council for metropolitan Melbourne, empowered to achieve priorities for all Melburnians. ●



Fred Again to conferences: the story behind one of Melbourne’s hottest event spaces

Tucked away in Fishermans Bend, The Timber Yard sits amid warehouses, apartments, and car dealerships and while its name pays homage to its past life, what lies behind the front gate is one of Melbourne’s most unique event spaces.

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



Located at 351 Plummer St in Port Melbourne, the former timber fabrication factory is a blank canvas that allows clients to design bespoke events tailored to their needs and vision.

Originally founded with the intention of becoming a music venue, The Timber Yard has since evolved into a space not only loved by international acts like Fred Again, but also a sought-after destination for weddings and corporate functions.

And it was all a happy accident, according to one of the company’s founders, Gideon Luber, who said it wasn’t until they hosted the AFL Christmas party in 2018 that they realised the enormous potential for corporate events.

“We started seeing inquiries from companies wanting to do product launches, awards nights, and automotive events,” he said. “It really pushed us to pivot the business and

refit the venue to support large-scale corporate functions.”

“We’ve grown into a premier events venue in Australia, working with some of the biggest brands in the world – and that wasn’t even the original intention.”

These events now account for around 70 per cent of their business. However, that hasn’t compromised their original mission of creating a dedicated music venue.

On September 26, New York’s Indo Warehouse will perform following their Coachella debut earlier this year, while Berlin’s most notorious collective, Live From Earth, will also take the stage in October.

Still, the lead-up to these events will be packed with corporate bookings. Mr Luber noted that a key aspect of their business model was the ability to transform the venue within 24 hours to suit a wide range of events.

“We can turn the venue around from a major corporate event overnight into a conference set-up the next morning – and then a music event the following day,” he said.

The founders have also made a conscious effort to embrace the site’s past as a timber fabrication factory.

“Everything at The Timber Yard has been designed with intention – from upcycled furnishings to preserved structural elements. We wanted to respect the site’s history,” Mr Luber said.

And while the types of events Mr Luber originally set out to host have evolved, at its core, the venue has stayed true to its original plan. The freedom it offers clients and integrity of the site, has allowed it to be appreciated by more people than the founders could have ever imagined. ●

“Roads, rates, rubbish and rock ‘n’ roll”: council gears up for AC/DC

“The City of Melbourne will host a concert and support the creation of an AC/DC installation to celebrate the band’s cultural legacy in Melbourne, coinciding with the band’s shows at the MCG.”

Following discussions with Sony Music, the band choose not to commit to any activities outside of their Melbourne shows on the *POWER UP* tour on November 12 and 16.

However, at the Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting on September 2, the council supported a motion for the City of Melbourne to work with AC/DC management and the Victorian Government to stage a tribute concert at Federation Square.

The council’s tourism and events portfolio lead Cr Mark Scott said, “this is a prudent investment. It leverages state government and corporate contributions, offsets risk and unlocks major cultural and economic returns for Melbourne.”

“Let’s endorse these celebrations and show the world that when Melbourne does AC/DC, we don’t just turn up the volume – we truly leave people thunderstruck,” he said.

Alongside concert planning, the council will also explore the creation of a permanent AC/DC Lane installation, to honour the

band and enhance the laneway precinct’s visitor experience.

The delivery of the event and laneway installation is expected to cost \$110,000, with further investment to come from corporate partners.

Analysis of recent high-impact events shows that events such as these can have a significant impact on Melbourne’s visitor economy.

The proposed Federation Square concert is expected to attract an audience of up to 20,000, with an estimated direct economic contribution between \$1.2 million and \$1.6 million. *Southbank News* understands that organisers are in discussions with Amyl and the Sniffers to feature at the event.

February 2026 will be another milestone for the band and city, marking the 50th anniversary of the *It’s a Long Way to the Top* film clip that was recorded on Swanston St.

According to a council report tabled at the September 3 meeting, a full-scale tribute parade replicating the 1976 film clip along Swanston St was scoped and costed.

The parade, estimated at \$1 million, would have included a rolling flatbed truck with a live tribute band, full road and tram closures, safety and security overlays, and a final tribute performance at Federation Square.

However, following further consultation with Sony Music and confirmation that the band will not participate in any civic or public-facing activities outside their MCG performances, the parade was deemed no longer viable.

“We all know the spiritual home of AC/DC is here in Melbourne – where they lived during the mid-1970s and, of course, where they first took off as a rock’n’roll band,” Lord Mayor Nick Reece said.

“While AC/DC are here, we’ve got some very exciting plans in the pipeline. We’ll be sharing more details soon – but there will be a very special performance at Federation Square.”

“I think it’s fair to say that here at the City of Melbourne, we’re all about roads, rates, rubbish – and rock ‘n’ roll.” ●

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



Fixing a broken system: How Inner Owners' Corporation is bringing integrity to strata management

“

When Michael Cimino first set out to build a career, he was determined not to follow in the family footsteps. While his father Joe had carved out a reputation in real estate, Michael instead pursued accounting, spending nearly a decade in the finance sector.

”

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



“I was the black sheep of the family,” he laughed. “I finished school and said, ‘I’m not getting into real estate’. So, I became an accountant.”

But as is often the case in family businesses, the call eventually came. In 2016, with Inner Real Estate reaching a size that needed more operational rigour, his father asked him to step in. Initially it was to tighten the numbers, improve systems, and give the business structure.

Soon enough, Michael found himself immersed in property management, applying the same methodical instincts that had guided him in finance: “I like to fix things,” he told *Southbank News*.

It was in that process of working with multi-dwelling properties that Michael first encountered the world of owners' corporations (OCs). What he found left him stunned.

He remembers attending his first AGM and asking straightforward financial questions that the manager simply could not answer.

