

Works begin on The Beacon



“

Construction has officially begun on Melbourne Recital Centre’s new rooftop venue, The Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon, marking a major new addition to Melbourne’s growing Arts Precinct.

”

First announced in 2024, the venue will transform an underused upper level of the Sturt St building into a publicly accessible performance and events space with sweeping skyline views.

Pictured marking the milestone are philanthropists Peter and Ruth McMullin, Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks, performer Meow Meow, Melbourne Recital Centre director of programming Iain Grandage and chief executive Sandra Willis. More on page 8.

Property. Connected.

Helping Southbank feel like home.



M I C M

We deliver better living experiences – while supporting our local community, growing businesses and giving back wherever we can.

- Property Leasing & Rentals
- Property Sales – Buy & Sell
- Owners Corporation Management
- Building Management & Concierge
- Building Essential Services
- Insurance

Connect with us today

www.micm.com.au

Sell with Southbank's Local Experts.

M I C M

(03) 9697 8888
 realestate@micm.com.au
 micm.com.au

Virtual Staging

12/1 Riverside Quay, Southbank

2 beds, 1 bath, 1 car

\$795,000 - \$850,000

1108/60 Kavanagh Street, Southbank

2 beds, 2 baths

\$560,000

Virtual Staging

1101/118 Kavanagh Street, Southbank

2 beds, 2 baths, 1 car

\$588,000 - \$625,000

102/60 Kavanagh Street, Southbank

1 bed, 1 bath

\$450,000 - \$480,000

Virtual Staging

2108/70 Dorcas Street, Southbank

2 beds, 2 baths, 1 car

\$680,000 - \$720,000

132/79 Whiteman Street, Southbank

1 bed, 1 bath, 1 car

\$395,000 - \$430,000

Actual View

4105/81 City Road, Southbank

2 beds, 2 baths, 1 car

\$850,000 - \$899,000

105/152 Sturt Street, Southbank

1 bed, 1 bath

\$360,000 - \$390,000

2103/283 City Road, Southbank

2 beds, 1 bath, 1 car

\$535,000

Virtual Staging

2503/250 City Road, Southbank

1 bed, 1 bath, 1 car

\$409,000 - \$449,000

118/28 Southgate Avenue, Southbank

2 beds, 2 baths, 1 car

\$700,000 - \$770,000

3803/245 City Road, Southbank

2 beds, 2 baths

\$500,000 - \$550,000

Buy. Sell. Rent.

Scan the QR code for more properties.





The City of Melbourne's finance portfolio lead Cr Owen Guest and Lord Mayor Nick Reece promote the release of the council's latest draft budget on March 31 at Boyd Park in Southbank, where the City is investing heavily this year including the fit-out of the new library at Boyd Village. Photo: Huda Shehzad.

PLANNING, PAGE 02

Early works begin on PDG's Queens Bridge project

BUSINESS, PAGE 05

Fresh authentic Indian hits the spot in Southbank

SOUTHBANKER, PAGE 10



A Southbank sanctuary in the sky

After 24 years on a busy Southbank corner, Heather Wheat (pictured) and Lindsay Doig have created a lush terrace garden that has turned their apartment into a private refuge and a haven for birds, bees and city life in bloom.

Southbank emerges a winner in City of Melbourne's draft budget

“ The City of Melbourne's 2026-27 draft budget is, on balance, a prudent one. However for Southbank, the more immediate story is that the suburb appears to be one of the clearer beneficiaries of this year's spending plan.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR

”



Unveiled at the future Southbank Library at Boyd Community Hub on March 31, the budget puts a spotlight on several long-awaited projects for the area, while also layering in broader citywide investments in safety, cleaning and open space that are likely to be felt locally.

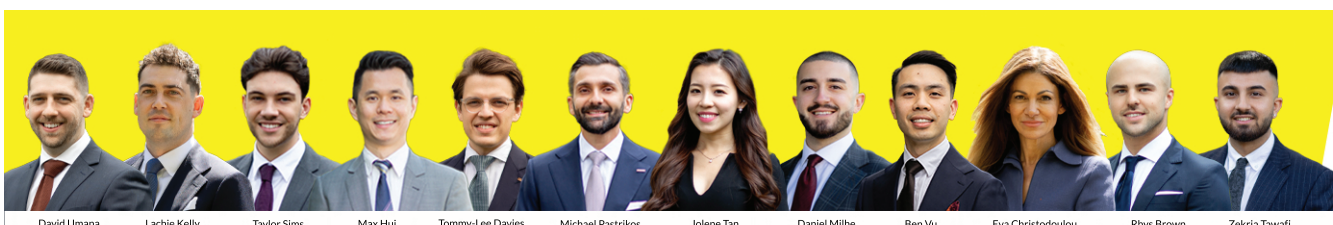
The most symbolic of those wins is the new Southbank Library itself, with \$2.8 million allocated to fit out the new facility within the new Boyd Village development.

For a growing residential community that has long argued it needs more accessible local services and civic infrastructure, the library is one of the clearest examples of a promised project now actually moving. It also paves the way for the soon-to-be former library space within Boyd Community Hub to be transformed into a larger meeting space, easing the strain on the very modest Assembly Hall.

The budget also continues work on the Kings Way undercroft, part of the wider City Road Master Plan and one of the more unusual public space projects in the municipality. With more than 5000 sqm of new open space planned beneath the roadway, the site has the potential to become an important new recreational and community asset in a dense part of Southbank that has historically lacked green breathing room.

This budget delivers a third straight underlying surplus of \$1.2 million, keeps services broadly intact and sets out a path to reduce council debt to \$60 million by the end of the current term, with the city aiming to be debt free by 2032.

Continued on page 4.



Buy, Sell, Lease
Speak to our team today

8102 0200 | raywhitesouthbank.com

RayWhite

HYPERLOCAL NEWS

CONTACT
 Suite 208, 198 Harbour Esplanade
 Docklands 3008
 southbanklocalnews.com.au
 Tel: 8689 7980

EDITOR
 Sean Car

PUBLISHER
 Hyperlocal News Pty Ltd
 ABN: 57 623 558 725

ADVERTISING
 Hyper-local print works for
 advertisers in our digital world
 because local people are
 interested in local news.

To sell to the Southbank community,
 contact Sean Car on 0460 896 115 or
 sean@hyperlocalnews.com.au

Reader contributions are welcome.
 Send letters, articles and images to:
 admin@hyperlocalnews.com.au

**The deadline for the May
 edition is May 8**

Opinions expressed by
 contributors are not necessarily
 shared by the publisher.

hyperlocalnews.com.au
 admin@hyperlocalnews.com.au

Follow us on social media
 by searching @southbanknews



Early works begin at long-dormant One Queensbridge site in Southbank

Early works have begun at developer PDG's long-awaited One Queensbridge development in Southbank, marking the first visible movement on one of Melbourne's most prominent dormant riverfront sites in well over a decade.

WORDS BY
 SEAN CAR



The project, now branded No.1 Queens Bridge, will rise on the former Crown-owned site at 1-29 Queensbridge St and is set to deliver a 71-level mixed-use tower with 588 residences, a hotel, dining and wellness uses overlooking the Yarra River.

PDG said demolition and other early works had now commenced, describing it as a major milestone for a site that has remained largely untouched for more than 15 years.

"This project marks the revival of one of Melbourne's most prominent riverfront sites and the beginning of a new chapter for Southbank," PDG founder and managing director Vince Giuliano said.

The start of works follows PDG's acquisition of the 5059 sqm site in December 2024, after it was sold by Crown Resorts' owner Blackstone. As previously reported by Southbank News, the purchase brought fresh momentum to a site long associated with failed ambitions, most notably the abandoned Crown-Schiavello supertower proposal that once promised to become Australia's tallest building.



PDG's plans are more restrained in height but are still significant in scale, and the latest material indicates the tower has grown from the 67 storeys outlined when plans were lodged last year to 71 levels in its current form.

A key feature of the project remains the retention and reuse of the heritage-listed Queens Bridge Hotel, originally built in the mid-1800s. PDG says the former pub will become a central arrival point for the development and anchor a new hospitality offering, including a rooftop bar and grand atrium entry integrated into the podium and hotel levels.

Designed by COX in collaboration with ODO and PDG, the tower's architecture is intended to draw on the movement of the Yarra River, with a sculptural façade made up of six vertical pleats running the full height of the building. PDG says the form

is designed to capture changing light and give the project a distinctive presence on the skyline.

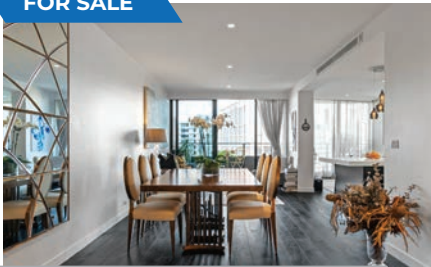
Residents are also promised more than 5500 sqm of amenities across multiple levels, which the developer describes as an "urban village in the sky".

The site sits opposite Crown and nearby is the Arts Precinct, placing it at one of the most visible gateways to Southbank. In earlier comments to Southbank News, local stakeholders including Freshwater Place and the Southbank Residents' Association broadly welcomed PDG's proposal, particularly its retention of the historic hotel and plans for better pedestrian connections through the site.

