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# CBD NEWS

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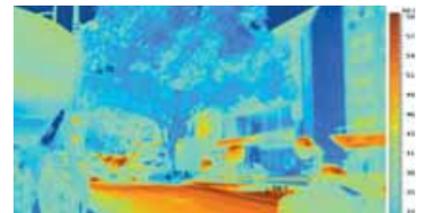
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## Aussie spirit alive and well

*Celebrating the spirit of Australia Day were young CBD residents Megan Chen, Daisy Liang and Sally Chen. What does it mean to be an Australian? "Our sense of community and multiculturalism," said the young students.*

## Parking has peaked in CBD

By Shane Scanlan

**Car parking has peaked in central Melbourne and is now in decline.**

The amount of on-street and off-street parking is shrinking, with implications for residents, retailers and the City of Melbourne, which has traditionally relied on parking as a primary source of revenue.

The council's finance chair Cr Stephen Mayne says the council has accepted the "peak parking" phenomenon and is comfortable looking for alternative revenue sources.

"Up until now, we've had a defensive approach to parking revenue," Cr Mayne said. "But we need to accept that on-street parking is often the least productive use of road space."

Cr Mayne said a higher economic yields were possible for the city as a whole by utilising road space for moving traffic - whether it be cars, tram or cycle traffic.

He says that, while businesses are rightly concerned to ensuring spaces for customers, the council should have removed more on-street parking during its recent installation of dedicated cycle paths in LaTrobe St.

City of Melbourne figures show that 400 on-street car spaces have been removed within the CBD since 2007.

"This loss of spaces is due to the cumulative effect of tram, bicycle and road safety works,

car share spaces and tree planting programs impacting on on-street parking spaces," a council spokesperson said.

Off-street parking is shrinking too, as a consequence of State Government policy settings which has resulted in CBD land becoming too valuable to be used for merely parking cars.

Both the state's relaxed attitude to height control and its harsh congestion tax on parking are contributing to the decline of off-street parking.

A recent example of this can be seen in LaTrobe St opposite Melbourne Central where the 689-space multi-storey public car park is being replaced by an 85-storey, 1208 unit apartment tower with just 362 private car spaces.

Council figures show that nearly 1800 off-street public car spaces were lost between 2008 and 2012. Current figures are expected later this year.

Private spaces are being squeezed too. In the past, inner-city developers were penalised if they did not provide enough parking with residential developments. Today, the opposite is true. They are discouraged from providing too much parking.

*Continued page 2.*

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# End of the line for weather station

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## After 106 years of recording CBD weather, the LaTrobe St weather observation station has been closed.

The weather bureau has moved the station to  
a new site at Olympic Park where, it says, the  
readings are less affected by urbanisation.

Melbourne's weather has been measured  
at the site on the corner of LaTrobe and  
Victoria streets since 1908. Prior to that,  
it was measured at the Flagstaff Gardens  
(1858-1863), and at the Melbourne  
Observatory at the Botanic Gardens (1863-  
1908).

The bureau says that wind readings had  
progressively deteriorated over the years,  
due to obstruction by buildings constructed  
around the city, and were finally switched off  
in 2009.

In November 2013, the bureau launched a  
new observation station at Olympic Park  
where air temperature, wind speed and  
direction, air pressure, rainfall and relative  
humidity are now measured.

The bureau operated the two observation  
stations in tandem for more than 12 months  
to compare data and identify differences  
in the readings for forecast and long-term



The now empty former site of the LaTrobe St weather station.

climate comparisons.

Initial results suggest the new site shows  
similar rainfall and temperature readings  
in most weather conditions, although it is  
cooler in southerly winds and sea breezes.

### LaTrobe St statistics:

- Hottest: 46.4°C (February 7, 2009)
- Coldest: -1.5°C (July 4, 1963)
- Wettest: 113.4 mm (February 3, 2005)

## Parking has peaked in central city

From page 1

Of course, developers are not arguing – given  
the higher prices they can leverage from a  
square metre of apartment space, compared  
with car parking.

And diminishing relative supply is pushing  
the cost of car spaces to record levels, with  
reports of CBD spaces changing hands for  
more than \$100,000.

The state's congestion tax is taking its toll  
too. According to Cr Mayne, the council is  
handing Spring St nearly \$1 million per year  
– more than 20 per cent of its profits – from  
its Queen Victoria Market parking revenue.

He says the tax is another factor that  
artificially discriminates against commercial  
activity within the CBD in favour of  
residential development.

Cr Mayne said he advocated the sale of the  
council's seven-level car park behind the  
Melbourne Club in Little Collins St.

Writing in *Crikey* late last year, Cr Mayne  
said: "But Melbourne has now hit 'peak  
parking' such that ongoing total gross  
revenues of about \$100 million a year is not  
regarded as sustainable into the future as  
more and more street space in Australia's  
fastest-growing municipality will need to be  
turned over to pedestrians, cyclists and the  
world's biggest tram network."

Council annual reports show a declining  
capacity to raise revenue from parking fines,  
which Cr Mayne attributes to increased  
compliance as well as fewer on-street spaces.

In 2013, the council budgeted to collect  
nearly \$51 million in fines, but only managed

to bank \$43 million. Last year, the figure  
dropped to just \$40 million.

Parking fees, on the other hand, were up last  
year to \$46.7 million – but this was a direct  
reflection of a significant hike in charges.  
The figure is now expected to stagnate as the  
council does not intend to increase the cost  
of parking over the next three years.

In its first quarter 2015 figures reported to  
council in December, the city collected more  
parking fees than it expected, but said this  
was due to temporarily collecting more from  
construction zone parking meters and an  
increase in what it charges to tow vehicles  
from clearways. Its parking fine revenue  
was also up 2.3 per cent but this was not  
expected to be sustained during the entire  
financial year.

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# From busking to the city's top job

**New Melbourne council CEO Ben Rimmer is returning to the city which gave him a start in life – as a young busker playing violin for extra cash.**

The former busking-licence-holder starts work in the city's top job on February 9.

Mr Rimmer replaces Kathy Alexander who resigned last year after seven years in the role.

Despite not having worked in local government before, councillors perceived Mr Rimmer as the stand-out candidate and are excited to have secured his services.

At just 42, Mr Rimmer is seen as a "young gun" and a rising star in the public policy realm.

Selecting the chief executive officer (CEO) is the only hands-on role that councillors are allowed in the running of the council. Councillors can issue policy directives, but it is up to the CEO to appoint staff and run the council's day-to-day operations.

Lord Mayor Robert Doyle described Mr Rimmer as one of the nation's "finest thinkers in public policy".

"I am confident that Ben will be a CEO of vision, intellect and hard work. He is an inspirational leader and we are delighted to welcome him home to Melbourne," Cr Doyle said.

It is understood that Mr Rimmer wanted to return to Melbourne, where he spent his formative years in the northern suburbs of the municipality.

Mr Rimmer has worked for Boston Consulting Group but has spent most of



*New City of Melbourne CEO Ben Rimmer ... is seen as a "young gun" in government administration.*

his career in the Victorian and federal public service, most recently in Canberra as associate secretary, service delivery transformation, Department of Human Services.

Mr Rimmer has been overseeing an ambitious cost-cutting exercise involving the amalgamation and digitisation of federal welfare delivery services.

As a young man, Mr Rimmer played in the

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and once played at Carnegie Hall in New York with the Australian Youth Orchestra.

He was Victoria's 1997 Rhodes Scholar, completing an MBA at Oxford University.

Last year he was the recipient of the Sir James Wolfensohn Public Service Scholarship, studying at the John F Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in the USA.

## Jury is out on further smoking bans

**The City of Melbourne has completed its consultation on three new potential smoke-free zones in the CBD.**

The council sought views on possibly banning smoking in Howey Place, Equitable Place and Block Place.

The council says it spoke with stakeholders and patrons of the lanes, conducted surveys and also collected online feedback.

It says a date has not been set for when recommendations will be made to councillors to make a decision.

Some 25 comments were left on the council's "participate" website, including:

"I see no reason why the common air should be polluted for the sake of people with an unsociable habit."

"We have to recognise that this is a legal activity and product being used primarily by people who have a chemical addiction."

"Impossible to enforce and not representative of the free society in which we live."

"Yes it is the smokers right to choose to smoke but what about the passive smokers right to breath fresh air?"

"Please remove your heads from the sand and have a look at the research into passive smoking."

"Smoking should be banned throughout the CBD."

southgate

## Add a break back into your weekday lunch

Make the most of your lunch break and admire the city from the Southgate side of the river.

Dine in over an express restaurant lunch menu, or enjoy a quick bite at Melbourne's bustling riverside food court.

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# Melbourne imagined as Manhattan

*This stunning image of the intersection of Bourke and Elizabeth streets by master photographer David Simmonds interprets the CBD in the vision of New York.*

Mr Simmonds created the work late last year as one of a series commissioned by Wyndham Vacation Resorts Asia Pacific for use in 84 deluxe suites in its new property in William St.

“The reason they selected me was they did not want the clichéd usual tourist views of Melbourne,” Mr Simmonds said.

Mr Simmonds visited the Wyndham on William site before construction had even started to assess what was required.

“As it was a high-rise in the middle of the city, I did not want to use skylines or architectural themes, as my work has often done in the past, but rather get down into

the street level and show a side of Melbourne not always seen,” he said.

“For the GPO image, I wanted to get as much of the lovely old post office building, the mall, trams and people in as possible,” he said.

“As I often do, I went for a three-section vertical panorama using a 17 mm lens to get the GPO all in. At close distance, this naturally created some distortion which, instead of working to correct I liked, and pushed further to give this image a new edge – converting to high contrast monochrome completed the shift,” he said.

“I used the Hockney-influenced idea that

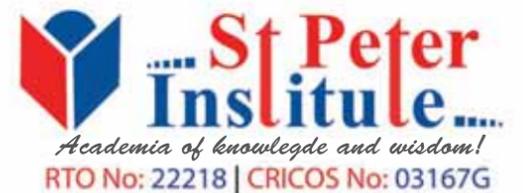
there is always more than one decisive moment and I took many images to get a crowd that represented Melbourne’s cultural mix and energy. The final touch was to add some colour.”

Other themes in the series include “live music” from Bennett’s Lane, “food and funk” from Hardware Lane and “sport, gardens and culture” – comprising more than 1000 small images, taken from the top of Federation Square.