“It just didn't sit right with me,” Michael said. “There were managers impossible to get hold of, providing little information, yet they were pocketing commissions and hidden fees. I thought – there has to be a better way.”

That frustration became a turning point. In 2019, with encouragement from a client who was chair of an OC, Michael registered as a manager and took on Inner Real Estate's first building in Footscray.

From the outset, he made integrity and transparency non-negotiable. While most in the industry relied on undisclosed insurance commissions, Inner Owners Corporation refused to take them. The decision raised



eyebrows – even the sector's main body at the time would not accept them as members unless they agreed to commissions – but Michael held his ground.

“I wanted to be the manager that people looked to and said, ‘they're the ones doing it properly,’” he said. “When clients call, we answer. When they email, we respond. And when it comes to money, it's all above board. No commissions, no hidden fees.”

The approach resonated. What began with a single building quickly multiplied. Within a year, Inner Owners Corporation was managing more than a dozen plans. Today, it looks after 150 owners' corporation schemes and around 5000 lots across Melbourne, contributing a third of the company's annual turnover.

Remarkably, that growth has been achieved without marketing – fuelled entirely by word of mouth.

“It's all referrals,” Michael said. “That tells me the team is doing something right.”

It has not gone unnoticed in wider circles. The OC industry has faced increasing scrutiny, particularly after an ABC *Four Corners* investigation last year uncovered systemic misconduct – from inflated fees to opaque insurance deals. The exposé accelerated long overdue reform, with the Victorian Government now reviewing the *Owners Corporation Act*.

For Michael, who had already been

pushing for higher standards, the inquiry was a vindication.

“We actually welcomed it,” he said. “We've been operating with transparency since day one, so any move to lift regulation only helps the sector. At the end of the day, this is about people's homes and investments. They deserve managers who are accountable.”

What sets Inner Owners Corporation apart is not only its ethical stance but also its comprehensive service. The team facilitates AGMs and regular committee sessions, handles budgets, levies and financial reporting, and supports sustainability initiatives such as EV chargers and solar conversions. Through an online portal, committee members can access live financials and transaction details, giving them confidence and control over their building's affairs.

For many, the shift from their previous managers has been transformative. Michael frequently fields calls from committee chairs who had grown used to silence or delay. “The biggest feedback is how much easier it is to deal with us,” he said. “They know who they're talking to, they get consistency of staff, and responses are fast. But more than that, they're given information and guidance to make informed decisions. That sense of collaboration is crucial.”

Michael describes the relationship in corporate terms. The lot owners are the

shareholders, the committee is the board, and Inner Owners Corporation acts as senior management – executing decisions while providing advice. “It's about empowering committees. Not just dumping information on them but giving them the tools and recommendations to make the best calls for their buildings,” he said.

As the sector braces for reform, Michael is optimistic. He has already made a formal submission to the state government's review, and he believes stronger compliance and oversight are on the horizon.

“The barriers to entry are too low. We're managing millions of dollars in trust accounts with little oversight. That has to change. Any step towards better regulation is a step in the right direction.”

Looking back, the accountant who was initially reluctant to get into the property sector admits he has found his calling in an unexpected place. From one building in Footscray, Inner Owners Corporation has grown into a force reshaping strata management across inner Melbourne. And for Michael, the measure of success is simple.

“Clients trust us,” he said. “They know we'll pick up the phone, give them straight answers, and manage their money with integrity. That's all we set out to do, and that's what we'll keep doing.”

innerrealstate.com.au/what-we-do/owners-corporation ●

Your Federal MP for Southbank.

We're here to help.
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JOSH BURNS MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MACNAMARA

📱📧📺📺 joshburnsmp





Local art club brings creativity and connection to Southbank

A new community art group has taken shape in Southbank, bringing locals together through creativity, conversation and connection.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Led by Southbank resident Shilpi Jain, the Southbank Community Art Club began in 2024 with support from the City of Melbourne's Connected Neighbourhoods program.

What started as a simple idea – to meet, talk and make art together – quickly grew into something more.

"We soon started looking forward to these sessions and got to know each other, sharing stories, advice and even TV recommendations," Ms Jain said. "Art is a form of expression, but it's also therapy and stress relief, and those aspects were just as valuable to the group."

The club embraced a range of mediums, from paint and pencil to collage and lino printing. Members included complete beginners through to trained artists, each encouraged to try new techniques and experiment.

"Each person created something different even when given the same tools or prompts," Ms Jain said. "It showed the diversity of expression we all bring."

Living in the heart of Melbourne's Arts Precinct, the group also ventured out to explore the city's cultural offerings, visiting Buxton Contemporary, NGV, The Lume and exhibitions at Southgate. These outings provided inspiration and deepened members' appreciation for the creative environment on their doorstep.

The program culminated in an exhibition



at Southgate Gallery, showcasing works created throughout the year. For many, it was their first time seeing their own art displayed publicly – a milestone that Ms Jain described as both proud and humbling.

"It was exciting to see our works and stories displayed for all to see. It really showed how far we had come together."

The Southbank Community Art Club has proven that creative practice is about more than just making art. It has become a platform for building friendships and strengthening local ties, whether for residents living alone, busy parents, or new migrants finding their place in the neighbourhood.

Ms Jain encouraged others with community ideas to apply for small grants through the City of Melbourne.

"This project really shows how art can bring people together," she said. "I'd love to see more local initiatives grow in the same way."

The exhibition remains on display at Southgate Gallery, Upper Level Southgate Centre. Locals are encouraged to drop in and see the works for themselves. ●

Our action-packed AGM

Well, we have just finished our annual general meeting (AGM) where we heard from Dr Yazid Ninsalam, Associate Dean, Landscape Architecture from the School of Architecture and Urban Design at RMIT University.