PDG said its plans for No.1 Queens Bridge remained before the Department of Transport and Planning, with sales expected to launch in the coming months. ●

INNER REAL ESTATE

FOR SALE

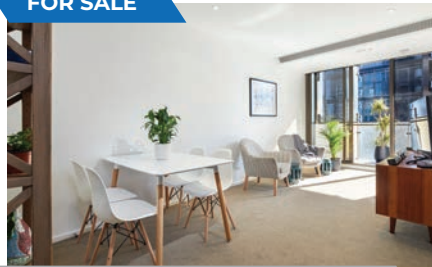


1505/50 Albert Rd, South Melbourne

3 beds 2 baths 2 cars \$1,450,000 - \$1,550,000

Anthony Cimino
 0400 500 903

FOR SALE



1507/118 Kavanagh St, Southbank

1 bed 1 bath 1 car \$430,000 - \$470,000

Anthony Cimino
 0400 500 903

SOLD



11/114 Hardware St, Melbourne

2 beds 1 bath 1 car \$608,000

Gio Campagnaro
 0447 894 467

SOLD



414/108 Flinders St, Melbourne

1 bed 1 bath \$400,000

Matt Kunz
 0477 006 125

FOR SALE



1401/8 Bowen Cr, Melbourne

2 beds 2 baths 1 car \$770,000 - \$830,000

Gio Campagnaro
 0447 894 467

FOR SALE



34/632 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne

2 beds 2 baths 1 car \$600,000 - \$650,000

Anthony Cimino
 0400 500 903

SOLD



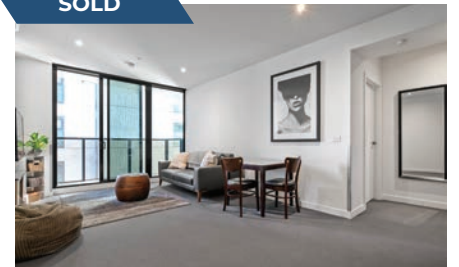
SOLD WITHIN 24 HRS

15/213 Williams Rd, South Yarra

1 bed 1 bath 1 car \$386,000

Anthony Cimino
 0400 500 903

SOLD



2909/135 City Rd, Southbank

1 bed 1 bath 1 car \$398,000

Anthony Cimino
 0400 500 903

Head Office - Inner Real Estate \ 138 Thistlethwaite Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205 \ 03 9804 5551 \ mail@ire.com.au \ ire.com.au

SALES | RENTALS | OWNERS CORPORATION



~~Once, twice,~~ Eight times Southbank Agent of the Year Michael Pastrikos



Consistent results for our sellers is why Michael is the most recommended and trusted agent in Southbank, again.



0404 282 864 | michael.pastrikos@raywhite.com | raywhitesouthbank.com.au

SOUTHBANK AGENT OF THE YEAR 2017. 2020. 2021. 2022. 2023. 2024. 2025 + 2026

MICHAEL'S MARCH 2026 SOLD RESULTS



Southbank emerges a winner in City of Melbourne's draft budget

Continued from page 1.

That focus on open space is reinforced by funding to begin expansion of the Miles and Dodds Street reserve, as well as progress plans to expand the Normanby Road reserve, both of which are significant for a suburb under intense residential growth pressure.

Taken together, Southbank is benefitting from the council's broader "Garden City" agenda in a more meaningful way than many other inner-city areas. Works are also due to start soon on the new open space at ACCA on Grant St.

Southbank3006 president Dr David Hamilton has welcomed this year's budget as one that is "fiscally responsible" but has "prioritised Southbank".

"These measures [surplus and debt reduction] are crucial for repairing the city's balance sheet, particularly given its long-term growth requirements," Dr Hamilton said. "The council faces a difficult situation. It's constrained by a state-imposed rate cap, demands for improved services and rising costs. Delivering a budget with a surplus, debt reduction and no cuts to services or staff while also managing additional state services is a commendable achievement for both the council and its executive team."

"In this budget, the council has prioritised Southbank and is fulfilling its promises to address gaps in its liveability. This focus is particularly evident in improvements to open spaces and community development."

"Finally, Southbank and its needs are on the map. Launching the budget at the Boyd



▲ Cr Owen Guest announces this year's budget in the future Southbank library. Photo: Huda Shehzad.

in Southbank should be applauded and not underestimated. Clearly, Southbank matters to this council and we are now top of mind." While bike infrastructure remains a relatively modest part of the overall budget, design and community engagement for future bike lanes on Queensbridge St is included.

The draft budget also includes more

funding for the Greenline project, with \$4.4 million in federal support to continue transforming the north bank of the Yarra River.

Beyond capital projects, Southbank stands to benefit from the budget's strongest citywide theme: safety and cleanliness.

The council will double its Community Safety Officer workforce from 11 to 22, expand the Safe City camera network by up

to 150 more cameras, and invest \$2.3 million in a new outreach response for rough sleepers and vulnerable people, including for the first time dedicated support for those facing complex mental health challenges.

The same applies to the \$34.3 million budgeted for cleaning, graffiti removal and broader city amenity works. Southbank's public realm has often struggled with litter and tagging, so increased spending in this space should be felt locally.

That is not to say the budget is without trade-offs. The city's capital works program declines over the forward estimates, and finance chair Cr Owen Guest has made clear that part of the improved debt outlook has been achieved by delaying projects rather than cancelling them. That is fiscally responsible in the short term, but it carries risks in a high-cost construction environment.

Rates are also rising again, with the council applying the full 2.75 per cent state cap after last year's rebate, while parking fees will also increase modestly for the first time in eight years.

Still, if judged suburb by suburb, Southbank can fairly claim to have come out of this budget well. Between the new library, Kings Way undercroft, new park investments and the citywide uplift in safety, outreach and cleanliness, it is one of the clearer local winners in a budget that otherwise errs on the side of caution.

Consultation on the draft budget is open until April 28, with a special Future Melbourne Committee hearing on May 12 before final adoption on May 26. ●

Croissants, coffee and graffiti spotting on Neighbour Day

A group of Southbank residents got together, practised reporting graffiti and celebrated Neighbour Day, on March 29, with coffee and French pastries as part of a community strengthening initiative by Neighbourhood Watch.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



The app, which has been recently adopted by councils around Melbourne, offers a system for reporting graffiti, dumped rubbish or damaged infrastructure via a photo sent from a smartphone.

Chris Milner from Southbank Neighbourhood Watch, who organised the event, said six volunteers from the suburb's walking and gardening groups had acted as guides for small parties of

attendees who set off with route maps to scour the streets and snap and send any issues.

"The groups went out, they were led by the guides, and they took photos of the hard rubbish and graffiti and other things like broken pavements, etc.," he said.

"They had a map to follow, and they had a little spreadsheet-type thing to tick the box and note what they found. And they brought that

back, and that was all collated by the City of Melbourne."

The event was also attended by Cr Rafael Camillo, the City of Melbourne's portfolio head for safety and cleaning.

After the street activity the whole group decamped to City Rd cafe A Treat of France, where they enjoyed coffee shouted by the owners and food thanks to the council, which had provided a Neighbour Day grant for the initiative. The café was very supportive, Mr Milner said, and the food had received very positive reviews.

The event was part of a larger plan Southbank Neighbourhood Watch had to help the community get to know their neighbours, which was the most important factor in their being empowered around safety and security.

Because of Southbank's apartment-dwelling population, its lack

of traditional community organisations and meeting places and its young, diverse, often itinerant and majority non-native-English-speaking demographic, it was necessary to "connect people in different ways".

Neighbourhood Watch organises Coffee with a Cop sessions, where community members could sit down with officers from the Proactive Policing Unit, Mr Milner said, and also bike engraving, where driver's licence numbers are etched into the bottom of frames so they can be identified if stolen.

Later this year he hopes to hold an event raising awareness about car theft, another of the most common local crimes.

Mr Milner lists bike theft, car theft, licence plate theft and the theft of items from cars as the most common offences in the area. ●

Your Federal MP for Southbank.

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

joshburns.com.au

josh.burns.mp@aph.gov.au

(03) 9534 8126

219 Barkly St, St Kilda VIC 3182

JOSH BURNS MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MACNAMARA

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [y](#) [v](#) [joshburnsmp](#)



Fresh authentic Indian hits the spot in Southbank

“Southbank’s new Indian restaurant was always meant to serve the local community.”

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



Despite its owners having done little promotion so far, the restaurant’s food and atmosphere have been hitting the spot, with nearby residents finding their way to the establishment.

It’s surprising that Southbank (outside of Crown Casino) didn’t have an Indian restaurant before Southbank Spices opened in mid-February.

But if that wasn’t the case, the restaurant might never have happened.

Co-owner Yogesh Kumar first moved into the suburb during COVID when the rent was cheap.

In the four or five years since, he has seen the Indian community grow a lot.

“But what I’m seeing is that there are a lot of restaurants but no Indian restaurants,” he says.

The motivation for opening one was partly self-interest, says Yogesh, who also works in the IT industry.

“Because I had to go more than a few kilometres away to get good authentic tasting food,” he said.

“And when I’m tired from work, I don’t want to have to travel – to do a 20-minute walk or a 15-minute drive.”

Aside from this, Yogesh had been on the



Business partners and friends Yogesh Kumar and Prateek Chaudhary at their new restaurant Southbank Spices. Photos: Hanna Komissarova.

lookout for new opportunities.

In July last year when he noticed a shop near Melbourne Square that had been empty for a few months, he suggested to his lifelong friend Prateek Chaudhary that they open a restaurant.

Prateek, a chef and sometime hospitality worker, was keen.

“So, we said, ‘okay, let’s go for it!’” Yogesh recalls.

While it didn’t take long for the pair to make plans, the steps that followed were another story.

Negotiating with the landlords, organising the shop’s fit-out and obtaining council approvals took them the rest of 2025 and into early 2026.

Finally, in mid-February the friends were



able to start serving at their new Kavanagh St eatery.

Since then, feedback on their North Indian cuisine has been very positive.

As word gets around, they are seeing a mix of customers come through the doors.

“We’re getting a lot of Aussie customers, Chinese people are coming, there are people from groups,” Yogesh says.

“It’s a good place to sit down with a group, have a glass of wine, share ideas and have a chitchat.”

The business is also benefitting from foot traffic, with people passing by on their way to the supermarket.

“And the smell is there,” Yogesh says. “It attracts people to come and try it out.”

Along with the biryani and special curries,

the owners especially recommend their Southbank spicy special chicken, normally served mild to medium, with the option to spice it up.

The idea was always to open a place with “fresh authentic food and quality service” for the community, Yogesh says.

And in the few weeks the business has been open, its growing reputation and local focus has seen it called on to cater for various Southbank events – including the March 28 Ugadi Lunar New Year celebration and March 1 Holi Festival.

The restaurant, at 56 Kavanagh St, is open seven days for lunch and dinner until 10pm or 11pm.

It is BYO, licensed and serves several mocktails and cocktails. ●

INNER
OWNERS
CORPORATION

Property experts.
Inside and out.

Proudly crowned Victoria’s Best Strata Team



It’s honour to receive the 2025 Strata Community Management - Medium Business Award.

We’ve been recognised for setting the benchmark in transparency, trust, and an open-door policy that provides our clients with full access to the information they need. As an award-winning owners corporation management team, we remain committed to putting people first.