The final series of six images are available as signed, limited, 1200 x 837 prints from the artist. See [www.lightlinespace.com](http://www.lightlinespace.com) (go to collections).



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# Central city is the new Wi-Fi hub

By Shine Dighe

*For residents and visitors constantly on the go, it doesn't get better than in the CBD.*

First came the free tram zone in the city and now get ready for free WiFi as you make your way around town.

Pilots programs by Net Bay Internet, the Victorian State Government with the City of Melbourne, Optus and Telstra – are already under way and offer free WiFi in a few parts of the grid. Anybody can access the network as long as they are close to a hotspot and have no interference from trees, walls, mirrors and other interferences. Besides these, a number of spots including coffee shops (why else do you go to Starbucks), retail stores, libraries already offer free WiFi.

Victoria-based Net Bay Internet is creating a WiFi network that can be accessed for free and the company's revenue model revolves around advertising. The network currently offers free WiFi at Flinder's station. Optus hotspots can be found at Federation Square.

The Victorian Government (VicGovFree) is currently available at Queen Victoria Market opposite the food court. This free public WiFi model is starting in outdoor areas and will be delivered by internet service provider iiNet.

Further services are expected to be available on major streets, transport hubs and tourist precincts by mid-2015, with remaining



*CBD residents, workers and visitors are being treated to more free Wi-Fi than anywhere else in Victoria.*

coverage expected to be deployed by December 2015.

Using the latest 802.11ac WiFi technology, the service is fast and reliable, with speeds

comparable to the 3G network most users are familiar with. The Victorian free WiFi pilot does not require personal log-in details, and allows users up to 250MB per day –

which is around three hours of browsing, or 200 photo uploads to social media.

Telstra is making use of the ageing payphones network and converting them into WiFi hotspots that will temporarily allow all users to access the internet using smartphones and tablets free of charge. In future, Telstra-built hotspots will also be located at Telstra retail outlets and exchange buildings.

Access to WiFi will be free at the 1000 trial sites before the network officially launches early next year.

#### Fast facts

- It appears people love using WiFi when either shopping or heading to the beach with top usage sites in CBD shopping malls or coastal locations;
- Telstra has 92 hotspots connecting the CBD grid;
- Bourke St Mall, Swanston St, Elizabeth St figure in the top 10 places to connect nationally; and
- Remember to use caution when accessing personal information at wireless hotspots.

## Tranquility Within a Busy CBD Locale

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The recently completed Zen apartments offer residents a peaceful escape from a busy CBD environment.

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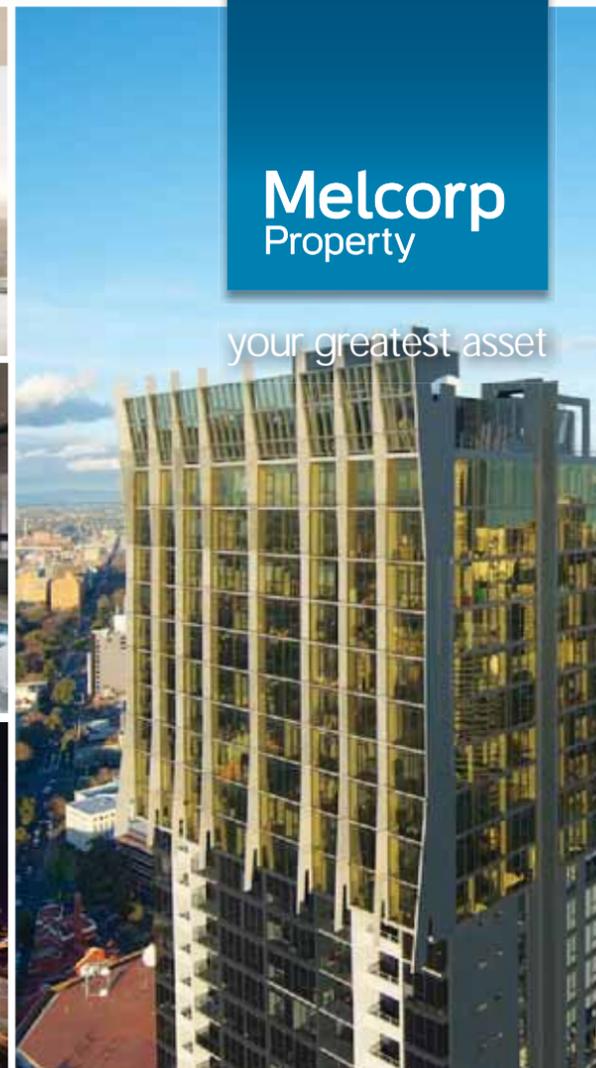
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# Call for plan for the central city

*Some order may come to the apparent planning chaos within the CBD if City of Melbourne planning chair Cr Ken Ong has his way.*

Cr Ong wants the council to again attempt to lead a planning scheme amendment resulting in firm rules governing built form within the Hoddle Grid area.

The council attempted four years ago to introduce a CBD built form planning scheme amendment (C188) but the document was not accepted by the State Government.

Cr Ong says lessons have been learned since 2011 and the council had not covered all the necessary aspects in its previous attempt.

He says that a West Melbourne structure plan is currently on the council's drawing board and, once complete, the only remaining urban renewal area without such a plan will be the CBD.

He said Docklands, Southbank, Arden-Macaulay and City North all had comprehensive planning guidelines in place.

"The CBD will be the only area left without comprehensive planning guidelines and it's time we tackled it," Cr Ong said.

He said he would be pushing for the task to be included in the council's 2015 action plan.

In the 2011 document the council said: "The present planning scheme provisions fail to present a clear, easily accessible picture of the desired built form in most parts of the central city. Some provisions fundamental to the desired outcome have insufficient statutory weight, or are buried in tracts of policy whose intent may overlap or contradict."

As reported elsewhere in this edition, since 2011 nearly 800 floors have been added to the CBD skyline comprising 5089 apartments, 188,000sqm of office space and

53,000sqm of retail space.

Cr Ong said much of the CBD was still without height controls, which had resulted in the current development bonanza.

"In Elizabeth, Spencer and Lonsdale streets there are no height controls. So we are seeing buildings coming up to 60, 70 and 80 storeys," he said.

"How big is too big? You can build up to where the aeroplanes will just miss you. Is that a good outcome?" Cr Ong said.

Elsewhere in this edition, we reveal that more than twice the development that has occurred in the CBD during the past 13 years is either currently under construction or on its way (see page 7).

But Cr Ong said it was not too late to introduce comprehensive planning controls within the Hoddle Grid.

"We need proper guidance on heights, setbacks, wind patterns, etc," he said. "We need to plan how these developments interact with people at street level."

Cr Ong said the starting point for such a review would be to consult all the relevant stakeholders to determine what was required.

He said that without proper height controls, we would see developers buying and demolishing towers built in the 1960s and 70s and pushing further into the sky.

"Unless there are heritage restrictions on a site, there is nothing stopping a further explosion of development," he said.

"I want to lock in built form planning controls for the central city."



Artist's impression of the proposed B1 Veloway.

## High hopes for the 'other' east-west link

*Proponents of the Melbourne B1 Veloway are confident that the new State Government will accept their novel idea to separate cyclists from CBD motorists and pedestrians.*

If accepted and finally built, the Veloway cycle path would be "clipped" to the outside of the 1.7km railway viaduct, passing over Banana Alley and six intersections, between Flinders St and Southern Cross stations.

The consortium behind the novel idea has taken to calling the Veloway "the other east-west link" and is hopeful of a better reception from the new Labor government than the original east-west road link.

"At this stage, all we are seeking from government is a commitment to fund a fuller feasibility study which we believe will prove the business case and show a net state benefit for the state and for all Melburnians," said consortium spokesperson Grant O'Donnell.

Mr O'Donnell, a director of Melbourne life-form Development, said the Veloway would provide an important link connecting Melbourne's bicycle networks from Cremorne, Richmond in the east to Docklands in the west.

"As a congested city, we have to make life easier for motorists, taxis, delivery drivers and of course for cyclists. The current thinking which seems to begin and end with bike lanes and painting lines on roads is demonstrably not good enough," Mr O'Donnell said.

"We believe this public infrastructure proposal will firmly establish Melbourne as a transport innovator in delivering improved cycle safety through much needed separation of cars from bikes and also from pedestrians along the busy Northbank and Southbank precincts as well as being an appealing amenity for ride to work commuters and visitors to Melbourne."

"Cycling to work has more than doubled in the last 10 years and a stated aim of all governments has been to provide vehicle-free paths and facilities as an extremely effective way for improving their safety."

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# BOOM TIME IS JUST BEGINNING

*If you think inner Melbourne is booming, then hang on to your hat, the party is only starting.*

There is more than twice as much construction either underway or planned within the CBD than has taken place over the past 13 years.

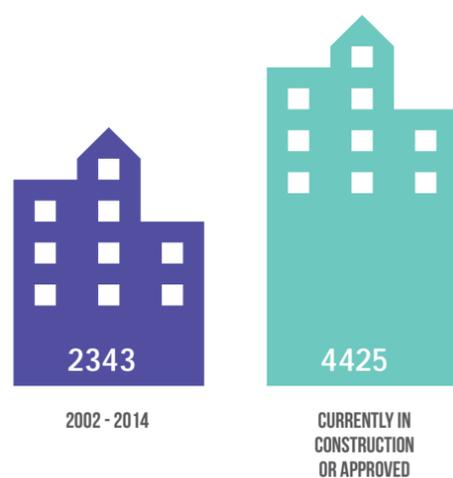
The City of Melbourne's recently-released Development Activity Monitor (DAM) shows that 11,715 apartments have been built in the central city since 2002 but that a further 26,553 are either under construction or are on the drawing board.

It's a similar story on the commercial front too. Since 2002, some 466,857sqm of nett lettable floor space has been added to the CBD. However, a further 653,777sqm is on its way.

One of the metrics measured by the DAM is "floors above ground". Since 2002, some 2343 floors have been added to the Melbourne skyline. There are a further 4425 coming to a street near you.

The only area of activity of modest growth is retail, where an extra 48,856sqm is either underway or planned. This figure is only slightly more than the 44,891 sqm of retail growth experienced in 2014. Overall, retail has grown by 144,971sqm since 2002.