Dr Ninsalam spoke of our urban landscape and opportunities. This was most insightful and great the Lord Mayor Nick Reece, and our local member of parliament, Nina Taylor, were there to hear from Dr Ninsalam firsthand. We are hoping they were inspired by his talk and some creative change comes Southbank's way.

I have always argued the exit from the freeway onto Power St should be celebrated by the City of Melbourne, firstly announcing entry to the city, but also reminding those entering Southbank they are entering the arts capital of Australia.

This entry looks drab and disinteresting. A bit a greenery, and maybe some flowers, would go a long way to making this introduction something memorable and inviting.

The Lord Mayor opened the floor to questions and there were some good ones from our community, mainly around parking and the recent changes. According to the Lord Mayor, nothing is locked in, and feedback will continue to inform the parking team of what is best for the community.

Having said that though, I have been part of community consultation several times over the past five or so years and the community is divided on this. While one group thinks two hours is best to stop visitors being able to use the parking spaces while attending the theatre, as there is plenty of private paid parking, the spaces should, where possible, be available to residents so they have a place for their visitors to park.

While on the other hand there is the argument three hours is required for exactly that reason, to attend a show. I am not sure what the answer is, but I am not paid enough to figure that one out so I will leave it to the council to collate the feedback and ascertain the overwhelming consensus and implement accordingly. But if you have concerns with the parking, please forward your feedback to the council.

And the big news of the night was the soft launch of our Southbank Residents' Association (SRA) app which is going to



connect our local business community with us residents and also give a space for all our community groups, large and small, to have a presence for us all to see and find.

In fact, we missed our AGM last year because we wanted to use it to launch the app and the development was taking much longer than anticipated. We were delighted to be able to do this after so long in development.

This will be a game-changer for how our organisation goes forward, making us sustainable. The anticipated funds this should earn our group will assist us greatly with a smooth and more engaging operation going forward. You may even start to hear from us more frequently.

Watch this space (and your letterbox for our flyer) for the hard launch to the public over the coming weeks. ●

Tony Penna
PRESIDENT



Community shows support after Camp Sovereignty attack

In the wake of an attack on Camp Sovereignty in Kings Domain on August 31, the community has rallied behind it.

WORDS BY
JON FLEETWOOD



Southbank News visited the camp on September 9, where Aboriginal people and allies have gathered to show their support for, and to protect the site.

And over the weekend, hundreds attended an event to stand against the violent attack, that saw a group of 30 men dressed in black storm the camp.

Minister for Indigenous Australians, Malarndirri McCarthy, visited the site on Sunday, September 7.

Speaking on ABC News Breakfast the following morning, the minister said, "It was incredibly disturbing. It was reprehensible – the vision that we saw of what was going on."

"There was a lot of deep emotion and continues to be. But it was important to get a sense of what spiritual peacefulness, and

what people were really looking for amid what has been an absolutely horrific time," she said.

"Unless people do come together and stand against this form of hatred, then you allow that hatred to fester."

Senator Lidia Thorpe has since called for the neo-Nazi protesters who targeted the camp to be investigated for hate crimes.

Friends of the Earth Melbourne have also condemned the actions of those involved in the incident.

"Camp Sovereignty is an important place of ongoing Indigenous resistance, a sacred burial ground, a place to pay respects, to meet mob, and to share stories," a Friends of the Earth spokesperson said.

"We at Friends of the Earth Melbourne unequivocally condemn the actions of this white supremacist group of thugs," they added.

"Their racism and violence is

unacceptable. We stand in solidarity with those impacted by their violence, both on the day and the wider community who have been affected by these events in the aftermath."

Police have charged a total of seven people over the incident and allege that Thomas Sewell, leader of the neo-Nazi group the National Socialist Network (NSN), led them.

Mr Sewell has been charged with 25 offences, including violent disorder and affray, and has been refused bail.

At a bail application hearing at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, September 3, Detective Senior Constable Saer Pascoe said members of the network held down occupants of the camp and began to kick them.

He said another person was struck with a pole, kicked, and punched by members of the network. ●

Spring has arrived in Southbank

Each year we find ourselves saying, "how quickly spring has arrived".

WORDS BY
MARIA TARRANT



Southbank Sustainability Group (SSG) is now busy preparing garden beds and planting seeds and seedlings that will be ready for harvest in November and December. We are listening to the buzz of bees, watching dragonflies as they hover and there are butterflies in among the yellow Calendulas and other flowers planted to attract insects that aid pollination.

Beds have been composted and mulch is being added to help conserve water. We will have plenty of leafy salad greens and herbs in a few weeks. Please read the signs, which ask that plants not be harvested yet and watch out for the painted rocks.

Red rocks mean plants are not ready for harvest, yellow rocks mean harvesting is a few weeks away and green rocks let you know plants can be harvested now. Please bring some scissors and cut off what you need.

With warmer weather on the way we are looking for volunteers to help with watering the gardens over spring and summer so email us using the address below if you are interested. Watering the garden beds is a great way to meet locals and visitors to the area as they explore the garden beds.

Recently I was asked about the history of the gardens by a new Southbank resident. It prompted me to think about the benefits of community action and the preparedness of the City of Melbourne staff at the time, to assist a group of locals improve a small corner of Southbank.

In February 2017 as part of the City of Melbourne's Sustainability Month activities, a few Southbankers gathered to plant herbs in some small planter boxes located at the Boyd Community Hub.

In discussions it became apparent there were quite a few residents looking for an opportunity to meet like-minded people with an interest in gardening and sustainability. With support from Nadine Ford, Boyd's community animator at the time, these discussions lead to the creation of Southbank Sustainability Group, an informal group of people looking to make a practical difference and support community building.