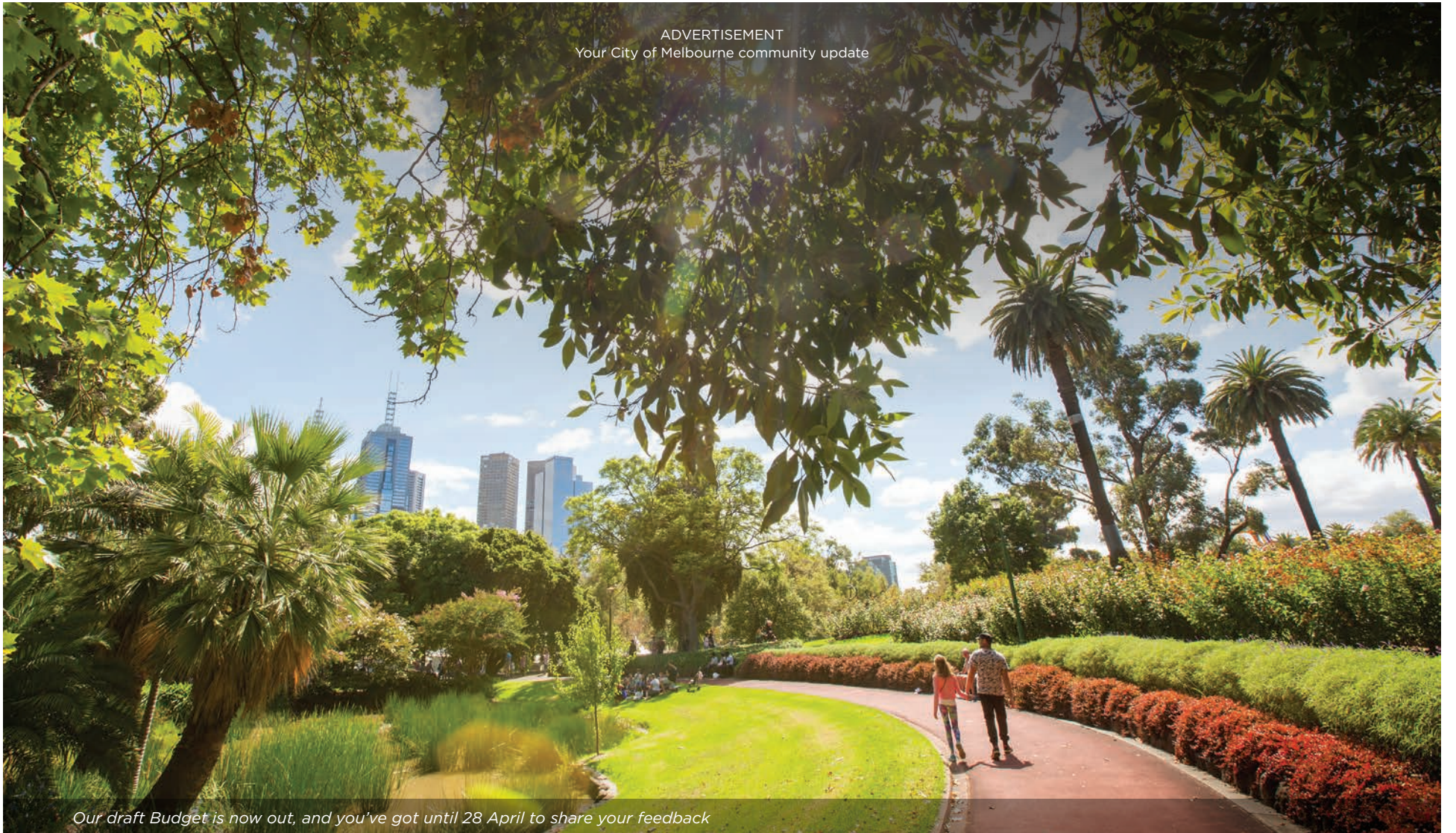
Thank you to our clients, partners, and local community for choosing us as your trusted strata experts.

Your support makes achievements like this possible.

Call 9804 5551 today for a confidential, obligation-free discussion about how we can add value to your building and community.


Head Office - Inner Owners Corporation \ 138 Thistlethwaite Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205 \ 03 9804 5551 \ mail@iocm.com.au \ iocm.com.au

SALES | RENTALS | OWNERS CORPORATION





Our draft Budget is now out, and you've got until 28 April to share your feedback


OUR BUDGET PLAN FOR A MORE LIVEABLE MELBOURNE


 Total budget:
\$804.8 million

 Capital works
program:
\$175.1 million

 Garden City:
\$26.4 million

 Surplus:
\$1.2 million

 Events, arts, culture,
activation:
\$41.2 million

 Safety and cleaning:
\$73.2 million

We know budgets aren't usually the most exciting time of year – especially when Melbourne has just squeezed in Moomba, the opening round of the AFL season and the Australian Grand Prix in one glorious weekend.

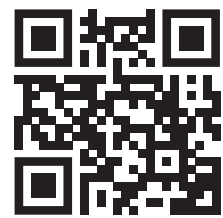
But this draft Budget really matters, because it sets out a plan to support a more liveable Melbourne.

It proposes investment in greener spaces, cleaner streets and more active laneways, and aims to make the city easier to get around and better connected.

It's supported by strong financial management, with this draft Budget delivering a third consecutive surplus and a path to being debt-free by 2032.

And because this is a draft Budget, we want to hear from you. Share your feedback using the QR code on the opposite page before 6pm on 28 April to help shape the final Budget.

There's a lot in it, but here are some of the ways you'll see the difference.



Feedback on the draft Budget 2026–27 can be provided on Participate Melbourne from 6pm on Tuesday 31 March until 6pm on 28 April.

BRINGING OUR STREETS TO LIFE



Our draft Budget invests in major events like NYE, which bring the city together

- Melbourne's street life is part of what makes the city tick. This draft Budget strengthens that with a focus on lighting, precincts and events that draw people in and keep the city moving:
- **Lighting up Melbourne**
\$2 million to light up more streets and laneways, doubling last year's \$1 million investment, with upgrades in places like Hosier Lane, Collins Street and Hardware Lane to improve safety and support activity after dark.
- **Creating a new Little India precinct**
In Docklands, more than \$1.2 million will help bring Little India to life, with infrastructure, public realm upgrades, creative projects and events.
- **Backing the events that bring the city together**
Across the year, almost same as last year will support major events like New Year's Eve, Moomba and the Christmas Festival, driving visitation and backing local businesses.

GROWING THE GARDEN CITY

Greening Melbourne remains a priority in this budget, with faster delivery of parks and more trees across the city:



We're investing in more parks, trees and greener streets across Melbourne

- **More parks, closer to home**
We're fast-tracking the planning and delivery of 13 new or upgraded parks and green open spaces across the municipality, making sure nature is never far away in our Garden City.
- **3,000 new trees across the city**
We'll plant up to 3,000 new trees across the city, growing Melbourne's urban forest and bringing more shade and greenery to our streets. It will help make the city cooler, greener and more climate resilient.
- **A greener stroll to grab your groceries**
Design work is progressing on Market Square at Queen Victoria Market – the city's biggest new park in more than 50 years – alongside a greener, pedestrian-friendly Franklin Street connecting State Library Station to the market.



Keeping Melbourne active and connected

RESPONSIBLE RATES, PRACTICAL SUPPORT THAT GOES FURTHER

Keeping costs manageable while consistently delivering the services people rely on remains a clear focus:

- **Keeping rates as low as possible**
After we delivered a full rebate on the Victorian Government's 3% rate rise last year, ratepayers will see a 2.75% increase on their rates notice this year. Pensioners will again receive up to a 25% discount, and ratepayers can access support through payment plans and interest-free extensions.

- **Staying active, together**
To support community wellbeing, we're continuing our popular free fitness classes in the park, along with \$2 weekday summer pool visits and free summer swim lessons, helping keep people active and connected.



- **Helping put food on the table**
Rising food prices are putting pressure on households, and we're responding. This draft Budget invests in food security programs that rescue surplus food and deliver it to those who need it most. We will also expand our food rescue partnership at Queen Victoria Market, helping food relief providers reach more vulnerable people in our community.

CLEAN, SAFE AND EASY TO GET AROUND

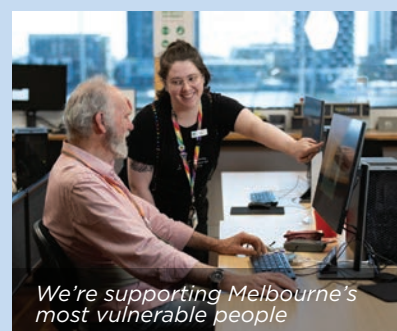
A great city works well day to day, and this draft Budget focuses on the essentials that make Melbourne safer and easier to navigate:



We're investing in a cleaner and safer Melbourne

- **More Community Safety Officers**
The number of Community Safety Officers will double, with 22 CSOs providing a stronger on-street presence.
- **Streets designed for people**
We're exploring ways to make it easier for pedestrians to move through the heart of the city, including extending Bourke Street Mall. Flinders Lane will also get a major refresh between Swanston and Degrave streets, with wider bluestone footpaths and more greenery and more space for the community to enjoy.
- **FOGO goes high rise**
For the first time, we're rolling out food and garden waste recycling to high-rise apartments, making it easier for more residents to reduce waste and keep apartment living green.

A FAIR GO FOR EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD



We're supporting Melbourne's most vulnerable people

From local libraries to neighbourhood hubs, having community places close to home helps people connect and feel part of something bigger:

- **New spaces to connect, learn and come together**
A 6.3 million investment will see new and upgraded community hubs including Southbank Library and the North Melbourne Community Hub, offering modern spaces to connect and learn.

- **Supporting our most vulnerable**
For the first time, dedicated support will be introduced for people experiencing homelessness with complex mental health challenges. A \$2.3 million investment will expand services for those at risk or sleeping rough, building on the care and connection already in place.
- **Giving kids a strong start**
Giving every child the best start means supporting families early. This draft Budget invests \$500,000 in early childhood services, focused on those who need it most. These programs aim to boost literacy, physical activity, improve access to nutritious food, and provide family-centered support including early intervention and domestic violence prevention.



Projects like the Greenline are one way this draft Budget is investing in making Melbourne greener and more liveable

Residents are invited to meet City of Melbourne Councillors during our public consultation on the draft budget.

Residents can provide feedback on the budget and ask questions about issues that matter.

- 11am-1pm on 8 April at City Square (in conjunction with a 'fitness in the park' activity)
- 11am-1pm on 17 April at Queen Victoria Market
- 10am-12pm on 18 April at Young Husband Rose St Market
- 4-6pm on 24 April at Boyd Community Hub in Southbank
- 4-6pm on 27 April at Clayton Reserve dog park in North Melbourne



Feedback on the draft Budget 2026-27 can be provided on Participate Melbourne from 6pm on Tuesday 31 March until 6pm on 28 April.