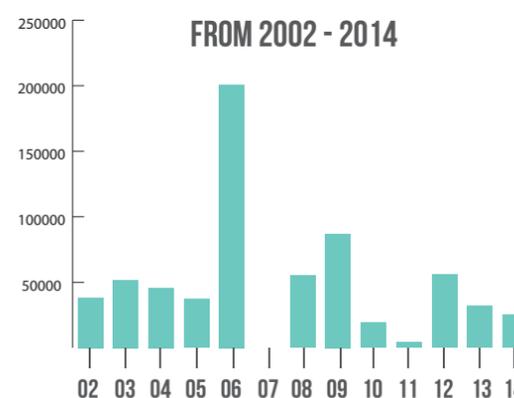
## FLOORS ADDED TO THE CBD SKYLINE



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# Allez, cuisine!

*You've seen 'Iron Chef' on SBS. Fast-paced action from the chefs in their elaborate outfits - grilling, sauteing, setting things on fire with Chairman Kaga's entertaining commentary in the background.*

But now here is your opportunity to enjoy a gourmet meal prepared by three iron chefs.

The supposed story behind *Iron Chef* is that the flamboyant Takeshi Kaga (known as chairman Kaga) specially constructed a cooking arena called the Kitchen Stadium in his castle.

There, visiting chefs from around the world would compete against his Gourmet Academy, led by his three (later four) Iron Chefs. Chairman Kaga himself is a showpiece, dressed in outlandish examples of men's formal attire.

Over two nights this February, *Iron Chef* is coming to Melbourne for a special dinner event.

French Iron Chef Hiroyuki Sakai, Italian Iron Chef Masahiko Kobe and Chinese Iron Chef Kentaro Chen will prepare a six-course dinner, with each chef cooking two dishes.

There is a capacity of up to 300 people for each night, and Masterchef contestant Alice Zaslavsky will be the evening's MC. Wine and sake will be matched by local sommelier Masahiko Iga.

Diners will be treated to a performance of shodo by Japanese calligrapher Junko Azukawa and live music by koto player Brandon Lee.

The Iron Chef Melbourne Dinner will be on February 14 and 15 at RACV City Club, 501 Bourke St. Tickets are \$380 per person.



A Princes Bridge cyclist is forced into the motor-vehicle lane to overtake a horse-drawn vehicle.

## Riding roughshod over the law

*The clippity clop of hooves on CBD streets is soothing to most but is increasingly annoying to the City of Melbourne.*

The council and the horse-drawn vehicle operators are locked in a bitter battle over permit conditions compliance.

Some operators, the council says, are now operating without street trading permits – presenting an even greater regulatory challenge.

The situation has become so strained that Cr Rohan Leppert is suggesting that the city might be better off without them.

"I've seen enough poor behaviour from some operators and witnessed enough enforcement problems to make me think that we should wind them up and not renew their permits," Cr Leppert said.

Cr Leppert said operators regularly broke traffic laws including driving up tram tracks and in dedicated bicycle lanes. He said he was also concerned about the welfare of the animals on very hot days.

"What I fear is that there is going to be a terrible accident before something is done about this problem," Cr Leppert said.

Carriage operators need a council street-trading permit because they accept money from customers approaching them on the street. However, Cr Leppert said the council could only act against them while they were stationary.

Speaking on unrelated matter at the council's Future Melbourne Committee meeting on October 14, the council's engineering services manager Geoff Robinson virtually admitted the council was powerless.

"We have a myriad of people out there taking photos of horse-drawn vehicles (doing the wrong thing), taking pictures of people crossing the roads at the wrong time, all of which is completely unenforceable," he said.

"You have to actually have an authorised officer right there at the time. The law will not allow us to go and do it remotely. And that's the inherent difficulty with it. We've got limited numbers."

"There are people with street-trading permits for things that move around the city, whether it be human-powered or horse-powered

or otherwise-powered who seem to make almost a sport of not complying with the conditions which have quite reasonably been applied," Mr Robinson said.

Mr Robinson told councillors that some operators did not have permits but there was little remedy available to the council.

"There are two operators out there now who are not trading with a permit. They operate on the premise of accepting booked fares, but when you stand there next to the operator with an alleged booked fare, money changes hands. It's just not the way it's meant to be," he said.

"It requires a constant level of reinforcement, gradual escalation. It reached a point a little while ago where we were really cross and we went out and issued a notice to comply and breach and then this cat and mouse game ensued to the point where we were able to issue a fine. We did it twice to the one operator who cried foul."

"What it did, was bring them back to the table for a quick meeting, but that's all."

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**CBD NEWS**

# If you can't stand the heat . . .

By Shane Scanlan

**As the mercury rises this month, it is no comfort for CBD residents, workers and visitors to learn that the temperature here can be four to seven degrees hotter than in the outer suburbs.**

Known as the "urban heat island effect", the masses of concrete, steel and bitumen in the central city draws and retains heat like no other place in the state.

Other inner city locations get as hot as the CBD on any given day. But our thermal mass dictates that the heat is retained for longer, meaning higher overnight minimum temperatures and increasingly-oppressive nights during heat waves.

According to City of Melbourne environment chair Arron Wood, the solution is multi-faceted, but can be summarised as "greening".

Deciduous trees, which drop their leaves to allow vital winter sun but provide a canopy in the summer, is the first line of defence. Greening walls, rooftops and facades comes next.

The heat island effect disadvantages the CBD over-and-above the effect of global warming and we are particularly vulnerable should our plane trees die from disease or in the next prolonged drought.

Contemporary council policy dictates that no more than 5 per cent of a single species be planted in a specific area. This is to protect against species-specific diseases which can wipe out every tree in a location.

But in the CBD, we have a mono-culture of plane trees ... and more plane trees.

Cr Wood said plane trees were susceptible to extreme heat and their leaves literally

burned off. The effect looks like an early autumn, except the leaves just die and don't necessarily drop.

"Without enough water, their leaves shrivel and die and this is only going to get worse with rising temperatures," Cr Wood said.

He said that, with a conservatively-predicted average rise in temperatures of two degrees by the end of century, Melbourne's climate would resemble current-day Mildura's.

So, keeping water up to the city's "urban forest" is a vital cog in a complex wheel of survival.

Water sensitive urban design (WSUD) is an engineering solution that results in the harvesting, storage and re-use of storm water.

Cr Wood explained that only 1 per cent of the 500 billion litres of rain that falls on the City of Melbourne each year was retained.

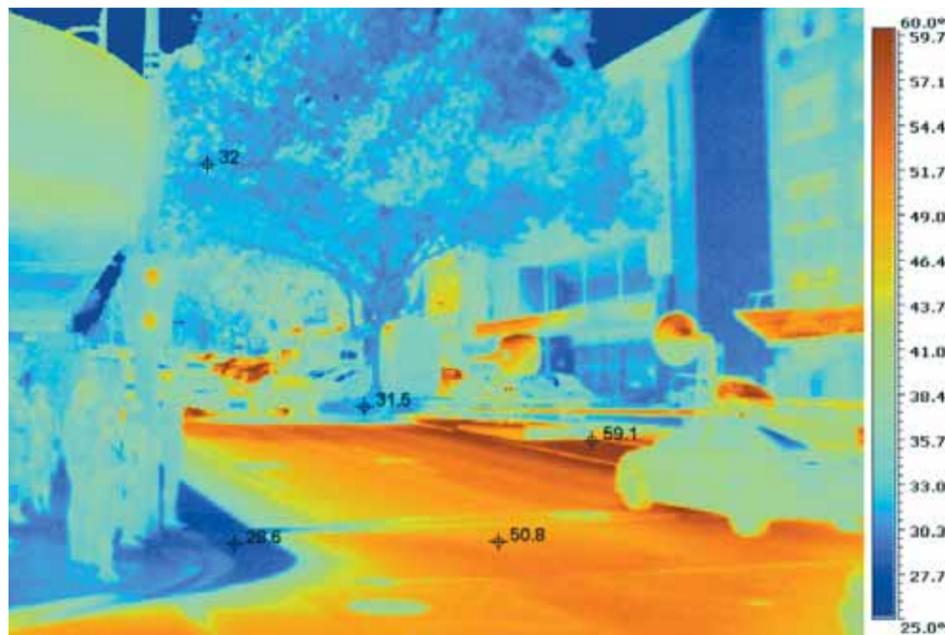
The council is becoming more technically competent in engineering options which nurture more trees throughout our long summer.

And there are plenty of hardcore reasons to embrace a "greening" agenda apart from simple aesthetics which, back in 1977, Victorian's celebrated with the slogan "Garden State" on motor vehicle number plates.

Cr Wood pointed out that heat stress kills more Victorians each year than the road toll. He said that, in the week leading up to the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009 (which claimed 170 lives), some 370 Melburnians died from heat stress.

He also said January 2014's five-day heat wave cost CBD retailers \$50 million in lost revenue because shoppers simply stayed away.

"And that's not to take into account construction industry losses where workers stay home when the temperature hits 35 degrees and disruption to schools,



A thermal image of the corner of Little Collins and Russell streets illustrates the benefits of shade trees in our city.

kindergartens and childcare centres," Cr Wood said.

"So, we've had heat waves of three, four or five days," he said. "But what happens when these events extend to two weeks or more?"

"We're heading for Mildura-type weather, where they get 10 or 12 days in a row of over 40 degree temperatures."

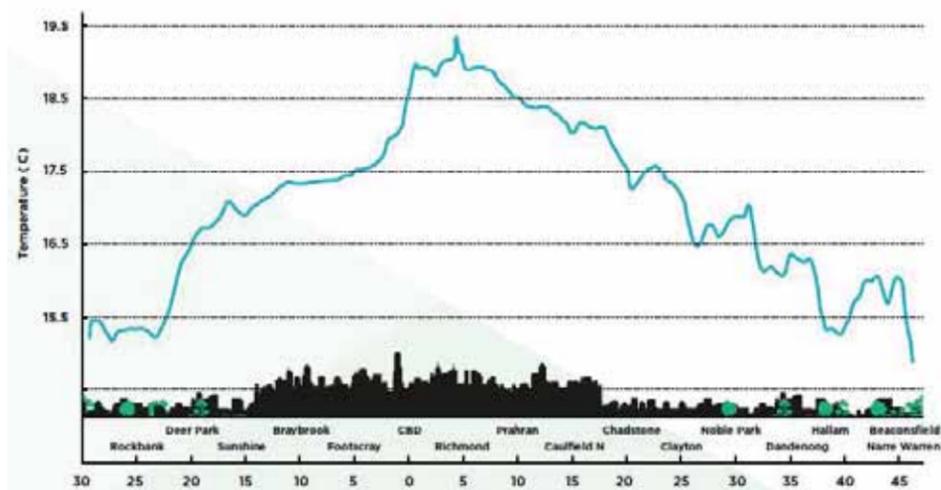
Cr Wood said the council had a series of intersecting policies to combat the effects of urban heat islands. These include social strategies, open space strategies, urban forest strategies and climate adaption strategies.