This was the beginning of some important changes. The group convinced the council that there was benefit in establishing a permanent vegetable garden open to all residents as part of the new Boyd Park. The council assisted by purchasing and locating the raised garden beds on the Boyd forecourt. Residents turned up fortnightly to assist in planning and planting the first crops.

For a while there was an "orchard" – a dozen fruit trees located behind the Boyd building. This has been lost with the development of the apartment building.

It is interesting to reflect on what has happened over the past eight years. What started as "guerilla" gardening on a small patch of dirt near the Kings Way overpass by 12 or so people is now more than 30

raised garden beds and planters providing pleasure, connection and friendships for many local residents.

The connections and friendships being made while digging up weeds or planting or simply enjoying a coffee at the end of the fortnightly garden meetup all have a positive impact on our health and wellbeing, as well as providing a fun way to meet other locals.

So come and enjoy meeting other likeminded Southbankers in the garden. We meet every fortnight on a Saturday morning between 10am and noon for a little gardening (no previous experience required) and discussion. We are located in the community garden in front of the Boyd Community Hub. September meetup dates are on September 13 and 27.



About the group

SSG is a solutions-focused community group of Southbank residents working to bring positive change in sustainability practices. Reach us at southbanksustainability@gmail.com, [facebook.com/SouthbankSustainabilityGroup](https://www.facebook.com/SouthbankSustainabilityGroup) or Instagram on @southbanksustainabilitygroup.

If you are interested in getting involved with SSG join us at a Saturday meetup or send us an email. ●

How two planter pots tell the story of the scourge of smoking at Southgate

A human battle recently ensued outside of Southgate's upper-level atrium as centre management sought to enforce its no-smoking expectation. There's no argument from me.

WORDS BY
PASTOR JAMES WINDERLICH

Intereconomics Erik Clanton explored how the European Union sought to leverage positive and progressive social capital in ways that focused on inclusivity and sustainability. This led to outcomes that were good for everyone.

Those outcomes, according to Clanton, were grounded in trust shared among all concerned. He wrote, "popular support for the social contract breaks down when ... trust is diminished." Responding that "you'll do as we please," is not the opposite of "I'll do as I please." They are variations of the same sets of authoritarian values and actions. They rarely lead to any common good.

So, instead of pouring costly resources into defeating opposition or transferring the real costs of a conflict to palms and planter pots (as in our local case), Clanton suggested co-constructing (and not legislating or imposing) trusting relationships that have the capacity to imagine and create sustainable outcomes that are good for all.

What would it take for people to freely gather and smoke while also respecting the wishes and responsibilities of those who own and maintain that space?

Trust is more than negotiated compromise. It comes when people enter into the struggles and lives of those they consider opponents and commit to their good. Within the Christian tradition this begins with what we give up, not with what we win for ourselves.

Jesus said, "You have heard it said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:43). Committing to our opponent's good is the "other" way to manage the human conflicts and dramas that this article wonders about.

Our Southgate planter pots and palms told our story. Was it the story we wanted told? What would be good? ●

Southgate is entitled to administer its property as it wants, while at the same time smokers should be free to smoke with a minimum of inconvenience. What draws me to this battle is the role that trust unavoidably plays in this and many other human encounters.

Good, productive relationships don't result when battles end and one party or another wins. Instead, it is when trust is either established or restored.

Southgate management made serious efforts to prevent smoking. It removed outside ash trays and sent staff to move smokers on. Weeks later the smokers remained, and an impressive symbol of their defiance appeared.

Two planter pots that contain large palms were littered with cigarette butts. The smokers never gave in and the planter pots, since cleaned, became a cultural installation that bore testimony to the most basic human drive, "I'll do as I please".

The planter pots captured and communicated bold human stories. Stories about the freedom to choose, and the freedom to gather with others who value those same choices. Those freedoms were enacted in the planter pots, ready to stimulate our reactions and draw us towards participating in the conflict. Whose side might you take?

With the smoking continuing and the planter pots now cleaned it looks as though one group has won, but what lasting good was really achieved? I assume that centre management still wants its no-smoking expectation to be respected, and so it seems that its only option is to either escalate the conflict or give in. Both these options come at costs that likely far outweigh any benefits. Are there other ways to resolve this?

In an article published in

 **St Johns**
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Photo: Kit Edwards.

New Metro Tunnel artwork *A Fleeting Sense Of* raises awareness of threatened species

If you take a peek down Scott Alley off Degraives St as you go about your day in the CBD, you might notice a colourful – and wild – addition.

To coincide with Threatened Species Day in September, the Metro Tunnel Creative Program has unveiled a new artwork in Scott Alley – *A Fleeting Sense Of* – by artists Gracia Haby and Louise Jennison.

The digital collage seeks to raise awareness of threatened species, which includes a pair of swift parrots, a southern greater glider, a brush-tailed rock wallaby, a family of eastern barred bandicoots and an “inspection” of Poolika (New Holland mouse).

The work includes images from the National Gallery and State Library collections, along with beautiful foil detail that can be seen from any part of the alley due to its UV reflection.

“We wanted to make the work (centred on) Threatened Species Day and around certain species – how different species might perceive the world. The foil is a playful interpretation of what it might be like to see UV light in the way parrots and various other birds can,” Haby said.

“It’s at the end of the alley, so we wanted a nice visual, an enticement that might draw you down the lane.”

Today more than 2000 species of plant, animal and ecological communities including more than 590 animals are officially listed as threatened.

It’s a subject matter both Haby and

Jennison deeply care about, as both artists and wildlife carers who run a wildlife shelter together. The two have been collaborating since 1999.

“The shelter is also our studio, and we see (making art and caring for wildlife) as one and the same,” Jennison said.

“So, we’re trying to make work that’s about what all our individual roles are in reciprocating with nature, and the fact that we’re all interconnected in our responsibility to each other – non-human as well as human.