KEEP IN TOUCH

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

Connect with us

- [/cityofmelbourne](https://www.facebook.com/cityofmelbourne)
- [@cityofmelbourne](https://www.instagram.com/cityofmelbourne)
- [@cityofmelbourne](https://www.x.com/cityofmelbourne)



Construction begins on Melbourne Recital Centre's new rooftop venue The Beacon

Construction has begun on Melbourne Recital Centre's new rooftop venue, The Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon, marking the next stage in the Southbank institution's expansion and adding another performance space to the fast-changing Melbourne Arts Precinct.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The new venue, first announced in 2024, is being created at the top of the Melbourne Recital Centre building on Sturt St and will transform what the organisation describes as a previously underused upper level into a publicly accessible performance and events space with sweeping views across the city skyline.

Backed by a \$2 million investment, comprising a \$1 million contribution from the Victorian Government and a matched \$1 million philanthropic gift from Peter and Ruth McMullin, The Beacon is intended to broaden the centre's programming and audience reach beyond its two existing venues, Elisabeth Murdoch Hall and Primrose Potter Salon.

Melbourne Recital Centre chief executive Sandra Willis said the start of construction was an important milestone in the project's evolution.

"The Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon began as a vision – a belief that this building had another extraordinary space to offer – and to see it now under construction is genuinely thrilling," she said.

Ms Willis said the new venue would offer something quite different from the centre's existing auditoriums, which are better known for formal and acoustically refined listening experiences.

"Where our two existing venues – Elisabeth Murdoch Hall and the Primrose Potter Salon – invite deep listening and contemplative experience, The Beacon is something altogether different – vibrant, electric, intimate," she said. "Artists and audiences side by side, above the city, in a space that is as much about joy and connection as it is about music."

As previously reported by *Southbank News*, the venue is being delivered amid the wider Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation and was originally pitched as a way of unlocking the latent potential of the building's rooftop. At the time, the Recital Centre said the project would become a "transformative" new public arts space and an additional drawcard for music lovers and visitors to the precinct.

The Beacon is expected to host a mix of cabaret, musical theatre, jazz, First Nations

storytelling, curated cultural events and community programming. It will also be available for private functions including receptions and corporate events.

For Peter and Ruth McMullin, whose names the venue will carry, the project is also about supporting Melbourne's broader cultural life.

"Throughout our lives, music has been a powerful source of connection and inspiration," they said. "We are delighted to see The Beacon move into construction and are excited by the opportunities it will create for artists, audiences and the wider community."

Creative Industries Minister Colin Brooks said the development would reinforce Melbourne's reputation as a live music capital. "The Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon will add a compelling new dimension to that offering – enhancing the visitor experience while contributing to the vibrancy of Victoria's creative sector," he said.

Construction is scheduled to be completed in the coming months, with the official opening planned for mid-year. ●

Buxton Contemporary to spotlight key chapter in Chinese contemporary art

Melbourne's Buxton Contemporary will host a major new exhibition this autumn focusing on a pivotal but often overlooked moment in the history of Chinese contemporary art.

WORDS BY
GABRIELLE SHI



Running from May 1 to October 3, *Poetry goes no further than language: A historical moment of art becoming art again* examines the emergence of conceptual art in China during the mid to late 1980s and early 1990s, a period when artists began to question not just what art should look like, but what art could be.

Presented by The University of Melbourne, the exhibition brings together reconstructed historical works, archival material and a new commission by Melbourne-based artist Darcey Bella Arnold. It will also be the first bilingual exhibition, in English and Chinese, ever presented at Buxton Contemporary.

The exhibition is curated by Carol Yinghua Lu, director of Beijing's Inside-Out Art Museum, and artist Liu Ding, who have spent years researching the development of modern and contemporary Chinese art.

At the centre of the show is the complete body of work by the New Measurement Group, a Beijing-based artist collective

active between 1989 and 1995. Known for their highly systematic, rules-based approach, the group used measurement, analysis and standardisation to create work that deliberately stripped away personal expression and individual authorship.

Also featured is a selection of works by Shanghai conceptual artist Qian Weikang. Though his artistic career was brief, it was distinctive. He explored calculation, chance and the effects of external forces such as gravity and time. Qian stopped making art in 1997 and withdrew from the art world entirely, meaning his work has remained rarely seen and little known outside specialist circles.

Rather than relying on visual spectacle alone, the exhibition turns attention to a moment when Chinese artists were increasingly drawn to ideas, systems and language as artistic materials.

The title references a 1985 statement by poet Han Dong: "Poetry goes no further than language." The phrase reflects a broader shift among artists at the time. As new intellectual currents moved through China in the 1980s, many artists began to move away from traditional ideas of artistic value such as technique, expression and narrative, and instead turned to more conceptual ways of thinking.

For Melbourne audiences, the exhibition offers a rare chance to encounter works and ideas that have often remained inaccessible, lost or under-discussed outside China.

Curator Carol Yinghua Lu said the exhibition invited viewers to look more closely at the intellectual foundations of Chinese contemporary art, rather than only its global image.

"This exhibition offers a rare opportunity to encounter works that were previously inaccessible, lost or little known outside specialist circles," she said. "Without access to this deeper history, we risk a superficial encounter with Chinese contemporary art."

Appearing throughout the exhibition is a newly commissioned body of work by Melbourne artist Darcey Bella Arnold, whose practice explores language, translation and miscommunication across painting and sculpture.

Drawing on the exhibition's historical ideas, as well as her mother's notebooks and AI translation software, Arnold's new work turns mistranslation into a poetic and visual device, creating a contemporary dialogue between language, memory and interpretation. ●



Romulus Folio Gallery marks one year of contemporary art and design at Montague

Romulus Folio Gallery is celebrating one year of cultural programming at The Gladstone in South Melbourne, where the independent gallery has activated the Tower B lobby through a steady program of exhibitions, workshops and public events since April 2025.

Operating within a residential development, Romulus Folio has established an open studio model that brings contemporary art and design into direct dialogue with everyday space. Over the past 12 months, the program has grown into a consistent cultural presence within the Montague precinct, contributing to the broader transformation of the Montague Precinct and Fishermans Bend.

The gallery is led by creative director Angelina Mirabito, an interdisciplinary artist with a PhD whose practice spans contemporary art, curatorial work and cultural programming. She works alongside gallery manager Scott Ross, with Joseph Mirabito supporting the gallery's operational and commercial direction.

Together, Angelina Mirabito and Scott Ross have built a vibrant arts hub through their own independent efforts, fostering meaningful exchange across the broader creative community.

Romulus Folio presents a monthly exhibition program, with opening events aligned with The Gladstone's resident social nights. These gatherings bring together residents, artists, architects, designers and visitors, creating a shared cultural experience within the building's public environment.

In May 2025, the gallery presented an exhibition as part of Melbourne Design Week, contributing to the citywide program exploring the intersections between art, design and material practice.

Among its recent highlights was *FUSION*,

presented in collaboration with Mark Alexander, a highly regarded luxury interior designer, artist, sculptor and furniture maker. The exhibition explored the relationship between contemporary art, interior architecture and design through a curated presentation of artworks and sculptural furniture, installed in dialogue with the architectural conditions of the site.

City of Port Phillip Mayor Alex Makim has regularly opened the gallery's exhibitions, recognising the role independent cultural initiatives can play in enriching the creative life of the municipality.

Romulus Folio has also built links with the wider arts sector. Through a student placement program with The University of Melbourne, the gallery recently welcomed its first intern, Louisa Chu, who is completing a Master of Arts and Cultural Management.

Mirabito said the program was grounded in a belief in the transformative potential of art within lived environments.

"I believe in the power of art to transform the way we experience everyday life across public, private and commercial spaces," she said.

"It has been incredibly meaningful to contribute to the evolving identity of Fishermans Bend. The precinct carries existing histories, textures and layers, and the work responds to that condition while opening new possibilities for how space can be experienced."

As part of its first anniversary, Romulus Folio will present *Inside Wonder* from April 1 to May 3, featuring work by Xinzhi Li alongside a focused presentation by local emerging artist Usha Newland.

A special exhibition opening and anniversary celebration will be held on April 17 from 5pm to 7pm.

Romulus Folio also hosts the *Romulus Salon*, an interdisciplinary gathering of artists, designers and creative practitioners. The next Salon will be held on Thursday, April 30, from 5pm to 7pm.

romulusfolio.com.au •



Melbourne Design Week 2026 returns in May

Melbourne's biggest celebration of design is set to return this autumn, with hundreds of events exploring everything from food and fashion to robotics, interiors and furniture.

WORDS BY
GABRIELLE SHI



Running from May 14 to 24, Melbourne Design Week will transform venues across the city into hubs of creativity, with more than 400 exhibitions, talks, installations and workshops showcasing the latest ideas from Australian and international designers.

Now in its 10th year, the event highlights how design shapes everyday life, from the way we eat and exercise to how our homes, cities and technologies are imagined and built. Held across locations including NGV International, The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne School of Design, the National Communication Museum and showrooms throughout the CBD, the program has grown into the largest design event in Australia.

Among the headline speakers is Japanese industrial designer Shunji Yamanaka, who will deliver a keynote lecture at the National Communication Museum on work spanning prosthetics, robotics and product design. NGV International will host a conversation between *Grand Designs Australia* presenter Anthony Burke and Australian design legend Mary Featherston, while acclaimed architect Tom Kundig will also appear in a talk at the NGV.

The Melbourne School of Design will

present a keynote and exhibition celebrating the 25-year career of Australian architect and designer Alison Page, whose work explores how Blak design perspectives can shape and enrich everyday Australian life.

Several city events will place a particular spotlight on Melbourne's design and retail culture. At NGV International, Interior Design Day on May 23 will fill the Great Hall with talks and discussions featuring leading figures from the sector. On Collins St, the new Stylecraft showroom will host an exhibition of finalists in the Australian Furniture Design Award, while Muji Australia will present *Muji Made*, an exhibition featuring some of the brand's most enduring products alongside reinterpretations by Australian designers.

Food and hospitality will also feature strongly. *Yiaga: The Craft of Place* will bring together chef Hugh Allen and architect John Wardle in a discussion about how design and craft have shaped Melbourne's newest fine dining destination, while other events will span cutlery design, edible architecture-inspired chocolates and reflections on the relationship between kitchens, design studios and dining culture.