He said hard surfaces, such as footpaths and roads, needed to be permeable so precious rainwater could be retained in the underlying soil.

He also said the council intended to double the current city tree canopy by 2040 by planting 3000 new trees every year.

And he said Melburnians needed to get used to the reality that the city's iconic heritage trees were approaching the end of their natural lives.

"Some of our classic parks and gardens will be unrecognisable without the elms and oaks," he said.



Graphing showing the cooling effect of moving away from the central city.



Thermal mapping shows the CBD's hotspots.

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# Palace battle at VCAT

*The Save The Palace Theatre battle over the Bourke St building is going to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).*

The building's owner, Jinshan Investments, has already applied to VCAT to demolish the building. The City of Melbourne indicated it would take on the campaign and resist this.

At the Future Melbourne Committee on December 9, councillors voted 5-3 in favour of refusing to issue a permit to demolish the Palace Theatre and the subsequent construction of a hotel.

On December 23, the Save The Palace Committee, Melbourne Heritage Action and National Trust all lodged applications to be parties to the VCAT hearing.

Rebecca Leslie from the Save The Palace Committee shared with *CBD News*: "Mediation is listed for February 20 and the hearing scheduled to run for five days commencing March 30."

## STREET LIFE: February, 2015



Off Little Collins St - Tuesday, 10pm

## Creative pathway

Young people between 13 to 25 years engaged with professional artists as co-creators during Signal 37.

The summer art program was jam-packed with workshops, mentoring opportunities, conversations, exhibitions and performances.

The program offered budding artists the chance to work alongside professional artists, develop skills across a wide range of art forms and gain accreditation, opening pathways into the creative industries.



Getting down to business at Signal.

## Safety campaign for CBD residents

***CBD News is joining Residents 3000 in a campaign during 2015 to make city living more secure.***

To be known as City Safety 2015, the embryonic campaign will be wide ranging and, as much focusing on safety and security aspects of inner-city living, it will also be a celebration of the benefits of our special lifestyle.

Residents 3000 president John Dall'Amico said some residents living in apartment towers had a false sense of security.

"We love the security aspects of apartment living," Mr Dall'Amico said. "But if an intruder gains access, some of these very strengths can work against us."

"Because we often don't know all our neighbours in our buildings, a confident

intruder can often work for hours without being challenged."

"Some of us don't even lock our doors," he said.

Mr Dall'Amico said his group expected to work with Victoria Police to roll out a comprehensive security audit system specific to high-rise apartment living.

Covering nearly 100 security point, Residents 3000 wants to make contact with building owners' corporations to explore the level of interest in the program.

Mr Dall'Amico said the first stage of the campaign was to make contact with owners' corporations to develop a comprehensive list of contacts.

"Once we gauge the level of interest, we can plan our delivery stage of the campaign," Mr Dall'Amico said.

"It is likely we will be seeking funding for expert consults to work one-on-one with owners' corporation office bearers and

building managers to fully explore building security," he said.

Mr Dall'Amico said he was disappointed to miss out on a City of Melbourne community grant for the project but was confident other funding sources were available.

Each month, *CBD News* will be publishing a sample tip taken from the building security audit.

Mr Dall'Amico is asking CBD residents to encourage their OC to become part of the campaign.

"If your owners' corporation doesn't know about what we are doing, please bring it to their attention," he said.

Mr Dall'Amico can be contacted via email at [president@residents3000.com.au](mailto:president@residents3000.com.au). More information can be found at [www.residents3000.com.au](http://www.residents3000.com.au)

## Getting Married? Your will may become invalid

Speak to one of our expert solicitors to a complimentary FREE advice session  
Located in the CBD - "Your Lawyers, Your Partners" - [www.pearcewebster.com.au](http://www.pearcewebster.com.au)



L4 - 379 Collins St  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
T (03) 9614 5122  
F (03) 9614 2964

# Councillors compromise on housing strategy

*After more than eight years of talking about it, the City of Melbourne has a housing strategy but no one, it appears, is very happy with it.*

Councillors debated the strategy in December and settled on a compromise. The majority view was that any strategy was better than no strategy at all.

To the proponents of government intervention in the market, the compromise strategy does not go far enough. Opponents believe the strategy is flawed in other ways.

Cr Stephen Mayne proposed a compromise – to remove the most contentious matter, that of recommending the mandated inclusion of 15 per cent of “affordable housing” in private developments.

The council has committed itself, however, to a 15 per cent affordable housing component within future developments on its own land.

Despite being successful at council’s Future Melbourne Committee meeting of December 9, the strategy still has its critics.

Planning chair Cr Ken Ong and Lord Mayor Robert Doyle both opposed the adoption of the strategy, preferring instead a deferral until agreement was reached between the Commonwealth and the states on housing funding.

“We are getting ahead of ourselves here. This will overpromise and under deliver,” Cr Doyle said.

“The end point is a very worthy one, but you have to understand where we sit in the scheme of things,” he said.

“How can you have targets for affordable housing being expressed in percentage terms until you know what the underpinning

funding might be from the Commonwealth or the state?”

Cr Ong said it was unacceptable for such an important document to be a compromise.

“We should defer it and get it right,” he said.

Cr Ong later said he would ask to have his photo removed from the “welcome” page of the draft document.

Earlier Housing Industry Association assistant director Mike Hermon told councillors the measures proposed within the strategy to increase housing affordability were “largely flawed” and would not solve the issue.

“Affordable housing mixes cannot be manufactured by governments and planning policies,” he said.

Mr Hermon also said mandated standards would make housing more expensive.

This view was not shared by planning academic Prof Roz Hansen, who urged councillors to “bite the bullet” and recommend inclusionary zoning (for affordable housing) for future developments.

“Supply alone will not solve the problem,” she said.

Cr Mayne said it was clear that a strategy which included inclusionary zoning would not be supported by the council.

Removing the contentious item was a “sensible middle ground”, he said.

Seconding Cr Mayne’s motion, Cr Richard Foster said that, while technically a compromise, the amended strategy was still ambitious.

He pointed to overseas examples where local government involvement in social housing was “booming”.

Greens councillors Rohan Leppert and Cathy Oke both said they were disappointed that inclusionary zoning had been removed from the strategy but it was important that the council had a strategy.



## Assault at karaoke bar

*Melbourne North Crime Investigation Unit detectives are investigating a serious assault that left two people injured at a karaoke bar in the CBD last month.*

It is believed the male and female victims were drinking with a group of people at the licensed premises on Elizabeth St around 1am on January 11.

The 25-year-old male victim was attacked by the males in the group and was punched and kicked until he was unconscious on the floor.

The man’s 23-year-old girlfriend came to his aid and was also assaulted by the

group of men and thrown to the floor by her hair as she was trying to defend herself.

Detectives have released images and CCTV of the incident in the hope someone may recognise the men and women in the footage.

Anyone with any information is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000** or submit a confidential crime report at [www.crimestoppersvic.com.au](http://www.crimestoppersvic.com.au)



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Further information [www.goddesswellnesscentre.com](http://www.goddesswellnesscentre.com)



# LATIN FLAVOURS, AUSSIE KITCHEN

HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT A MEXICAN WAVE IS ENGULFING THE FOOD SCENE IN THE CITY? FROM TAKEAWAY MEALS IN A BOX TO A THREE-COURSE MENU WITH PAIRED TEQUILA, THE LATIN AMERICAN CUISINE IS GAINING IN POPULARITY.

Boasting of one of the largest cultural ranges, chefs are experimenting with the ancient and modern culinary techniques. With bold new flavours, cooking techniques and sophistication, these restaurants are offering an exciting journey into a new world of food discovery.

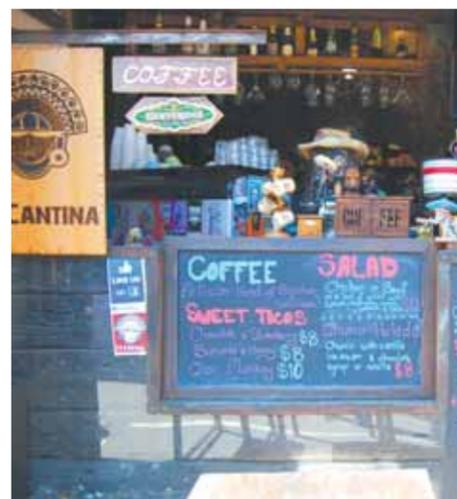
At Mamasita, the tacos and tostadas are offered with authentic flavours that people would have experienced on their last visit to Mexico. Also, with the ever-growing interest in the fascinating world of quality tequila, Mamasita offers only the best aspects of a modern taqueria, while showcasing the enormous variety of tequila on the market.

A modern Peruvian grill, cevicheria and pisco bar taking you on exciting journey of discovery through the coast, Andes and the jungle of Peru's beautiful food and culture is Pastuso. Pastuso, takes its name from Paddington Bear who was originally an orphan bear from Lima before he was sent to England.

Then at La Chinesca, the menu offers a sampling of Peruchos Criollos - the fusion of the influences from the last 500 years of Spanish, Japanese, African, Italian and

Peruvian cuisines from the coast of Peru, and dishes from Los Antichucos or Peruvian charcoal grill.

But if you are after something casual and fun, there is no better place than La Cantina. The authentic tapas bar serves excellent Spanish fare for breakfast and lunch, plus delicious churros dripping in chocolate served any time. La Cantina also offers a licensed bar and outdoor seating.



**La Chinesca**  
Basement, 71 Collins St

**Vamos**  
1st Floor 37 Little Bourke St

**Mamasita**  
Level 1, 11 Collins St

**San Telmo**  
14 Meyers Place

**Pastuso**  
ACDC Lane

**La Cantina**  
Shop 24, shed F, Queen Victoria Market

**Fonda Mexican**  
31 Flinders Lane

**Amigos**  
75 Hardware Lane

**Taco Bill Mexican Restaurant**  
142 Russell St

**Mad Mex**  
35 Elizabeth St, Melbourne Central and Southern Cross station

**Guzman y Gomez**  
289-299, Swanston St

## HIGHLIGHTS



### MAIL EXCHANGE

Open seven days for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

688 Bourke St  
9903 6880  
www.mailexchangehotel.com.au  
info@mailexchangehotel.com.au



### BROOCHES AT ERIKA

Looking for a Valentines Day gift that lasts longer than a bunch of flowers. How about a crystal Brooch from Erika? Prices from \$20.