“The different animals that we look after, they’ve taught us about seeing the world through their eyes ... how to think about what plants they need to eat, and what shelter they need and how much water they need ... and we try to put these connections into our work.

“Hopefully we inspire people to think about what their role in solutions (to threatened species issues) would be.”

The Metro Tunnel Creative Program curates artworks and events to enhance Melbourne city life alongside the construction of the city-shaping project.

The focus of the program is to encourage community interaction with construction sites and support local businesses at the coalface between where site work and city life begins.

The Metro Tunnel is the biggest transformation of Melbourne’s rail network in more than 40 years and will free up capacity in the City Loop to run more trains more often across more lines.

Check out *A Fleeting Sense Of* in Scott Alley now. ●



Southbank3006 pushes for stronger strata laws in *Owners Corporation Act* review

We call for fairer governance, short-stay accommodation reform, and voting rules that encourage participation.

“We need the rules to work for residents”

Our neighbourhood lives and breathes strata. The *Owners’ Corporation Act 2006* (OCA) needs to protect residents’ interests, not tie their hands with outdated rules. One priority is bringing facility and building managers under the same regulation as owners’ corporation (OC) managers.

Currently, facility managers – who oversee critical building operations and spend large sums of resident funds – are not covered by the Act’s governance requirements. Southbank3006 also wants mandatory training for committee members, conflict of interest declarations, and better record-keeping. To prevent the loss of corporate memory only 33 per cent of an OC committee should retire each year not the 100 per cent at present thus providing some stability in decision making. The nomination processes need a radical overhaul so owners know who they are voting for and what are their skills.

Importantly we need fairer OC manager and facility management contracts for OCs by bringing them under Australian consumer law. This would remove unfair contract terms that penalise OC committees when they seek to change managers, making it easier to appoint new ones without being hit by excessive fees or restrictive clauses.

Short-stay accommodation – flipping the rules

Short-stay rentals are one of Southbank’s biggest headaches. Residents report noise, security risks, overcrowding, and excessive wear on facilities caused by constant guest turnover.

While the government has introduced powers for OCs to regulate short stays, the 2018 reforms are toothless given their complexity and legalistic nature, and the 2025 reforms are impossible to translate into action for most OCs. This is because they require a special resolution – meaning a minimum of 50 per cent of all owners must attend a meeting or a ballot and all vote in favour. In practice, that’s a near-impossible hurdle when many apartments are owned by people overseas or disengaged from building affairs.

Southbank 3006’s solution is simple: the government should insert a Model Rule in the OC regulations, which implements the 2025 reforms it passed rather than each building having to waste money on lawyers and meetings. If a building wants short stays, they should have to pass a special resolution to opt out of the rule.

This flips the current model, making short-stay the exception rather than the

default – and placing the onus on those who want it, not those who oppose it.

Why this matters

Uncontrolled short stays don’t just disrupt residents – they also affect housing affordability drive up rents, and impact neighbourhood stability and community safety with a highly transient groups coming and going every week thus undermining community cohesion. The current laws give an illusion of control to OCs without the practical ability to use it.

Voting rules that work

Beyond short stays, Southbank3006 is calling for Victoria to follow NSW, SA, and WA in reforming quorum and voting rules, so they encourage participation rather than discourage it. Right now, low owner turnout can kill reform efforts – even when most who vote are in favour. Changing these rules would help communities respond to emerging issues without years of frustration. Perversely just one owner voting NO can shoot down an interim special resolution despite the majority supporting it.

The system for passing special resolutions in Victoria is broken and need an urgent fix. Without this we cannot address important issues like funding sustainability improvements, preserving building assets, even borrowing money to make undertake unplanned major maintenance.

Balancing compassion and fairness

The review is also grappling with financial hardship provisions. While there is an expectation that OCs support struggling owners, the cost can unfairly fall on those who meet their obligations. Southbank3006 says it is essential to protect the financial stability of OCs.

Most buildings deal with hardship of owner occupiers compassionately at present so there is no need for change. The evidence is that those who consistently don’t pay OC fees see them as optional and frequently live overseas.

A chance for real reform

With strong resident interest across Southbank and similar stories emerging from other high-density areas in the City of Melbourne, the review is a chance to modernise Victoria’s strata laws for the realities of urban living.

Residents want transparency, accountability, and the power to protect their homes. The government must deliver rules that work – because in Southbank, this isn’t just legislation, it’s our everyday life.

Join us at southbank3006.com and keep informed. ●

David Hamilton

PRESIDENT

COMMUNITY@SOUTHBANK3006.COM



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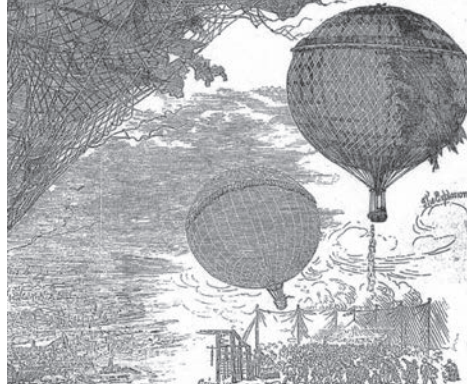


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Up and away over Southbank

People who live in Southbank are used to seeing hot air balloons in the early morning, with up to eight at a time. Each balloon holds about four people who start the day at dawn.



They watch as their balloon gently inflates and they enjoy floating peacefully above the Yarra River as they rise over legendary city landmarks like the MCG, Victoria Barracks and what is now Southbank. The Melbourne event is unique among global balloon experiences as it is over a city.

Hot air ballooning has been taking place in Melbourne since the late 1850s. History was made on February 1, 1858, with the first balloon flight in Australia taking place in the Cremorne Gardens in Richmond.

Observers often wonder whether today's balloons are likely to have an accident, but the safety controls make such an event seem unlikely. The main danger was from residents who attacked the balloonists, thinking that flying was entirely unnatural.