The Melbourne Art Book Fair will again form part of the program, with its annual stallholder fair taking over NGV International's Great Hall from May 15 to 17 and highlighting publishers from South-East Asia, Latin America and the Australian Chinese diaspora.

Victorian Creative Industries Minister Colin Brooks said the event highlighted the strength of the state's design sector, while NGV director Tony Ellwood said the program showed how deeply design influences daily life. Melbourne Design Week 2026 runs from May 14 to 24, with the full program to be announced in April. •

SPECIAL EVERY DAY



Belgian Beer CAFE
Melbourne

HAPPY HOUR

EVERYDAY 3PM - 6PM

- APEROL SPRITZ - \$12
- STELLA PINTS - \$10
- PINOT GRIGIO - \$10
- SPARKING ROSE - \$10
- SANGIOVESE - \$10

MONDAY
ALL MAIN MEALS - FROM 5PM

TUESDAY
CURRY - ALL DAY

WEDNESDAY
STEAK NIGHT - FROM 5PM

THURSDAY
BURGER NIGHT - FROM 5PM

FRIDAY
FISH & CHIPS - ALL DAY

 **\$25**

 **\$15**

 **\$25**

 **\$20**

 **\$20**

☎ 03 9690 5777

🌐 www.belgianbeercafemelbourne.com.au

📍 5 Riverside Quay, Southbank, Melbourne, 3006



Southgate's new arcade brings fresh fun to the neighbourhood

A brand-new arcade has opened in Southgate, adding a fun, easygoing entertainment option right in the heart of the precinct for locals and visitors alike.

Designed for quick visits and casual catch-ups, the space brings together a mix of arcade games, interactive experiences, and mini golf – all in one convenient, walk-in location. It's the kind of place you can drop into after work, on the weekend, or whenever you feel like doing something a little different without heading far from home.

With its central Southgate location, the arcade fits naturally into the area's lifestyle – close to apartments, offices, restaurants, and the riverfront. For residents especially, it offers a new nearby spot to unwind, play a few games, and spend time with friends and family. It also caters to birthday parties and corporate functions, providing a fun and flexible space for group celebrations and team events.

More than anything, it's about simple fun. No planning, no travel – just a relaxed space where people can connect, compete a little, and enjoy something new in the neighbourhood.

As Southgate continues to grow and evolve, this new addition adds another reason to stay local and make the most of what's right on your doorstep. ●

Life in bloom and on the wing

SOUTHBANKER

When Heather Wheat and her husband Lindsay Doig first moved in 24 years ago, "Southbank was a bit of a community desert," she says. But these days it's greening up a bit and developing into "a really good neighbourhood".

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



As empty nesters who had found themselves "rattling round" a big terrace in Richmond, Heather and Lindsay had started looking at the newly developing southern edge of the city.

As well as its convenience and proximity to theatres, galleries and the museum, they liked "the anonymity" of city living, which meant you didn't have to conform.

The couple chose their apartment off the plan in a building on the corner of City Rd and Power St, which at the time was only about the second residential tower in the area, they say.

One of their criteria was having space for a garden.

There are terraces on two sides of their dwelling with gardens created from a mix of native and non-native plants, including fruit trees.

Heather describes the terrace gardens as "our green barrier to the world". "We come in here and shut the door and we think it's like drawing up the drawbridge," she says.

"And then we've got a barrier of green around us, and in a busy city on a very busy corner, it's a really nice sort of a hideaway."

To the couple's delight, the greenery – which includes a popular fig tree and grevillea shrub, and bird baths set up in the sun – attracts a lot of avian life.

Among 20 species they have spotted landing or spending time there are butcher birds, currawongs, honey eaters, wattle birds, sparrows and doves.

"I think it's a stopping place to get a bit of food or water," Heather says. "They come and forage in the garden."

"They love the water," Lindsay adds. "They come in there, and splash around and toss water everywhere."

The garden also attracts insects, notably "lots and lots of bees", according to the couple.



A copy of the City of Melbourne's recently released *Insects of Melbourne* guide lives on their coffee table.

Although it is a key part of their life in Southbank, the garden is intended, primarily, to provide a patch of wildlife for nature, Heather says.

And given the amount of time they often spend away from it, apart from some irrigation to keep it basically watered, it "has to be able to look after itself".

The couple, who had both been married before, got together after working in the public service in Canberra, where Lindsay was Heather's boss.

They were considered by friends to be an unlikely match.

"He was a bit of a tyrant as a boss and sort of very serious, and I was a bit gay, I loved a party," Heather says.

But over the 40 years since, they have thrived together.

"We've had a very, very full life, particularly as we've gotten older, it's just gotten richer and deeper and broader, in a way," Heather says.

After studying for a PhD and working as a neuroscience researcher, Heather had an interesting role on a ministerial advisory council, she says.

In retirement she and Lindsay did an extraordinary amount of volunteer work – on the board of Life Activities Victoria, in setting up U3A Port Phillip, at Foodbank, Neighbourhood Watch, the Bili Nursery, local sustainability groups and in foster caring.

Of late, though, their main game has been travel – with the pair notching up an astonishing series of adventures, from a month-long journey on an ice breaker along the coast of Antarctica to train trips to Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, sailing the Northwest Passage; and caravanning around the country from Tasmania to the Top End.

At times they have been away for eight months of the year.

"It's boots and all, whatever we do," Heather says. "I think the excitement keeps us on the go."

After an early trip to Paris, they "sort of got the travel bug," Lindsay says and have been travelling, and blogging about it, ever since.

Now 79 and 82, the pair, who have four children, six grandchildren and five great grandchildren between them, plan to keep on going.

Their next trip will see them complete a circumnavigation of Antarctica they started three years ago.

But meanwhile between journeys they are happy to be back at home watching birds and enjoying the area.

"Now Southbank's got a great library, a community centre and a big supermarket," Heather says.

"There are some terrific Asian groceries, we've got dentists and doctors and laundries and the neighbourhood garden, down at the Boyd, which is terrific."

"It's developing into a really good neighbourhood." ●

New beginnings celebrated at colourful event

An Indian-themed multicultural event celebrating new beginnings at the Boyd Community Hub attracted more than 240 people, who were keen to eat and get to know each other, its organiser says.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



When Preetam Nalbalwa first came to Australia, he found it hard to meet people to talk to.

The IT managing consultant, who hails from Maharashtra, in central India, is now an Australian citizen who uses his spare time to organise events that bring people together.

Particularly in Southbank, these sorts of initiatives are important, he believes.

"Everybody is from different countries, coming from different places," he told *Southbank News*.

"People don't know how to talk to each other, don't know how to open up with each other, because they come from completely different cultures."

"I'm trying to make things easier for newcomers."

On Saturday, March 28, Preetam and his wife, Sabita, staged a "Happy Ugadi" celebration at the

Boyd Community Hub.

Ugadi, which marks the first day of the Hindu calendar, is traditionally celebrated only in the southern states of India, Preetam said, making it a bit foreign to people from elsewhere on the continent as well as other nationalities.

"But we needed a title and a reason to get people together," he said.

"The reason for picking Ugadi is it's the start of something new."

The City of Melbourne backed the initiative, signing off on a small neighbourhood grant.

With Melbourne turning on some beautiful weather, people flocked to the get-together.

"We had 240-plus people joining the event and people really wanted to get to know each other," Preetam said.

About 70 per cent of those who came were Indian, and although it hadn't necessarily been part of the plan, about half of them came in traditional dress, he said.

There was even a New Zealand couple who came in a sari and kurta.

"They approached me saying they wanted to be at the event and to wear our traditional dress," Preetam said.

"I told them they could come in their own traditional dress, but they wanted to use this opportunity to go with something different."

"Sabita helped arrange the clothes and how to wear them."

Also turning up in an eye-catching outfit was state MP Nina

Taylor, who was wearing a hot pink frock.

The Member for Albert Park said it had been "fantastic" to take part in the local community event and "connect in a unified and joyful way".

There had been some attendees from Middle Eastern countries too, Preetam said. "They were asking us what Ugadi was all about."

Activities on the evening included drawing and painting for kids, games like musical chairs, and conversation starters – one based loosely on the spring cultural festival Gudhi Padwa, from Preetam's part of India – as well as singing and dancing.

"Everything was planned in such a way that people talked to each other and got to know each other's faces, Preetam said.

He himself had "met at least 100" new ones.

Meanwhile, the Indian food, chosen to appeal to as many people as possible, disappeared, with a second order needing to be placed. ●

Southbank emerging: trading wastelands for a community heart

In the past month, we have witnessed some truly amazing “green shoots” appearing across our neighbourhood.

From fresh thinking to decisive action, the vision for Southbank is shifting toward a future defined by better facilities and a commitment to genuine community development by the City of Melbourne.

Bringing light to the “Wild West”

For decades, Southbank has been plagued by a “Wild West” approach to development – a legacy of poor state planning that favoured high-rise density over liveability.

Those who continue to argue that our suburb should be forced to suffer more concrete towers simply to meet a narrow vision of urban development have clearly learned nothing from the past. Their short-termism and lack of imagination are exactly what the community and the council are now working to overcome.

Fortunately, the City of Melbourne is taking major steps to “redress the sins of the past”. We are seeing a wave of creativity and innovation designed to fill the gaps left behind by years of neglect, poor planning, and developers driven by profit and not liveability and sustainability for those who live here.

Key projects on the horizon:

The Kingsway Undercroft: This project

aims to transform a literal wasteland – an area left to fester under the Kings Way for decades – into a hub of active recreation. The council’s designs that we have seen aim to bring light, life, and greenery to a space that was once forgotten. This \$5.5m project is funded and is targeted emerge into a reality for residents by the end of 2027.

The ACCA project & Normanby Reserve concept: imaginative proposals for these spaces reflect a new commitment to urban healing. The ACCA project is set to be a reality later this year breathing life into desolation.

New library facilities and a redeveloped Boyd: essential infrastructure that treats Southbank as a neighbourhood, not just a postcode will be a reality very soon.

The battle for the Barracks

As reported in last month’s *Southbank News*, we are actively throwing our support behind the conversion of the Defence Department’s Victoria Barracks site. Our goal is clear: we want to see this site transformed into a high school and a suite of community facilities.

This is the first real opportunity in a generation to deliver a major facility that serves the whole community of Southbank. Securing a local high school is about more than just education; it’s about enabling people to think of Southbank as a long-term home, rather than somewhere you just stay for a short period of time. We urge the entire community to get behind this demand.