437 Little Collins St  
9642 5911 or online @  
www.erikaboutique.com.au



### LUNCHBOX TOURS

Get moving with the Squeaky Wheel - learn to safely navigate CBD bike lanes and pick up a free healthy lunchbox along the way.

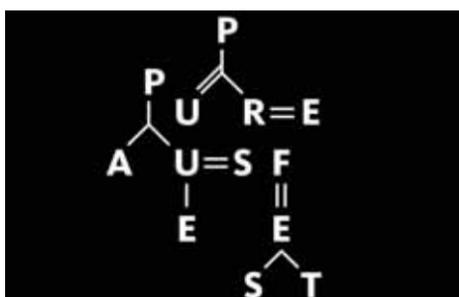
Departing and returning to City Square  
February, 10, 17 and 24  
12.30pm-1.15pm



### LINK FESTIVAL

Listen to emerging social innovators and design and technology professionals explore the nexus of technology and social change.

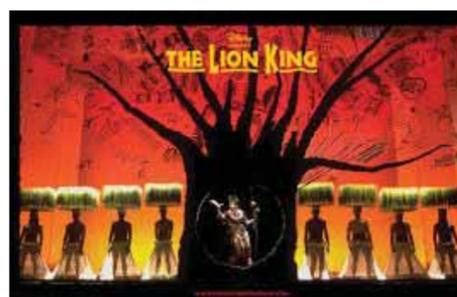
Deakin Edge, Federation Square  
February 16-17, 9329 1166  
info@linkfestival.com.au , free event



### PAUSE FEST 2015

The digital festival supports and showcases the best in creative and tech from Australia and all over the world.

Federation Square  
February 9-15; 10am-11.30pm  
info@pausefest.com.au



### THE LION KING

Set against the majesty of the Serengeti plains, the production explodes with glorious colours and stunning effects.

Regent Theatre, 191-197 Collins St  
February 20 - May 10, multiple shows  
lionking.com.au



# VALENTINES DAY AND THE CITY

- a single fella's guide

By Perrin Brown

FOR A SINGLE FELLA IN MELBOURNE, THE WORLD CAN SEEM LIKE A JOYLESS, LONELY, DESOLATE PLACE, ESPECIALLY ON THAT DREADED DAY IN FEBRUARY – VALENTINE'S DAY.

So while all your loved-up mates are out on dates, don't do what you did last year (you can deny it all you like, but we all know you purchased a cheap bottle of wine and sat at home crying while listening to "Love Song Dedications" on the radio). Instead, get out and enjoy the single life. Here's my top five list:

1. With Australian Bureau of Statistics data revealing that the CBD has the second highest number of single women in Victoria, fellas, why not try speed dating! It's fun, and could lead to you finding Miss Right. For those aged 35 and over, Longroom in Collins St has

a special Valentine's Day event, Love Bites. Cost: \$25. Bookings essential: [www.fastimpressions.com.au](http://www.fastimpressions.com.au).

2. If you want to do dinner, many restaurants are hosting "Anti-Valentine's Dinners". Touché Hombre (233 Lonsdale St) is one of them. So get your single friends (you must have at least one!) together for a non-romantic dinner.
3. Hit a bar. Any bar. If partying seems a good idea, hit the nearest bar and drink the evening away. My suggestion: something classy and sophisticated (like the fella you are) Whisky and Alement (270 Russell St).
4. Even the traditional movie date is making it worthwhile to be single, with Hoyts at Melbourne Central offering half-price \$10 movie tickets for singles.
5. And of course there is always sport. Drown your singledom with a pint or two and watch the Aussies take on England in the opening clash of the ICC Cricket World Cup. My suggestion is The Duke of Wellington (146 Flinders St) with their burger and Little Creatures beer deal for \$25.



Get out and enjoy the single life

## HIGHLIGHTS



### SOCIAL MEET-UP

Make new friends, learn more about the best and liveliest social activities in Melbourne and start enjoying a great social life.

**The Apartment, 401 Ltl Bourke St**  
January 29, 6.30pm - 9pm  
9111 0121; [info@funff.com.au](mailto:info@funff.com.au)



### DEGUSTATION WALK

Take this gastronomic tour of Melbourne's best-hidden restaurants. You'll visit three unique venues, with wine tastings and delicious bites to match.

**City Square, 44 Swanston Street**  
9663 3358  
[tours@hiddensecretstours.com](mailto:tours@hiddensecretstours.com)



### ALL ABOUT GENES

Hear global genomics expert Professor Michael Snyder and get the latest on the work around personalised medicine.

**Federation Square**  
February 18; 6pm - 7.30pm, 9658 9965,  
[conversations@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:conversations@melbourne.vic.gov.au)



### AFFLUENZA

Catch the late-night riches-to-rags synth-pop cabaret as part of the Midsumma Festival.

**The Butterfly Club**  
5 Carson Place (off Little Collins St)  
[www.midsumma.org.au](http://www.midsumma.org.au)



### AUTISM WORKSHOP

Designed to assist those who work with or support a person with an ASD to learn how they experience the world differently.

**Melbourne Grand Mercure**  
195 Swanston St, February 9  
(07) 5530 5099, [info@fabic.com.au](mailto:info@fabic.com.au)



### DEBATE ON 2020

As part of its fifth birthday celebrations, the Wheeler Centre presents a unique headline debate with two sides and just one team.

**Athenaeum Theatre, 188 Collins St**  
February 9, 7.30pm - 9pm  
9094 7800, [www.wheelercentre.com](http://www.wheelercentre.com)



# CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF THE GOAT

By Andrew Clugston and Anuj Jain

WHILE MANY OF US ARE GETTING BACK INTO THE SWING OF THINGS AFTER SEEING IN THE NEW YEAR, MANY MELBOURNE LOCALS ARE JUST GETTING PREPARED FOR THEIR CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS.

On February 19, the Year of the Goat charges in with an array of food, fireworks and dragon dances, kicking off two weeks of festivities across the CBD.

Between February 19 and March 1, the CBD will be transformed into a cultural exchange experience and Chinatown is just the beginning. While many families look forward to reuniting in their homes, Chinatown will be a central spot for celebratory New Year's Eve dinners, firecrackers and lion dances to welcome in a peaceful and prosperous year.

A hawker-style market will be set up on

February 20 offering a wide culinary experience. Keep a look out for some traditional dishes such as Yu Sheng (noodles tossed for good luck) and Nian Gao (New Year Cake).

Queen Victoria Market will host one of the traditional Lunar New Year celebrations, the Dragon Dance, on February 21 and 25, along with drummers and firecrackers to bring in good fortune and fend off evil spirits.

Federation Square's main attraction will be the Electric Dragon from February 26 to March 1.

The interactive performance uses original animation, motion graphics technology and shadow puppetry to tell the story of the dragon Fang. The public will also be invited to make their own dragons by selecting silhouetted images of animal parts and matching sounds.

If you are looking for a more unique cultural event, Hamer Hall in the Arts Centre Melbourne will be hosting the MSO's annual Chinese New Year concert on the February 28, which will be showcasing a series of great works including the Melbourne premier of Nu Shu: The Secret Songs of Women by Oscar and Grammy Award-winning Chinese composer and conductor Tan Dun.

The Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) currently has a rich program of



exhibitions, talks, films and workshops exploring the Chinese culture. On the other end of the CBD, Docklands will kick things off with the awakening of their impressive 100-metre long illuminated Docklands Dragon, floating lanterns, dragon boats, fire twirlers and dance demonstrations.

Chinese New Year is primarily a time to spend with family and friends, and it is important for local businesses to be aware of the cultural significance and its impact. With only a few weeks left, now is a good time to start planning ahead and here are a few tips:

1. Forecast and budget in advance to minimise any possible disruption on

your production needs and/or exports. Ensure you are conscious of the plans of your supplier/s and schedule your orders accordingly;

2. Leading up to the New Year is a great opportunity to network as many businesses will aim to improve their international relations through events and functions; and

3. Acknowledge the New Year with your Chinese affiliations. A simple red and gold greeting card with a personal message will go a long way. If you are visiting your Chinese business partners, bring some traditional gifts such as mandarins and other sweets.

Gong Xi Fa Cai and Happy New Year.

## HIGHLIGHTS



### WHITE NIGHT

The 2015 event is bigger than ever, the cultural festival will see increased activity on the Yarra River, Alexandra Gardens and Melbourne Museum.

February 21-22; 7pm - 7am  
[www.whitenightmelbourne.com.au](http://www.whitenightmelbourne.com.au)



### SEALIFE

Journey below the decks of an abandoned sunken shipwreck and encounter some of the ocean's most venomous animals.

Cnr King and Flinders streets, 9923 5925  
[www.melbourneaquarium.com.au](http://www.melbourneaquarium.com.au)



### FOOD FESTIVAL

Go on a global cultural journey to Brazil, with a cooking demo, tapas and a shared dining experience with new friends.

536 Little Lonsdale St  
February 21, 6pm-8pm  
[www.foodsocial.com.au](http://www.foodsocial.com.au)



### SLIDESTREET

Get on the 315 metres of adrenalin pumping slip-sliding fun. To put that into perspective, that's as long as 2 x AFL ovals end to end!

Lansdowne St  
February 15 and March 9  
[www.slidestreet.com.au](http://www.slidestreet.com.au)



### BAR TOUR

Join award winning cocktail expert Sebastian Raeburn on a tour exploring the very best bars in the city.

Meet on corner of Spring & Bourke sts  
31 January and 21 February, 4pm - 8pm  
Group size max 12 guests, 1800 801 838



### MARRIAGE ACT

An exhibition of wedding rings for all types of marriages.

Carlow House, Level 4, 289 Flinders Ln  
Until February 14, Saturdays: 12pm - 4pm

# The calm before the storm

A new Labor government and new planning minister recovering from a heart attack have temporarily put the brakes on Melbourne's apartment construction boom.

It has been estimated there are as many as 80 planning permits sitting on Richard Wynne's desk but he isn't likely to come back to work until February.