But safety couldn't be taken for granted. In May 1879 noted Australian-born aeronaut Henri L'Estrange took off in a new balloon from the Agricultural Society's Ground in St Kilda Rd, after flights in Sydney.

The balloon was filled by the Metropolitan Gas Company but during the operation of filling the balloon, several holes were made in the calico, which needed to be repaired before the flight.

As the local gas was much stronger than the inferior product used in Sydney, the balloon shot up with surprising velocity and was seen to suddenly open on one side and commence to descend with terrible speed.

The balloon was equipped with a silk parachute, attached to the centre of the

balloon. Almost instantly the parachute opened and checked the speed at which the balloon was descending. L'Estrange later stated that he had heard an explosion, as if of a large cannon.

With the wind whistling and screaming through the floor of the car, he looked up and saw that the balloon had burst. He gathered up what he could of the balloon and ended up in a tangle in a fir-tree at the rear of Government House.

Luckily, he survived and even appeared on stage in a theatre that night to relive his experience, although he was ill for some days due to the effects of the gas that he had inhaled. ●

Robin Grow

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OF SOUTHBANK

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Proposed *Owners' Corporation Act* reforms need to focus on speed

Melbourne is a world-class city. It hosts big international sporting and cultural events. It has a bustling tourism industry, excellent shopping and award-winning cuisine, late-night cocktail and whisky bars, theatres and a thriving CBD.

The people that live in Melbourne do great things in their working lives – raising families, saving lives, educating our young people, building towers, bridges, railways, designing computer systems, trading stocks and options.

They live a fast-paced life, and don't have much time to wait around for too long. Everything needs to be instant these days. Fast internet, mobile phones, tap and-go eftpos for your morning coffee, Hello Fresh deliveries, trams every four minutes. The list goes on.

Yet for those who live in apartment buildings the legislation that governs the operation and administration of an owners' corporation (OC) is so slow and antiquated, that it's no wonder that more and more apartments are becoming vacant and more and more owner occupiers are moving out.

Firstly, why bother turning up to the building's annual general meeting (AGM)? To get a quorum, more than half of the building has to attend. In larger buildings, that almost always never happens.

Then, every decision made at the AGM has to stand over in a moratorium for a period of 29 days before it can be acted upon. How can that be? Why does everything in a building need to stop for a whole month? Levies can't be sent out, new contracts can't be signed, the new committee can't meet and start making decisions.

This doesn't exist elsewhere in Australia. It's a quirk of Victoria to enshrine this "caretaker period" in the legislation.

The good news is, it's a quick and easy fix for the government to make as part of its OC legislative review (currently underway). The solution – the quorum is now deemed to be all the people that bother to show up the meeting (or vote electronically or give a proxy to someone else). Simple. Clean. Quick.

Secondly, there's never any snowball's chance in passing special resolutions in larger buildings. Getting more than half the building to vote on changing a rule or using the maintenance fund to pay for repairs and maintenance or agreeing to fund a building defects claim shouldn't be so hard.

But when more than 21 per cent of apartments in Victoria are vacant and another 45 per cent are rented (source – the 2023 Census) it's exceedingly difficult to get owners to respond to ballots to get even half of the building to participate in the special resolution motion.

The answer – redefine "special resolution" to comprise the votes of the lot owners that actually bother to participate in the vote. That's how the system works in New South Wales, and it's been in operation since 1973.

That's just two simple legislative changes to get apartment buildings moving and OCs transacting their business quicker. There are dozens more. In next month's column, we'll touch on some other proposed reforms. ●

Tom Bacon

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FEDERAL MP

Building more homes to buy and rent

It has been just over 100 days since I was appointed Special Envoy for Social Housing and Homelessness, and I have spent the time travelling around the country speaking to community members and housing services about the challenges facing housing affordability.

WORDS BY

JOSH BURNS – MACNAMARA MP

A house is more than a set of keys. It's the foundation of education, employment and community. And everyone deserves a safe place to live.

Whenever I speak to members of our own community here in Southbank the same thing comes up time and time again. People want to be able to buy their own house, but right now, it feels so out of reach.

I know there are people right across our community who are doing all the right things but still can't get over the line.

And if you are renting, I know the struggle of lining up for inspections and worrying about renewing your lease.

We need to build more homes, right across the housing spectrum. More social and affordable homes for people who need them, more homes for people to rent and more home for people to buy.

That's why we are getting on with our

ambitious \$43 billion homes for Australian plan, with a target of building 1.2 million homes.

Our build-to-rent concessions has paved the way for the construction of 80,000 homes exclusively for people to rent.

These homes mean long-term, secure leases for people right across the country.

This is all about giving renters in our community the stability and security they need. And in Macnamara alone, there are already more than 3600 build-to-rent homes.

More homes means less competition for existing rentals, and that means more affordable rental properties.

We went to the election committing to supporting first home buyers get their foot in the door.

And we delivering on that commitment sooner. Instead of next year, from the October 1 first home buyers only need a five per cent deposit.

It's not right that an entire generation has been locked out of the housing market, and we know the burden that is saving up for a deposit.

This change will help tens of thousands of first home buyers own their first home.

It means a first home buyer in Melbourne can purchase a \$600,000 home with a \$30,000 deposit. They could save up to six years off the time to save for a 20 per cent deposit.

On top of all of this, the five per cent deposit scheme will save members of our community thousands of dollars on lenders mortgage insurance.

Since coming to government, we have



helped more than 180,000 first home buyers get a home of their own with a lower deposit. Expanding this scheme for all first home buyers will make a real difference for our community.

The federal government has an important role to play in building more homes for all Australians, and for too long under the former Coalition government, they handed off that responsibility to the states.