More new faces, new perspectives for Southbank3006 committee

Finally, Southbank 3006 is thrilled to announce that Nisha Gull-E-Nishat the founder of Healing Noor Collective has joined our committee. We highlighted her community initiative to create culturally safe spaces for women’s wellbeing, connection, healing and recovery in our March column.

Nisha brings an exciting new perspective to the group, focused on healing the long-standing issues in our area whilst ensuring our advocacy remains as sharp and effective as ever.



Get behind the campaign to make Victoria Barracks a high school and community hub for Southbank

Southbank3006 remains proud to support the council’s initiatives because it delivers the liveability we all desire. By reclaiming our wastelands and demanding essential infrastructure like the Victoria Barracks school, we finally have a chance to overcome the lack of imagination that has blighted our neighbourhood for too long.

Let’s keep building a Southbank that lives, breathes, and grows together. Join us at southbank3006.com to become part of the action. ●

David Hamilton

PRESIDENT

COMMUNITY@SOUTHBANK3006.COM



FEDERAL MP

How Canberra is responding to the fuel shock

Right across our country, the war in the Middle East is having a significant economic impact, including here in Southbank.

WORDS BY

JOSH BURNS – MACNAMARA MP

While public transport remains the mode of choice for many in our community, those who drive are feeling the pinch of higher fuel prices.

While we may not be able to control this war, we can control how Australia responds. I wanted

to give you an update on what our government has done so far, and what more help is on the way.

First and foremost, we have taken steps to secure Australia’s fuel supply. We’ve released 20 per cent of Australia’s petrol and diesel reserves, and temporarily relaxed fuel standards so Australian refineries can supply more fuel directly into the domestic market.

We’ve also secured a fuel supply agreement with Singapore, leveraging our status as a reliable energy partner to guarantee ongoing fuel imports. Thanks to these efforts, our emergency fuel reserves are roughly as large as they were when the war started.

We’ve also taken immediate

action to prevent fuel price gouging. We’ve passed new laws to double penalties for petrol companies which lie about the reason for price increases, collude on prices or engage in other cartel behaviour. We’ve also tasked the ACCC with ramping up fuel price monitoring and issuing on-the-spot fines.

Most importantly, we are doing everything we can to ease the cost burden on Australian households.

We’ve halved the fuel excise for three months, saving Australians 26c per litre on petrol and diesel. We’ve cut the Heavy Vehicle Road User Charge to help truckies keep moving.

And we’ve introduced legislation to underwrite the purchase of

fuel by the private sector.

The Victorian Government is also stepping up to help take the pressure off consumers by making public transport free for the month of April, which is particularly good news for the Southbank community, and enforcing mandatory fuel price reporting laws to ensure Victorians aren’t paying any more for fuel than they should be.

In a national crisis, Australians rightly expect all levels of government to work together in the national interest. On Monday, National Cabinet agreed to a new National Security Plan which does exactly that.

The plan will help coordinate a consistent response across all states and territories throughout

this crisis, including emergency demand-side measures to prioritise fuel for critical services and keep the economy moving.

Southbankers are right to be concerned about the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. As the Prime Minister has made clear, we expect the United States to clarify its objectives, to recognise the economic and humanitarian consequences of this conflict, and to de-escalate.

But Southbankers can also rest assured that this government has been working around the clock since the war started to soften the impact on Australian households, and we’ll continue to do exactly that for as long as the war continues. ●

QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET
online

- ✦ Shop more than 2,000 products
- ✦ From over 30 market shops & stalls
- ✦ With same day delivery available



MARKET FRESH PRODUCE HOME DELIVERED

QVM.COM.AU/SHOP

Biodiversity conservation and community gardening at Southbank

Cities are the perfect place for us to conserve biodiversity and rekindle our relationship with nature – Dr Kylie Soanes, Urban Ecologist and Conservation Biologist at The University of Melbourne

WORDS BY
DR SEEMA MISRA THAKUR



These words resonated at the Southbank Sustainability Group (SSG) community gardening efforts. It was a thrilling start to autumn, and the flurry of action and activities throughout March was truly invigorating.

The Community Gardening volunteers were excited in participating in the first Insect BioBlitz 2026. This program was conducted by the Urban Forest & Ecology team from the City of Melbourne between March 1 and 7.

BioBlitz is a citizen science, data collection event, where experts and members of the community work together to document as many species as possible within a specific location and time period. BioBlitz allowed residents a glimpse of recording a variety of insects in an urban environment.

Melbourne Square collaborated with the City of Melbourne and the SSG to organise a guided walk led by insect expert Dr Ian Smith to Southbank's local community gardens at Boyd and Melbourne Square. More than 30 people participated in this event. Participants learned tips on encouraging pollinators and beneficial insects in our gardens.



A summary of citizens' observations captured during the Insect BioBlitz can be found at: inaturalist.org/projects/city-of-melbourne-insect-bioblitz-2026. During the BioBlitz – 780 insect observations were made all over City of Melbourne (about 35 observations from Southbank community gardens), engaging more than 80 observers.

So far, 246 insect species have been observed and identified across the city. Common observations include the Chequered Cuckoo Bee *Thyreus caeruleopunctatus*, Lesser Grass Blue (*Zinia otis*), Wingless Grasshopper (*Phaulacridium vittatum*), Eucalyptus Tip-wilting Bug (*Amorbus atomarius*), Honeybrown Beetle (*Ecnolagria grandis*) and introduced European Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*) – these species have

been included in the newly published Insects of Melbourne (melbourne.vic.gov.au/citizen-science-and-nature-education) guide, which is a collaborative initiative between the City of Melbourne, Fed Square and Heartscapes.

The City of Melbourne Parks and Greening team is still looking through the large data set captured during BioBlitz 2026, along with experts in the field to help identify and verify some observations. We at Southbank community gardens appreciate the help received through the Parks and Greening team in hosting this event at Southbank.

The sustainability efforts practiced by Southbank Community Garden volunteers is aligned to EARTH DAY 2026 theme – "Our Power, Our Planet".



On March 5, the City of Melbourne gifted around 60 plants – herbs, vegetables and flowers to Southbank. SSG volunteers came in early morning hours to lovingly rehouse these plants in the community garden beds. In the past weeks we have harvested chillies, herbs, eggplants and cucumbers from our garden. Growing edible herbs is our volunteer favorite and at our last working bee a new volunteer, Akila, spoke about varieties of mint and its use in culinary and herbal medicines across different cultures.

About the group

SSG is a community group of Southbank residents dedicated to bringing positive change in sustainability practices.

Email us at southbanksustainability@gmail.com, visit our Facebook page, or follow us on Instagram at [@southbanksustainabilitygroup](https://www.instagram.com/southbanksustainabilitygroup).

If you're interested in learning more, join us for our next catch-up on April 11, Saturday, at 10am at the Boyd Community Hub, City Rd.

Our upcoming FREE event is on Plant Propagation. Join Corrinne at Boyd on April 11, at 10am, as she demonstrates the art of caring for and growing indoor plants. ●

SOUTHBANK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Temporary forever, or is Southbank simply unplanned?

In Southbank, we are no strangers to plans.

Masterplans. Structure plans. Consultations. Strategies.

On paper, you would think our precinct is one of the most carefully considered in Melbourne.

But after more than a decade of discussion, consultation and "visioning", a more uncomfortable question continues to linger: Do we actually have a plan at all?

This is not a new question.

It was raised back in 2021 at the Southbank: Where to From Here? community forum, hosted by the Southbank Residents' Association (SRA).

At the time, the intent was simple – bring together the City of Melbourne, planners and the community to discuss the future of Southbank, anchored around the 2010 Southbank Structure Plan.

What emerged from that forum, however, was something far more concerning.

The 2010 plan – once intended to guide Southbank's long-term growth – was no longer a living document. It had not been meaningfully updated, and much of what it set out to achieve had either not been delivered or had been overtaken by events.

In practical terms, that left Southbank – one of Melbourne's most densely populated precincts – operating without a current, guiding plan.

And here we are in 2026 ... still asking the same question.



Because once you understand that a lot of what we see around us begins to make sense.

It explains why the City Road Masterplan has now sat in limbo for close to a decade.

It explains why consultations, such as the recent Normanby Rd open space project, can feel disconnected from any broader vision.

And it explains why so many outcomes in Southbank are framed as "temporary" – because without a clear long-term framework, temporary becomes the default.

But there is another layer to this – one that residents experience every day.

Too many of Southbank's key projects are not just delayed – they are dependent on other projects to proceed ...

Stage 6 of Southbank Boulevard; the long-awaited Southbank Promenade upgrade; public realm improvements tied to the redevelopment of the Southgate and Esso sites.

Each one is linked, either directly or indirectly, to something else happening first.

In theory, that coordination makes sense. But in practice, it creates a bottleneck.

Because when one project stalls – whether due to shifting timelines, commercial decisions, or broader economic conditions – everything around it stalls as well.

And over time, what was once framed as sequencing begins to feel like inertia.

For residents, this doesn't present as a carefully staged delivery program. It presents as projects that never quite start.

As timelines that quietly slip. As promises that are made but not realised. And ultimately, as a precinct that feels like it is constantly waiting.

Waiting for the next stage.

Waiting for the next approval.

Waiting for something else to happen first.

But Southbank cannot afford to be a precinct that is always waiting.

Because when projects are assessed one by one – and then tied to other projects that may or may not proceed – the bigger picture is lost.

We see this most clearly in discussions around open space. While individual projects promise improvements, the broader reality is more complex, with gains in one area often offset elsewhere.

Without a clear, current plan tying these decisions together – and without the ability to deliver projects independently where needed – it becomes difficult to answer a simple question:

Are we actually moving forward?

To the council's credit, there have been signs of recognition. Commitments to review past strategies and reassess priorities are steps in the right direction. But review must lead to reset.

Because Southbank is no longer an emerging precinct. It is established, dense, and under increasing pressure. Decisions made today will shape how tens of thousands of residents live, move and interact with their environment.

We are not asking for perfection. But we are asking for direction.

A clear, current plan. One that reflects the reality of Southbank today – not the assumptions of 2010. One that actively guides decisions, rather than being held back by dependencies that may never resolve.

Because without that, we will continue down the same path: plans without delivery; projects without context; and "temporary" solutions that quietly become permanent.

The real concern is this: We identified this problem in 2021. Five years on, we are still living it.