The popular former Melbourne Lord Mayor is expected to be a little less gung-ho about planning than former minister (and now Opposition Leader) Matthew Guy and show a little more sympathy to the CBD fabric, given his strong background in housing and social issues.

Mr Guy's lasting legacy, apart from transforming the city with a laissez-faire approach to design and supply, was to ensure that there are some minimum standards for apartments such as no borrowed light for bedrooms in all new developments.

Right now, the market is spinning its wheels with few new launches before mid-2015 and only existing stock to sustain the continued demand for apartments.

Leading apartment sales and management

agent Malcolm Dingle of Dingle Partners said sales of existing apartments in the CBD over the Christmas break was at least as strong at the same period in 2013-2014 with strong demand in the \$500,000-\$800,000 range, with a focus on two bedrooms.

"Existing apartments tend to be larger than the newer apartments and price difference is more than offset by the stamp duty savings claimed by the new stock," Mr Dingle said.

The Dingle rental business has 3000 apartments with a vacancy rate of just 2 per cent.

"The main tenancy market in the CBD is the under 30s with a strong representation of single women setting up home in a secure environment," he said.

If you are thinking about a 2015 move into the city, make it quick.

Mr Dingle said the student rush would begin in February/March and would place even more pressure on existing rental opportunities.

"Rentals are holding firm although you might get a small discount from a landlord keen to get a quick lease in place," he said.

Colliers residential managing director Tim Storey said the new apartment market saw 5000-6000 apartments sold in the CBD/Docklands in 2014 to a range of investors and a growing number of owner-occupiers, compared to an annual requirement of "3000-4000".

Mr Storey sees the supply blip in the market as frustrating demand fuelled by strong population growth, particularly migration from Asia, that actively seeks out apartments as their preferred lifestyle choice.

"My motto is build it and they come," he said citing the Aurora tower in LaTrobe St as a great example of how a well-designed, well-located apartment tower can sell 941 apartments in six weeks at an average price of \$700,000.

Mr Storey is confident the market will sustain its growth and says escalating prices in the

CBD, that have seen the average apartment price at \$525,000 (two bedroom apartment source: December 29, 2014 realestate.com.au), was sustained by higher quality buildings.

He said rising land and construction prices were being offset by improved architecture and amenities.

"Comparing a 2014 apartment with an established apartment from 2000 is like comparing an old Holden with a new Holden," he said.

He also believes apartments stopped decreasing in size in 2014 and that the market is sustained by local buyers scoffing at the "off-shore" investor myth.



**Grant Müller**

Grant has been reporting on the property market for more years than he would care to admit.

# What's on at the Wonderland Spiegelent

WONDERLAND  
*Spiegelent*  
HARBOUR TOWN  
DOCKLANDS

**Renee Geyer**  
SATURDAY  
14 FEBRUARY  
8:30PM

**EUROGLIDERS**  
SATURDAY  
7 MARCH

**THE CHANTOOZIES**  
SATURDAY  
21 MARCH  
8:30PM

**MARTY PUTZ**  
Putzin Around  
APRIL SCHOOL HOLIDAYS  
MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL  
COMEDYFESTIVAL.COM.AU

**LEHMO**  
**CHRIS FRANKLIN**

WONDERLAND  
*Spiegelent*  
Presents

**WONDERLAND CARNIVALE**

WONDERLAND SPIEGELTENT HARBOUR TOWN DOCKLANDS  
Bookings [www.wonderlandspiegelent.com.au](http://www.wonderlandspiegelent.com.au)



## FASHION ON THE STREETS



### Lucy Hannemann Events

**LOCATION:** Little Collins St.

**WHAT ARE YOU WEARING:** My outfit is feminine, classic and timeless.

**WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE CITY:** Shopping with my sister for her engagement party dress.

**WHERE ARE YOU FROM:** East Brunswick.

**FAVOURITE CLOTHING ITEM:** Shoes.

**WHAT MAKES A GOOD OUTFIT:** If your outfit fits your body then it's always good. It's also good to dress for your shape not just what's in fashion.

**TRENDING NOW:** 1950s-style three-quarter length skirts and sleeveless shirts.



### Rafi Shiek Entrepreneur

**LOCATION:** Bourke St Mall.

**WHAT ARE YOU WEARING:** Bulgari sunglasses, Paul Smith loafers, local designer Flinders Lane shirt, David Jones pants, Diesel cardigan and a Longines watch.

**WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE CITY:** My business, AussiePops.

**WHERE ARE YOU FROM:** India.

**FAVOURITE CLOTHING ITEM:** That's a hard question. I think from top to bottom I want to look good, but a nice haircut and pair of shoes helps.

**WHAT MAKES A GOOD OUTFIT:** Colours.

**TRENDING NOW:** Just to follow the fashions.



### Seb Mont Musician

**LOCATION:** Bourke St Mall.

**WHAT ARE YOU WEARING:** My outfit is very indie and most of it is either from the op shop or garage sales. I'm wearing a tiger t-shirt from the St Kilda Salvos, vintage Ralph Lauren boat shoes and my sunnies are Ray-Ban.

**WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE CITY:** Busking.

**WHERE ARE YOU FROM:** St Kilda.

**FAVOURITE CLOTHING ITEM:** My black wide-brimmed hat.

**WHAT MAKES A GOOD OUTFIT:** Colour co-ordination and blending. It's also important to dress to your shape. I'm skinny so I embrace it because it's important to embrace who you are.

**TRENDING NOW:** I don't dress to trend but I'm aware of it. I think the long and layered look is pretty on trend right now.

## Fashion

# Caring for your clothes

By Laura Timberlake

Maintaining a wardrobe can be hard work.

What do you do when a favourite jumper gets too pilled, or the ironing pile has reached the ceiling? There are simple ways to clear the clutter and care for your clothing.

The first step is to evaluate your wardrobe. Do you really need 15 old t-shirts that have been relegated to the "painting clothes" draw? That's not to say that recycling isn't a good thing. For example, an old linen shirt makes an excellent window and mirror buffer.

But maximising the space in your closet allows the clothes you do wear to breathe properly. Rule of thumb: if it hasn't been worn for six months to a year, donate or sell it!

Many people find that rotating their clothes by season creates a streamlined wardrobe (this means storing your summer clothes in another spot during the winter months and vice versa). It also makes it easier to quickly pick an outfit.

There are some common mistakes made when storing clothes. For example, don't hang knits. It causes them to lose their shape. Also, those wire hangers from the dry cleaners are a no-no. Invest in good quality hangers that will help your garments stay in pristine shape.

Caring for the clothing itself is another matter. There are two items I can't live without: a clothes steamer and a fabric shaver (or fabric pill remover). I tend to wear my favourite knits over and over and, in time, they start to get pilled - this refers to those little balls that appear on knitwear items after they've been through the washing machine.

An electric fabric pill remover shaves those right off for you! Lint rollers are also handy little devices to own. (They are especially helpful in removing cat/dog hair before leaving the house.)

The second necessity is a clothes steamer. This is a marvellous invention for everyone who hates ironing and has the space for one. A steamer can cut dry cleaning costs and help keep your clothes wrinkle-free.

Other simple items to consider include a basic sewing kit and baby wipes. We can't always rely on mum to sew on buttons and baby wipes are a great way to do simple spot cleans.



**Laura Timberlake**

Laura is a fashion and lifestyle writer who enjoys hunting down the latest trends in Melbourne to share them with the world.

## Councillor Profile

# Ken and the art of political independence

By Shane Scanlan

Cr Ken Ong is very much his own man.

He's a supremely self-confident and forthright maverick with a big, bass voice and an even bigger presence.

Unaligned with any other councillors, the self-made-man does things his own way and would prefer not to care what his colleagues think of him.

But reality dictates that he needs majority support for his views – which is clearly a frustration for the Malaysian-born entrepreneur.

Now half-way through his second four-year term as a City of Melbourne councillor, Cr Ong says this time around has been tougher.

"We have developed along certain lines," he said. "There seems to be factions forming."

"I don't know whether this is because of how the election turned out with five for Team Doyle, effectively four from the left, myself – a Liberal but sitting in the middle – and then there's Stephen Mayne who loves to play his politics."

"So you end up with: the governing faction, the opposition faction and the balance of power. On one side you have a strong personality in the Lord Mayor and, on the other side, people whose sole objective is to fight the Lord Mayor. I can't understand that."

"For me, this has been difficult because this is not what I signed up for – spending half the time playing politics – and politics associated with certain egos," he said.

Cr Ong would prefer all councillors to vote on the merits of each argument and says party political affiliations should be left at the town hall door.

"I came into council with the mindset that this was just an extension of my community work. It's not a political thing. If you want it to be political, you should go to either the state or federal level," he said.

Interestingly, he says he was offered the Liberal candidacy for the safe lower house seat of Mt Waverly in the lead up to the 2010 election but chose to finish what he started at a Melbourne councillor.

But it's hard to see how he would tolerate toeing the party line as a parliamentary back-bencher. He says blind adherence to ideology is the cause of many of the world's problems.

"Here (at council) I am clear in my conscience that when I vote it is because I believe it is the right way to go – and not along party lines," he said.

"I have a clear view of what I want to achieve and I also have a clear conscience that I am not selling my soul. Maybe I'm not meant to be a party-political person."

Cr Ong says he'll remain a councillor for as long as he had goals to achieve. He would consider attempting to become deputy lord mayor in the future.

He says his involvement in council is an extension of his vast community and charitable involvements. He is particularly active within the Chinese community.

"I can always put my time into the philanthropic sector as well," he said. "Being a councillor is not the be-all and end-all. If I find there are one or two key areas that I want to do, I might come back and focus on those."

"I don't want to be here as a councillor just because it's great to be a councillor with a nice title and all that stuff," he said.

Cr Ong says he started developing self-confidence and leadership skills as a youth.

The ninth-born of a family of 13 children, he faced particular challenges after his father died when he was only 10-years-old.

"There is an ethic in my family that we have to work hard," he said.



In Cr Ong's case, hard work resulted in being selected for Malaysia's premier public school, the Victoria Institution in Kuala Lumpur.

He didn't become school captain, despite being destined for the position. Instead, he took the decision at the end of year 11, to travel to Australia for his final year of schooling.

"I said to my mum: 'give me an air ticket and enough money for a couple of months' rent and I will find my own way,'" he said.

Cr Ong found private board near Caulfield High School (now Glen Eira College) and worked in restaurants and factories to fund his completion of high school as well as a double engineering degree in computer and electrical systems at Monash University.