Now we are back at the table. Working alongside the states and territories, and industry, to get more homes built quickly right across the country.

We have already built 5000 social and affordable homes and have 25,000 more in the construction or planning stages thanks to our Housing Australia Future Fund.

We can't fix the housing crisis overnight, but we are right back at the table building thousands of homes for people to buy and rent.

As Special Envoy for Social Housing and Homelessness, I know that tackling this challenge will mean working alongside the states and territories, community housing sector and our community, and that's what I'm getting on with. ●

WHAT'S ON September



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



DOG MAN: THE MUSICAL
A heroic half-dog, half-policeman, battles cyborg fish, evil cats, and Beastly Buildings in a hilarious musical adventure based on Dav Pilkey's beloved characters, full of action and heart.
Playhouse, Arts Centre Melbourne
30 SEP – 4 OCTOBER, 11AM – 3PM



SARAH BLASKO: THE DOUBLE FEATURE TOUR
Performing her first two albums in their entirety, Sarah Blasko is sure to stun in her last headline show of the year – an unmissable 21st anniversary celebration.
Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Recital Centre
12 – 13 SEPTEMBER, 7.30PM



OLIVIA'S WALK AND RUN FOR WELLNESS
Join Olivia's Walk and Run for Wellness to celebrate Olivia Newton-John's legacy and support cancer patients' holistic care through fundraising wellness programs.
Alexandra Gardens, 3 Boathouse Drive
SUNDAY 5 OCTOBER, 7AM – 1PM



MAKING GOOD: REDESIGNING THE EVERYDAY
Making Good showcases innovative, eco-friendly designs transforming daily products and systems to prioritise sustainability and positive social impact.
The Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia
UNTIL 1 FEBRUARY, 10AM – 5PM



NATURE'S NEXT CHAPTER
This lecture explores urgent biodiversity protection, inspiring global and local action through powerful storytelling by leading Victorian environmental communicators.
Beckett Theatre, Malthouse Theatre
THURS 18 SEPTEMBER, 6PM – 7.15PM



TREE OF LIFE BY K.G. NARENDRABABU
South Indian artist KG Narendrababu's playful, poetic works explore the Tree of Life through embroidery, painting, and graphic techniques inspired by folk traditions.
Mystik River Gallery, Southbank
UNTIL 2 NOVEMBER, 10AM – 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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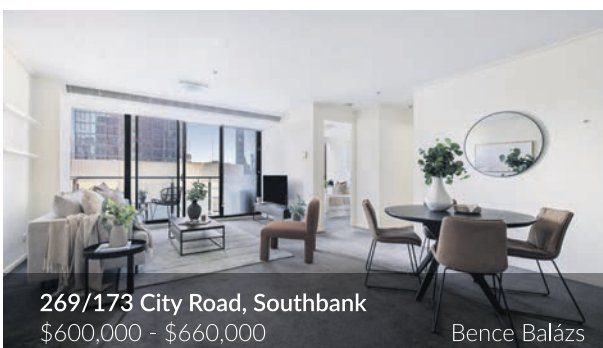
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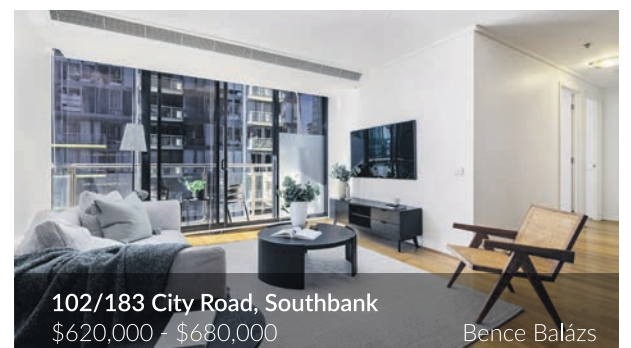
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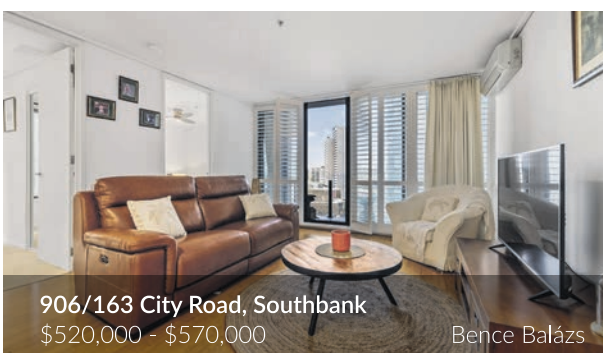
269/173 City Road, Southbank
\$600,000 - \$660,000
Bence Balázs



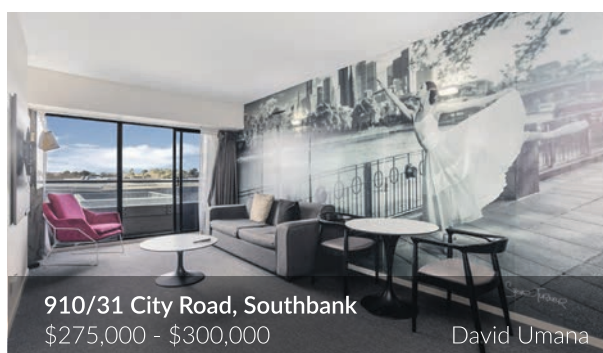
246/100 Kavanagh Street, Southbank
\$400,000 - \$440,000
Bence Balázs