And until that changes, Southbank won't be shaped by design – it will be shaped by default. ●

Tony Penna

PRESIDENT



Mapping Southbank

In the years from 1970 to 1974, people in South Melbourne became used to seeing men in the rear cab of a ute with a large camera taking photos of the houses and other buildings that made up the streetscape.

They were members of the Committee for Urban Action (CUA), a 1970s activist group that documented South Melbourne, regional cities and some other inner-city Melbourne streetscapes to combat destructive development and protect Victorian heritage.

Their extensive, 35mm photographic survey of South Melbourne streets, including Clarendon, Park, and Moray streets, is now held by the State Library Victoria. Their enormous collection of more than 2000 reels of 35mm film – more than 70,000 photographs in all – was donated to the Library in 1977 by Barbara Niven.

Much concern was starting to arise about the “piecemeal development” destroying Victorian and Edwardian architecture in South Melbourne, much of which is now Southbank. Members took comprehensive, strip-photographic surveys of streets, often detailing both sides of the road, to record building façades.

The CUA worked systematically, capturing



photos street by street, and recording the locations of each set of photographs. This information was used to prepare the title attached to each photo as it's uploaded to the SLV catalogue. In general, titles include the name of the road where the photo was taken, the name of the suburb or town, and the names of two intersecting roads that define the boundaries of the current road segment.

The pictorial record of South Melbourne area shows images of streets and buildings,

including homes (single and double storey), laneways and street signs, as well as public buildings and small businesses such as milk bars, hairdressers, newsagents, garages, fruit shops, drapers and many pubs, generally on corners.

A typical range of photographs shows single storey houses, sometimes hidden by trees in the front yard, brick or iron/wire front fences and some double storey corner buildings. Some shops are included, such as a fish and chip shop adjoining a small house

with a wire front fence.

Images also included architectural details such iron lacework, pediments and parapets, decorative orbs, wooden fretwork, bust mouldings, decorative chimneys and iron railing fences.

Some information is incorrect as some road names were wrongly documented, or because the names have changed over time, or the routes of some roads had changed – intersections no longer intersected, roads were closed, or new parks had emerged.

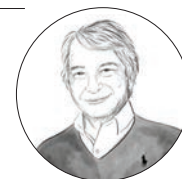
The images are considered an early “Google Street View” and act as a vital historical record used for heritage overlays. The aim was always to create some sort of map-based interface, that would allow users to click on a street and see any associated CUA photos.

As described, the title of each photograph generally includes four pieces of information: the road, suburb, intersecting roads, and side. The streetscapes have changed dramatically over the years, but we are left with an incredible array of images from 50 years ago. ●

Robin Grow

AUTHOR AND HISTORIAN
OF SOUTHBANK

ROBINGROW@OZEMAIL.COM.AU



ST JOHN'S SOUTHGATE

Sacred places

St John's (Southgate) prayer chapel offers a sacred place for people to rest, recover and reset each day.

WORDS BY
PASTOR JAMES WINDERLICH



This space is regularly used by people from our local business and residential communities, along with passing visitors who are curious about “what's inside.”

The St John's community is pleased that the chapel is used in such diverse ways. It reflects something of the complex,

interconnected special or sacred stories of life that we share at Southbank.

Every human activity, encounter and experience happens somewhere. At a place. As those things happen, we are not always conscious of where they're happening and how that place impacts what happens. It is often taken for granted.

We long, however, to return to those places where our experiences were good, where they positively added to the formation of our life and all that we hold precious. It's not enough to only recall those experiences. Returning to where those special things happened brings those experiences into the present.

Places impact the formation of our identities and the relationships that are created and flourish there. As physical beings where we are matters. Places hold deep memories for us, both good and bad, and returning to those places revive those experiences even when the events are long passed. How many of us in our ethnically diverse city, for example, long for our place or origin,

our homeland? Even when, in my case, that homeland might only be another Australian state. Familiar surroundings, sights, sounds and odors restore senses of wellbeing, order and completeness leading us to live and act naturally and with confidence. We know who we are and how to act in our familiar places, and we know those who are there with us on our common grounds.

God meets us in sacred places. The Franciscan priest, Richard Rohr defines sacred space as a transformative “inbreaking of divine reality” that jolts us to be fully present with God into the “Total Now”. It is liminal space where control is relinquished, allowing alternative consciousness and divine encounter. Where

this happens is a vital part of that encounter.

St John's prayer chapel offers a familiar place for those who use it. Its familiarity is not because those who use it necessarily have previous associations with it. The opposite is probably truer. Instead, their religious faith experienced as God's inbreaking, is where they return when they use our chapel. It's a space made sacred by that shared presence and the relationships that follow. It's a space where worldly noises are hushed, so that those who are there can be wrapped in God's prayerful and sacred completeness.

The St John's community is glad that it can freely offer its prayer chapel for public use. It's a special, sacred place available to all. ●




Sunday 12 April
2nd Sunday of Easter
9am Worship with Bach cantata
for 4 soloists, choir, strings, 2 oboes, flute,
2 recorders, 3 trumpets, timpani and continuo
St Johns Bach Choir and Orchestra
directed by Graham Lieschke
Kate Macfarlane (soprano)
Sally-Anne Russell (mezzo-soprano)
Timothy Reynolds (tenor)
Sunny Li (bass)

Every Sunday
9am Worship
Check our website for updates



20 City Road Southbank Telephone 9682 4995 www.stjohnssouthgate.com.au

WHAT'S ON April



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



ZWANZE DAY – BELGIAN BEER CAFE
Belgian Beer Café Melbourne hosts Zwanze Day 2026, Brasserie Cantillon's exclusive Melbourne event celebrating its playful annual beer release. For more info visit: trybooking.com (search Zwanze Day)

Belgian Beer Cafe, Melbourne

SATURDAY 25 APRIL, 12PM – 5PM



NGV FRIDAY NIGHTS
NGV Friday Nights brings after-dark access to fashion exhibition Westwood | Kawakubo, featuring Vivienne Westwood and Rei Kawakubo, with live DJs and food and drinks available for purchase.

National Gallery of Victoria

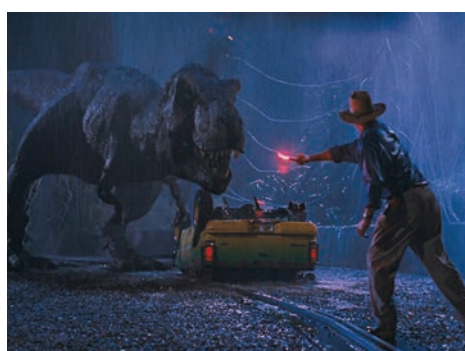
UNTIL FRIDAY 17 APRIL, 6PM – 10PM



PAMELA ANDERSON LIVE IN CONVERSATION
Pamela Anderson hosts an intimate conversation on reinvention, resilience, authenticity, and her acclaimed return to acting and public life.

Plenary Theatre, 1 Convention Centre Pl

FRIDAY 17 APRIL, 7PM – 9PM



JURASSIC PARK IN CONCERT
Jurassic Park screens in HD with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra performing John Williams' score live, conducted by Nicholas Buc, delivering an epic prehistoric adventure experience.

Hamer Hall, 100 St Kilda Rd

23 – 26 APRIL, 7.30PM – 9.30PM



CONNECTIONS TO THE BIRRARUNG
Explore colonisation and industrialisation impacts along the Birrarung with Wurundjeri educators, learning culture, Creation stories, traditional tools, and sailor life aboard Polly Woodside.

Polly Woodside, 21 S Wharf Promenade

SATURDAY 18 APRIL, 10.30AM – 12.30PM



RUN THE TAN
Run the Tan is a charity running festival at Melbourne's iconic 3.8km course, promoting fitness, mental health, and wellbeing with races for athletes, families, schools, and celebrities.

Pillars of Wisdom, Tan Track

SUNDAY 26 APRIL, 8AM – 12PM



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

UNTIL 26 DECEMBER, 10AM – 4PM

Business Directory

FUNCTIONS



Facilities hire Beautiful venue for weddings and memorial services Concert venue with excellent acoustic and comfortable seating Spacious function room Meeting rooms Kitchen

20 City Road Southbank
Telephone 9682 4995
www.stjohnssouthgate.com.au

EDUCATION



PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIES COLLEGE

PSC.EDU.AU
study@psc.edu.au
9682 3191

37-47 Thistlethwaite Street
South Melbourne 3205

PHYSIOTHERAPIST



- chronic disease, neurological, cardiorespiratory, musculoskeletal
- bulk-billed/ no-gap fees: Medicare EPC, Worksafe, TAC, DVA, NDIS
- CBD clinics (Flinders St and QV)
- online bookings



t (03) 9125 1500 www.physiopartners.com.au
f (03) 9125 15 11 hello@physiopartners.com.au

ARTS

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art

111 Sturt Street
Southbank VIC 3006
Melbourne

acca.melbourne



REAL ESTATE



Ray White Southbank | Melbourne City
273 City Road, Southbank 3006
P: (03) 8102 0200
www.raywhitesouthbank.com

Elite Sports Physiotherapy

Sports & Spinal Physiotherapy
Remedial Massage
Clinical Pilates
Post-Surgical Rehabilitation
Free Injury Assessments
WorkCover/TAC Claims



Mezzanine Level, 13-15/1 Freshwater Place, Southbank
PHONE: 8640 0328 WEB: www.elitesportsphysio.com.au



ESCORTS

THE MOST EXCLUSIVE ESCORT AGENCY

Paramour
OF COLLINS STREET

CITY CENTRE
Melbourne's exclusive entertainment service.
Highly recommended for our interstate and overseas visitors

- Dinner Companions
- Social Escorts
- Sensual Ladies

Scan QR code for pictures of ladies

SCAN



TEXT: 0477 291 058
(03) 9654 6011

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

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

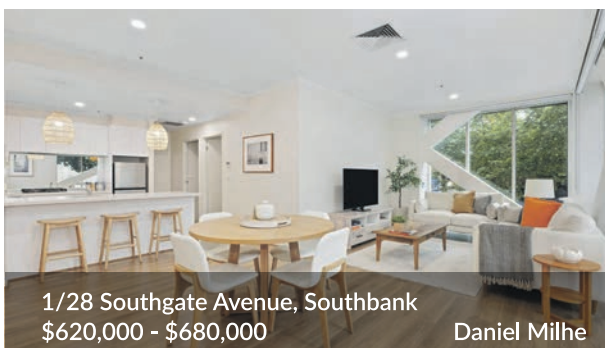
Here today, gone tomorrow

RayWhite

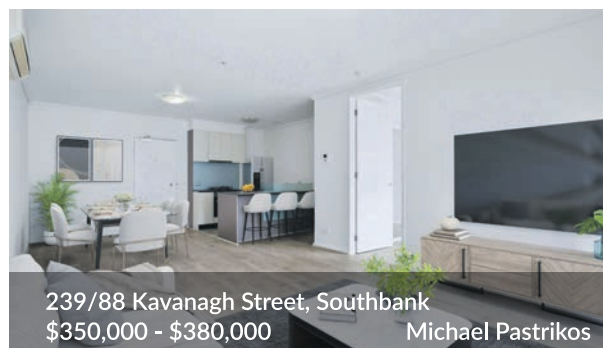


Scan the QR code.