He spend a brief period back in Malaysia upon graduating in 1983 before returning, marrying and starting a 19-year career in various roles with Ericsson.

He moved from technical to business development roles within the company following completion of a part-time MBA in 1993.

In 2002 he left the electronics giant and concentrated on his own business interests – in childcare centres.

Now independently well-off, Cr Ong chooses to serve the community via his council and charitable involvements.

He attributes his abundant self-confidence to achievements as well as a capacity and interest in ongoing learning.

"About three or four years after my dad passed away I joined the army cadets (becoming drum major and warrant officer) and that helped a lot in terms of self-discipline and focus," he said.

"Then I got involved in the Red Cross, the Scouts, played a lot of sports and built up confidence and leadership skills."

And his also apparent high level of energy and commitment?

"It's more determination than energy," he laughed. "Determination overcomes fatigue."



**In next month's Councillor Profile we look at:**  
Cr Jackie Watts

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## Architecture

The premise for this new column is to review recent architecture projects within the 3000-postcode precinct.



*The stunning atrium at 171 Collins St ... a fine example of corporate interior architecture (Photo Bates Smart).*

# Where has all the good architecture gone?



**Antony Di Mase** is a practising architect at Di Mase Architects. He is currently completing a masters of lighting design at QUT with a focus on daylight design in the built environment. 9482 5144, [antony@dimasearchitects.com.au](mailto:antony@dimasearchitects.com.au)

There is one problem – there have been few good pieces of architecture built here in the past five years. This is a shame as the Central Activity Centre has been the heartbeat of Melbourne architecture.

For generations Melbourne has re-defined itself from gold rush extravagances to mid-century elegances to a thoroughly modern city that balances between old and new. Not so long ago, Melbourne saw projects like Federation Square, Monaco House, Melbourne's council offices, the Urban Workshop, the Federal Law Courts and Melbourne Terrace as well as other exemplary projects redefined architecture in Melbourne.

These projects give something back to our city. They are generous. These buildings blur the public and private domain, so that the experience of the city is continuous and unfolding.

I did not realise it at the time, however the 1990s and early 2000s were a time of vitality and excellence in their architecture. Public and private projects were more innovative, and yet were built on the tradition of Melbourne's civic and cultural values.

Nowadays, real estate signage shouts "iconic" – yet there is sameness to it all – concrete, glass and tall buildings that give little to the public domain.

The new atrium at 171 Collins St is an exception. This fine example of corporate interior architecture plays with daylight,

glass and stone. It is an elegant reminder of our modernist tradition in city office foyers. Innovation is also occurring on narrow sites and the new Phoenix apartments in Flinders St and at the architects' headquarters on Exhibition St.

So what is happening? What role does property values play? Have project managers "value-managed" design innovation out of architecture?

Is the planning system too constraining? Does the planning minister have too much power? Does the Victorian Government Architect playing a meaningful role?

Good architecture is a collective responsibility and architecture has a role to play in defining the city and place we want. Whatever the reasons for the dearth of good architecture in Melbourne's Central Activity District – it is a failure.

It is a failure of the planning system to integrate good design into its performance measures and there is a failure by developers to invest in innovation.

Every new project has the opportunity to do one of two things – either give or take something away. The Post Office steps, for instance, gives a place for people to sit and enjoy the sunshine, whereas a shiny, glass high-rise tower takes away valuable sunlight away from the street or park below. In recent times we are seeing too many buildings contribute little to the city – relying on what took generations to make.

Architecture in the city says a great deal of our aspirations as a people. It helps define who we are and who we seek to be.

Perhaps the election of the new State Government provides an opportunity to redress this situation. As the new Planning Minister, Richard Wynne should hand responsibility solely to the Melbourne City Council to administer urban planning matters in a socially-inclusive way.

We need to whole-heartedly invest in architects, landscape architects, lighting designers and interior designers over project managers and developers to design our city buildings for people and a sustainable future.

Let's discuss homelessness, affordability and sustainability in relation to our city. We need to envisage a city with ideas of scale, form and mass and a rich exploration of architecture.

Call me naïve, but just as quickly as people are drawn to our wonderful city, they can be turned away when it becomes expensive, cold, windy and just plain bland. Let's not let this happen.

Street Art

# Desirable!

Will Coles maintains that he can tell whether the would-be thief of his sculpture is left or right handed!



So sort after is his work, that glue is not a deterrent to some street art connoisseurs! He is the most stolen (successful or otherwise) artist in the country!

This has forced Will to change the composition of the concrete used in the casting of his sculptures but, sadly, his work still suffers a lot of damage.

Originally from Suffolk, Will settled in Sydney in 1996. The grandson of a professional sculptor, he studied at the Glasgow and Wimbledon schools of art in the UK.

In 2007, motivated by an unsuccessful entry in the Sydney by the Sea Sculpture Prize, Will placed his TV sets along the foreshore anyway. It was some time before it was discovered that they weren't actually in the competition! And thus began Will's career as a street artist!

A favourite spot for this prolific artist was at the base of the now-demolished, Sydney monorail. Unfortunately, these pieces were to become a repository for chewing gum and cigarette butts!

Bodacious placement is Will's stock-in-trade. For example, his sculpture Photographed was glued in place during a busy lunch-time on Elizabeth St.

He is also one of the all-too-few street artists whose work is other than decorative. Most of his sculptures have a political or social comment behind them.

A frequent visitor to Melbourne, sometimes in conjunction with an exhibition, Will generously bestows his whimsical work on CBD streets and lanes and a trip down them will reveal many of his pieces.

You may chance upon a pigeon or a balaclava head, some fries and a hamburger or a very well endowed teddy bear!

Suburbs for a bit more Will Coles spotting are Fitzroy, East Brunswick, Collingwood and Windsor.

Will, it should be noted, is an entrant in this year's McClelland Sculpture Awards at McClelland Sculpture Park and Gallery, Langwarrin.



**Lorraine Ellis**  
If you are interested in Melbourne street art there is more on my Facebook page, **StreetsmART**

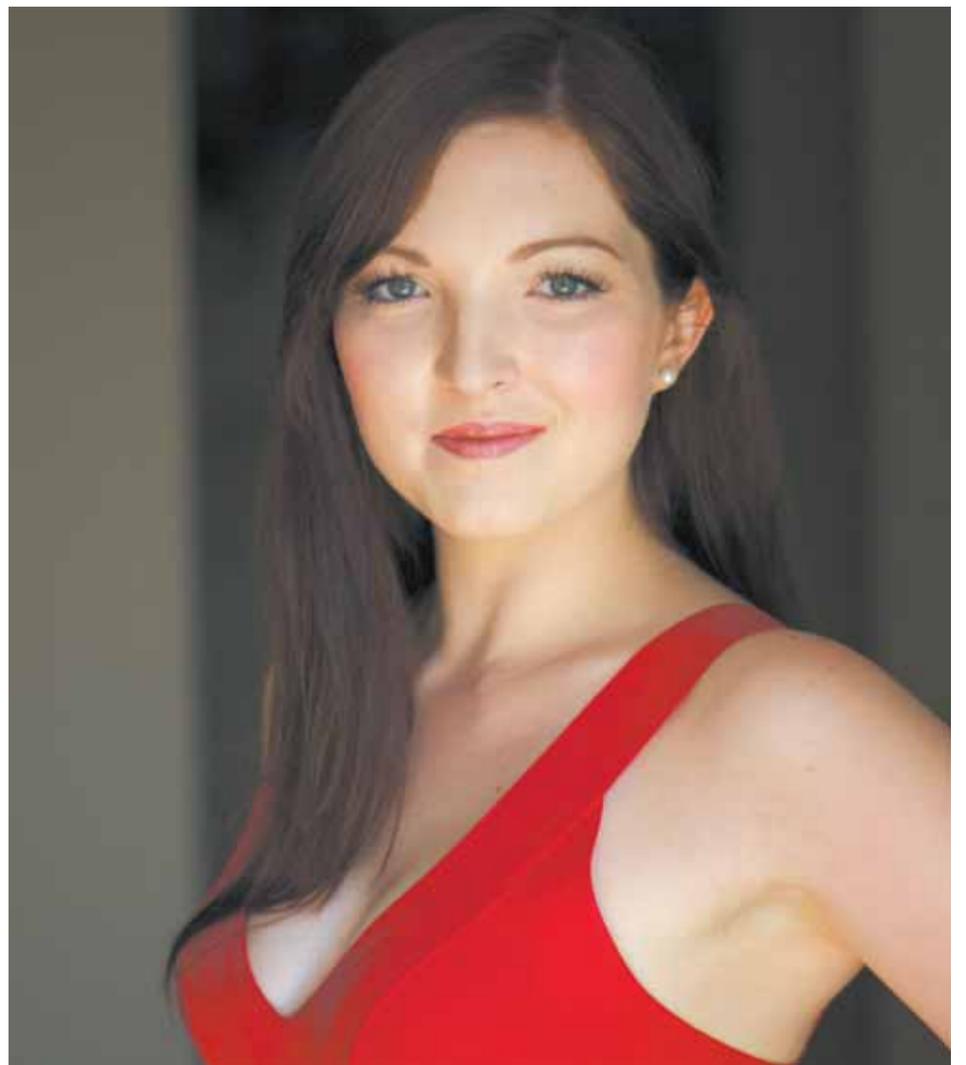


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CBD Local



# The magic of the stage

At just 26-years of age, CBD resident Jayde Krichet exhibits the confidence and the wisdom of a seasoned stage director.

In the middle of rehearsals for her latest direction, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde, Jayde is at ease encouraging, nudging and guiding the actors to get the required results.

Trained at the Victorian College of the Arts, completing a Bachelor of Music Theatre in 2011, Jayde took up directing more recently while she continues to act when an opportunity comes up.

Directing is as much about spotting the right projects as anything else and, if *The Importance of Being Earnest* is anything to go by, then Jayde has a sharp eye.

"It is important for a young director to be working with good writing. It means I can hone my skills and if something is going wrong, at least you know it's not the text," she said when asked why she chose Wilde's "serious comedy for trivial people".

"I enjoy the process of writing/directing as it allows me to explore ideas in a way that is much deeper. It is about creation and exploration," she said.

The rehearsal process brings out the best in her, she claimed. "This is the toughest part, but it's the most fun as it is where it all happens - where words come alive."

Jayde elaborated on her penchant for using non-traditional spaces as a set. Her first play as a director was set in a chapel, the next was in a bookstore and the latest in Como House.