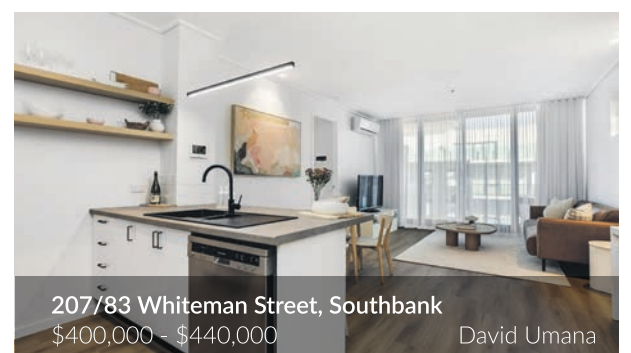
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\$620,000 - \$680,000
Bence Balázs



906/163 City Road, Southbank
\$520,000 - \$570,000
Bence Balázs



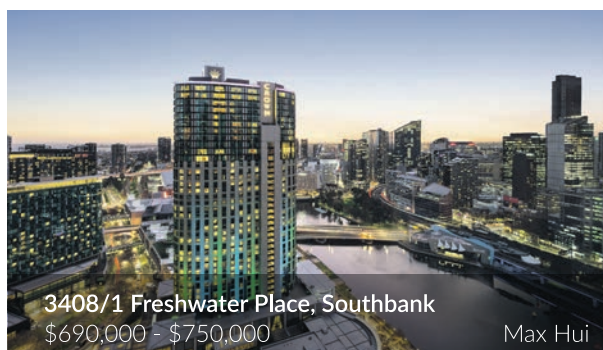
910/31 City Road, Southbank
\$275,000 - \$300,000
David Umana



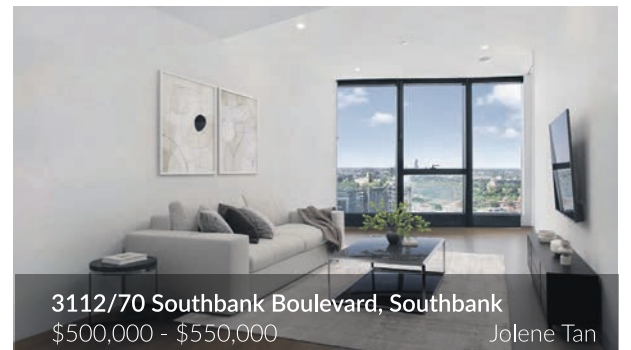
207/83 Whiteman Street, Southbank
\$400,000 - \$440,000
David Umana



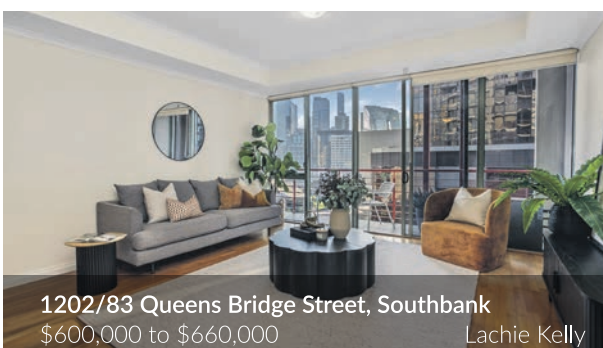
903/58 Clarke Street, Southbank
\$335,000 - \$365,000
David Umana



3408/1 Freshwater Place, Southbank
\$690,000 - \$750,000
Max Hui



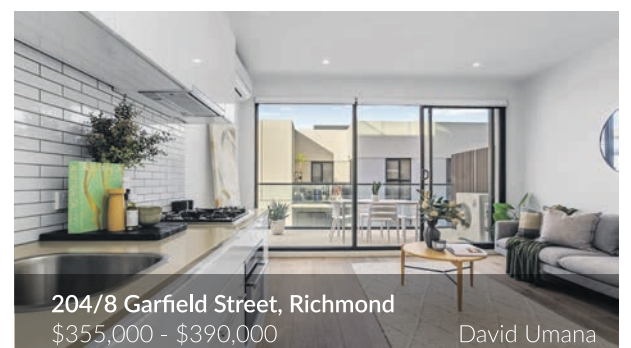
3112/70 Southbank Boulevard, Southbank
\$500,000 - \$550,000
Jolene Tan



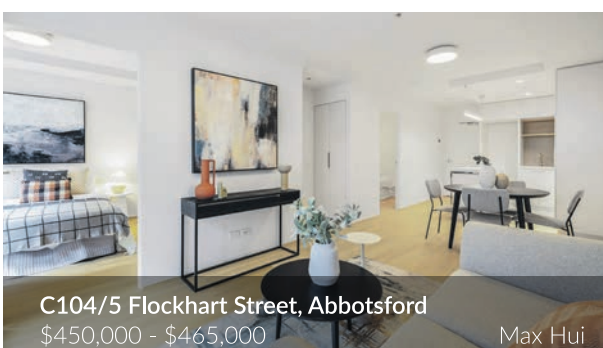
1202/83 Queens Bridge Street, Southbank
\$600,000 to \$660,000
Lachie Kelly



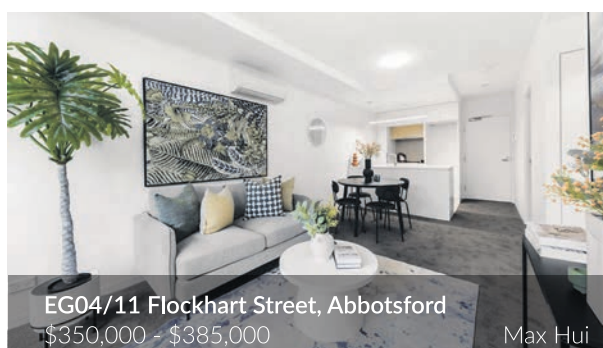
312/150 Dudley Street, West Melbourne
\$330,000 - \$350,000
Lachie Kelly



204/8 Garfield Street, Richmond
\$355,000 - \$390,000
David Umana



C104/5 Flockhart Street, Abbotsford
\$450,000 - \$465,000
Max Hui



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