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



1/28 Southgate Avenue, Southbank
\$620,000 - \$680,000
Daniel Milhe



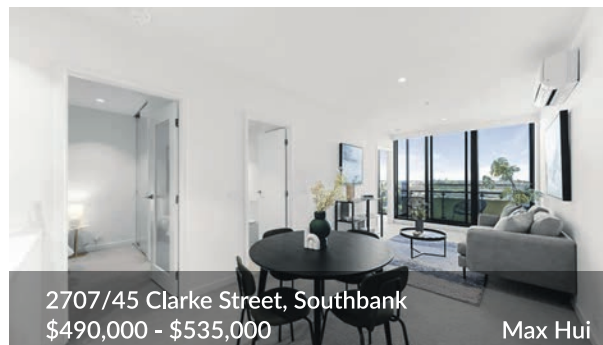
239/88 Kavanagh Street, Southbank
\$350,000 - \$380,000
Michael Pastrikos



3704/151 City Road, Southbank
\$530,000
Michael Pastrikos



1907/45 Clarke Street, Southbank
\$475,000 - \$520,000
Michael Pastrikos



2707/45 Clarke Street, Southbank
\$490,000 - \$535,000
Max Hui



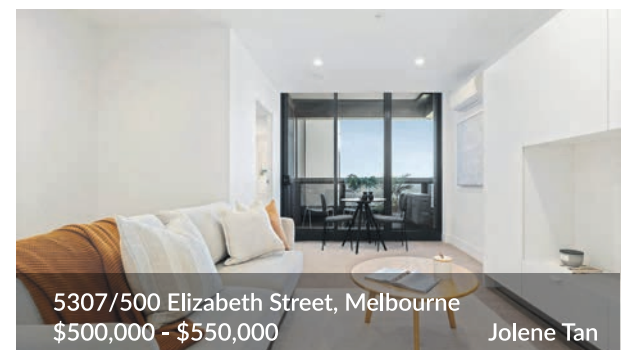
1015/422 Collins Street, Melbourne
\$440,000 - \$480,000
Michael Pastrikos



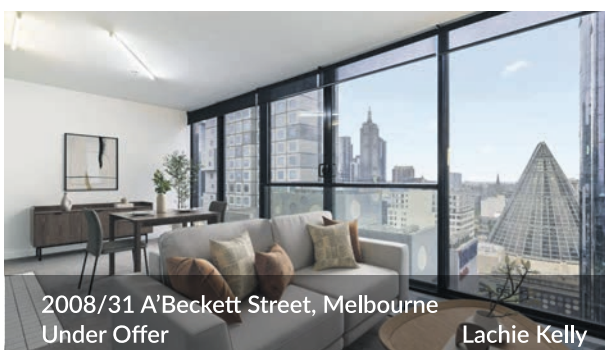
522/55 Queens Road, Melbourne
\$670,000 - \$730,000
Tommy-Lee Davies



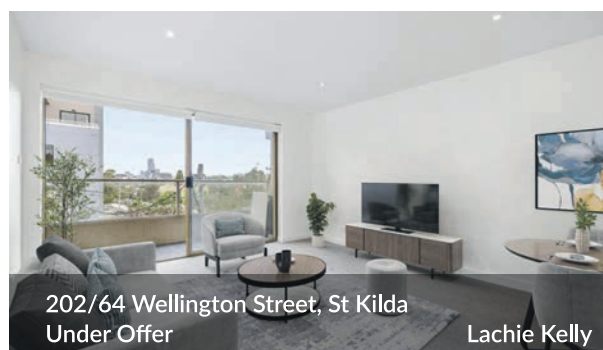
1301/55 Queens Road, Melbourne
\$1,250,000 - \$1,350,000
Tommy-Lee Davies



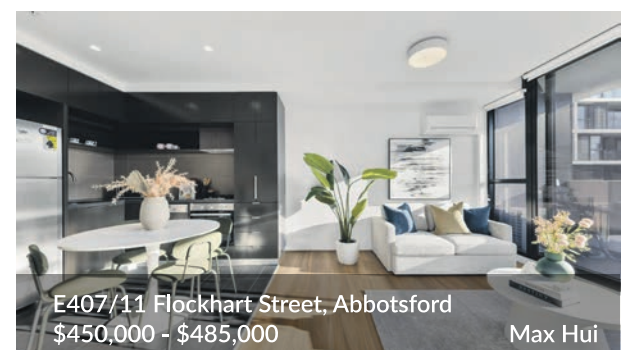
5307/500 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne
\$500,000 - \$550,000
Jolene Tan



2008/31 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne
Under Offer
Lachie Kelly



202/64 Wellington Street, St Kilda
Under Offer
Lachie Kelly



E407/11 Flockhart Street, Abbotsford
\$450,000 - \$485,000
Max Hui



614/26 Southgate Avenue, Southbank
Under Offer
Jolene Tan



1206/25 Coventry Street, Southbank
Under Offer
Ben Vu

Michael Pastrikos: 0404 282 864
Max Hui: 0430 238 021
Tommy-Lee Davies: 0416 823 173
Taylor Sims: 0403 485 210
David Umana: 0481 222 376
Jolene Tan: 0466 366 041
Lachie Kelly: 0411 446 204
Ben Vu: 0422 284 216
Daniel Milhe: 0422 261 527
Zekria Tawafi: 0411 577 970

raywhitesouthbank.com.au

Every Saturday, our team meets an average of 312 new buyers.

M I C M

☎ (03) 9697 8888
✉ realestate@micm.com.au
🌐 micm.com.au

Virtual Staging

🏠 1 🛏 1
76/183 City Rd, Southbank

📄 **\$360,000 - \$380,000**

🏠 1 🛏 1 🚗 1
31/161 Sturt Street, Southbank

📄 **\$400,000 - \$440,000**

Virtual Staging

🏠 3 🛏 2 🚗 1
401/11 Bale Circuit, Southbank

📄 **\$890,000 - \$930,000**

🏠 3 🛏 2 🚗 2
2201/151 City Road, Southbank

📄 **\$900,000 - \$990,000**

🏠 2 🛏 1 🚗 1
2005/83 Queens Bridge Street, Southbank

📄 **\$650,000**

Actual View

🏠 1 🛏 1
4508/1 Balston Street, Southbank

📄 **\$420,000 - \$450,000**

🏠 2 🛏 1 🚗 1
83/183 City Road, Southbank

📄 **\$578,000 - \$628,000**

🏠 1 🛏 1
1508/63 Whiteman Street, Southbank

📄 **\$400,000 - \$440,000**

🏠 2 🛏 2
3102/45 Clarke Street, Southbank

📄 **\$500,000 - \$550,000**

Actual View

🏠 1 🛏 1
250/88 Kavanagh Street, Southbank

📄 **\$360,000**

🏠 2 🛏 1 🚗 1
129/88 Southbank Boulevard, Southbank

📄 **\$595,000 - \$635,000**

🏠 1 🛏 1
1808/1 Balston Street, Southbank

📄 **\$365,000 - \$400,000**

Buy. Sell. Rent.

Scan the QR code
for more properties.



Sell with Southbank's No.1 Agency.

M I C M

(03) 9697 8888
 realestate@micm.com.au
 micm.com.au



1515/151 City Road, Southbank

1 bed, 1 bath, 1 parking

\$299,000 - \$328,000



3705/151 City Road, Southbank

2 bed, 2 bath, 1 parking

\$685,000



3209/60 Kavanagh Street, Southbank

2 bed, 2 bath, 1 parking

\$649,000 - \$699,000



1602/180 City Road, Southbank

3 bed, 2 bath, 1 parking

\$888,000 - \$958,000



804/63 Whiteman Street, Southbank

1 bed, 1 bath, 1 parking


\$410,000 - \$440,000



1409/22 Dorcas Street, Southbank

1 bed, 1 bath, 1 parking

\$365,000 - \$375,000



18/100 Wells Street, Southbank

2 bed, 1 bath, 1 parking

\$600,000 - \$660,000



406/60 Kavanagh Street, Southbank

3 bed, 2 bath, 1 parking

\$800,000 - \$850,000
























126/173 City Road, Southbank










1 bed, 1 bath, 1 parking

\$350,000

Your Sales Team

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| 
Adam Jordan
0400 500 587 | 
Calvin Zhu
0402 959 840 | 
Faith Chang
0423 783 039 | 
Giorgios Papastratis
0431 026 832 | 
Jackson Santana
0477 222 856 | 
Jacob Cock
0458 885 870 | 
James Yue
0457 661 730 |
| 
Jane Sukpanich
0472 876 281 | 
Jason Li
0400 361 277 | 
Jen Lin Lau
0466 407 555 | 
Jenny Huo
0481 915 796 | 
Mike Yuan
0499 579 822 | 
Natalia Susanti
0411 892 357 | 
Nick Hogan
0400 222 751 |
| 
Ricardo Zalapa
0456 822 278 | 
Sunday Hu
0484 708 087 | 
Sha Miek Sokhaimi
0400 869 227 | 
Will Newman
0409 912 711 | 
Yas Sunar
0408 674 896 | 
John Yacoub
0408 029 996 | 
Rod Richards
0434 835 945 |

Your Leasing & New Business Team

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 
Ambrose Ng
0409 813 966 | 
Ethan Medwin
0455 088 007 | 
Jackson Braby
0477 111 454 |
| 
Sura Gim
0407 980 676 | 
Mervin Lutchman
0459 944 871 | 
Mia Thompson
0473 735 022 |
| 
Luke Ellis
0417 674 013 | 
Jacob Paola
0423 027 874 | 
Yao Zhang
0466 153 078 |