"I like to find places that serve a text and that

does not have to be necessarily in a theatre," she said.

While her practice is grounded in performance, she also likes to include music in her work.

"Even if the play has no music, I like to get a composer to work on a musical score, to create an underscore that links the scene, just to add an extra layer to the world the actors are in," she said.

Theatre has been successfully fighting off all of its many apparent usurpers - television, movies, Internet, etc.

Jayde commented: "Theatre is analog - it's live. If something goes wrong, you deal with it, and soldier on. People enjoy that unpredictability. There is no pause or rewind here."

"You don't get the same experience online like you do in the flesh. Seeing someone living and breathing - putting their heart on the line - it doesn't get more interesting than that," she added.

She loves living in the CBD.

"It seems like everybody is in the city now. I never go to the shopping centres on the weekend. It's mayhem in there with shoppers from everywhere," she said.



**CBD Local**  
If you know someone who you think is a CBD Local let us know, [news@cbdnews.com.au](mailto:news@cbdnews.com.au)

# Waiting to learn new rules



**Alastair Taylor**  
Is a director of Urban Melbourne -  
[www.urbanmelbourne.info](http://www.urbanmelbourne.info)

It's a new year, we have a new state government, an updated project database and potentially a new planning approval regime for the Capital City Zone which encompasses the CBD, Southbank, Docklands and Fishermans Bend.

With the election of the Andrew's Government at the end of November last year it's understandable that there has not been much seen, said or done in relation to new development in the CBD.

In news reported on *The Mandarin*, the new government is doing what most new governments do and restructuring the bureaucracy and it has been reported that planning will be morphed into a new Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

If you take the name of the new department on face value, one might notice that one other key land-use portfolio has been omitted: Transport; it will now reside in a new Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

## Approvals

Tucked at the back end of an ABC TV report on January 15, the Acting Premier, James Merlino, foreshadowed changes on the horizon for Capital City Zone planning approvals.

There was no supplementary question and details remain sketchy as this stage, however the Mr Merlino alluded to the City of Melbourne and the Office of Victorian Government Architect playing a greater role.

Under the current regime, the City of Melbourne is consulted and invited to comment on applications which are lodged when the Minister of Planning and his/her department are deemed to be the responsible authority, however the ultimate authority still rests with the planning minister.

There are many in the industry - including us at Urban Melbourne - who would undoubtedly be keen to see the detail of the foreshadowed changes. No doubt, there would also be many developers who still have a planning application before the Spring St planning department who will be wondering if the changes to the approvals process will affect applications lodged up until the date they are announced. Rest assured this will be monitored closely.



568 Collins St continues its march skywards. Photos Mark Baljak / Urban Melbourne

## Australia 108

In the same ABC TV report where the Acting Premier made the comments about the new Capital City Zone planning approvals regime, news came to light that Australia 108 will kick off its onshore sales campaign in February.

Although the tower will not be located in the CBD, it's hard to imagine its presence not having an effect on the central city.

If you stand and look southwards anywhere on Queen Street at present, the Eureka Tower on Southbank dominates the vista. When Australia 108 gets off the ground, the odds of the tower dominating the William St vista are quite attractive.

At 319m tall, with well over 1000 apartments and a unique "starburst" architectural feature located two thirds the way up the facade, Australia 108 will catch everyone's eye both near and far.

## Database

During the downtime over the Christmas and New Year break, we at Urban Melbourne have embarked on a large-scale update of our project database and, since the start of

January we have been looking at volume of projects, the amount of residential units they yield and what kind of building these projects are in specific regions.

We define a low-rise building as a structure with have five levels or less; a mid-rise has between six and 12 levels; and high-rises have 13 or more levels.

We also break the CBD up into two regions: East and West End with Elizabeth St the boundary and all projects located between LaTrobe Street and Victoria Parade (sometimes known as the "CBD annex") to be divided into the sub-region, depending on which side of Elizabeth St they are located on.

No surprises that we are not tracking any low-rise buildings in the CBD, however we do have two mid-rise projects - one in the East End and one in the West End. There are 33 high-rise projects in total for the CBD ranging in size from 100 units up to and over 1000 units, 12 of the projects are located in the East End and 21 located in the West End.

## AGM season

For a large number of owners' corporations at this time of the year is time for the annual general meeting (AGM).

The AGM is a compulsory meeting, and must be held every 15 months at maximum.

All the usual motions must be put and resolved at the AGM - the existing committee must present their reports, a budget must be set and new levies struck. A new committee must be elected, and the owners' corporation must decide on its level of insurance and whether an audit should be done on their accounts.

However, contrary to what most think, the AGM is not the venue for airing grievances and raising complaints about the day-to-day management of the building or the structure of the affairs of the owners' corporation.

Of course, the chairperson has the power to invite owners to table "general business from the floor" but, unless there is a specific motion on the agenda to discuss and decide on a specific issue, then it otherwise cannot be raised nor resolved.

The key point for owners who wish to raise a particular issue for discussion and debate is to seek to formally put that motion on the agenda for the AGM. This involves either requesting the secretary, chairperson or the committee to include the motion on the agenda, or by requisitioning the motion by petitioning other owners to sign a form to support the motion being included on the agenda.

If neither of these options are viable, the lot owner may have to raise the issue via the complaints process under the model rules or under the dispute resolution section of the Owners' Corporation Act 2006.

Remember also that proxy votes for the AGM will only be valid if: (i) the correct and prescribed form is used; (ii) the form is submitted on time; (iii) that the owner or owners of the lot do not owe any levies or fees at the date of the meeting; and (iv) only if the form is signed by all owners shown on the roll of owners and the certificate of title.

If the lot is owned by a company, trust or self-managed super fund, then extra documentation may need to be submitted with the proxy form to prove the execution of the proxy is valid and that appropriate delegations have been made by the company or trust.

*Postscript:* Participation on the committee by resident owners, is going to be of critical importance for the future of the CBD.

The number of owner-residents in the community is falling, as local and overseas investors continue to acquire these apartments. Only residents will have the knowledge and context to keep oversight of the smooth running of the building on a day-to-day basis.



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## Health &amp; Wellbeing

**Time to grow**

It's always one of my favourite events in Melbourne as the Town Hall Veggie Patch is planted and the City Square becomes a tranquil garden of culinary delights – yes, the Grow Show is happening again this year between February 7 and March 1.

As part of this year's Sustainable Living Festival, rocket, basil, parsley and any other fruit or vegetable you can grow in an urban environment will decorate the corner of Collins and Swanston streets. The festival is focused on what we, as Melburnians can grow ourselves and so you can come down for tips about everything from the horticulture to how to cook it!

The event is always diverse and fun with information on species and plants that do well in back yards, or on balconies and terraces. And Melbourne being a foodie capital of course there'll be famous chefs to teach you how to prepare something extra special with the fruits of your toil.

So if you're looking for ways to become inspired about increasing your fruit and veggie intake, or just how to grow more yourself, come down to the City Square and get involved!

# Prepping your body like Kelly Slater



Even though we are well into summer now, it's not until February that our waters start to warm enough to coax someone like me into the open water. As a result, we are seeing a number of people asking for advice on how to prepare themselves for the surfing season. Laura Ham and Isaac Anderson from here at Viva are keen surfers and have put together some useful tips.

The universally-agreed approach is to focus on three main areas of your body: strength, spinal flexibility and balance. The combination of these three will ensure you not only get up like an expert, but also look



stylish once you're up there.

Isaac and Laura suggest the first step is perfecting your push-up technique. Push-ups are one of the exercises most commonly performed badly and unbalance on the board. Their YouTube clip gives specific advice on how to sort out your form.

In addition, striders, rollers squats and arabesques will keep you riding the wave all the way to the shore. For videos and specific advice, their blog can be found at [www.vivaphysiotherapy.com/prepping-body-surf-like-kelly-slater/](http://www.vivaphysiotherapy.com/prepping-body-surf-like-kelly-slater/)

**Kickstarting your 2015 Campaign**

Are you looking for a way to kickstart your 2015 fitness campaign? Here are two great ideas:

The Victorian Road Runners will be holding time trials at the "Tan" (TTTs) on Saturday, February 7 from 7.30am. The club was established in 1982 and, for a modest membership fee, you can be connected with other keen runners to motivate and focus your training.

There are 4km and 8km options (either one or two laps, with a slight detour to make up the distance) and the session is open to members and non-members alike. Beware though, as the time trial goes clockwise and for those who know the "Tan" you'll know that means running up the Anderson St Hill. More info at [www.vrr.org.au](http://www.vrr.org.au)

Viva Physiotherapy is holding its annual New Years' Resolution Pilates Competition. By telling us in 50 words or less how Pilates will feature in your New Years' resolution you can receive a month's unlimited studio membership, plus a one-on-one session with a physiotherapist to write your tailored program. Runners-up prizes are also available.

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**Kathryn Anderson**  
Is the principal of Viva Physiotherapy, Flinders Lane. Ph: 9663 2043 [www.vivaphysiotherapy.com](http://www.vivaphysiotherapy.com)

## Pet's Corner



# Tourist guides: a walk in the park

**Roger Hersey 65**

**Toy Poodles: Bacci, 10 (grey) & Enzo, 8 (black)**

Roger Hersey, 65, and his two toy poodles Enzo and Bacci love wandering the Flagstaff Gardens in the the summer heat.

Joining many fellow Melburnians, Roger and the two poodles are busy showing their friend Vincent, who is visiting from Adelaide, what Melbourne is all about.

"Enzo and Bacci get to come for a walk at least twice a day, they love it! The heat isn't bothering them too much, especially since they have just had a haircut," Roger said.

Roger loves the dog-walking community that exists in the Flagstaff Gardens near his home.

"It's a great social scene here with the dog walkers. Everyone gets along really well," he said.

On the topic of the gardens being an on-leash area for dogs, Roger said that it was a shared desire to create some space for dogs

to run free.

"We were thinking of asking if the corner of the gardens where the gum trees are, if it could be made into an off-leash area for dogs," Roger said.

"So far, apathy has reigned and no one has taken up the task," Roger laughed.

"However people do use the leashes at the moment because not all dogs are social. And if dogs run away then there is the risk of the roads nearby."

Roger loves the stimulation in Melbourne in the form of music, arts, theatre and many great discussion groups, and is looking forward to the many events held over summer in the CBD.

"I know it will be great. I need to have a better look at the program of what's on but I will definitely attend some events," he said.



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