



Celebrating the Year of the Horse

This year's Chinese Lunar New Year festival, led by the Melbourne Chinatown Business Association, produced yet another amazing day of family fun and incredible stage performances celebrating the rich culture of ancient China and, in the spirit of the horse, a year of strength, speed and success. Photo: Josh Stanyer.

Heritage strategy scrap exposes deep cracks in Melbourne council chamber

“What should have been a routine tick-and-flick adoption of the City of Melbourne’s new Heritage Strategy became, on February 17, a 75-minute rolling debate that exposed just how fractured this council chamber has become.”

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The strategy, titled “Stories of People and Place”, is designed as a 10-year reset in how the City of Melbourne thinks about heritage. It deliberately shifts the frame beyond “built form” to the broader, lived story of the city, with five stated priorities: stewardship, distinctive

places, Aboriginal heritage, “powerful experiences of our multicultural city”, and sustainability and environment.

It is an ambitious piece of work. The strategy describes heritage as “the things people care about and want to hand on to the future”, and explicitly embraces both tangible and intangible heritage, including festivals and activities such as NAIDOC Week and Lunar New Year events.

It has also been heavily consulted. As Deputy Lord Mayor Roshena Campbell told the chamber in her right of reply, the engagement program drew thousands of views and hundreds of survey responses, with a mix of in-person and online participation. The consultation report itself points to a broad mix of stakeholders and targeted “walkshops”, including business stakeholders, that explored topics like laneways, adaptive reuse, climate resilience and “Aboriginal Melbourne” storytelling in the urban landscape.

And yet, after all that, the meeting’s flashpoint was not a complex planning lever, nor an argument about where heritage should sit in development decisions. It was a single line, in a section titled “Aboriginal heritage and the future of the city”, that states: “Melbourne is an Aboriginal city.”

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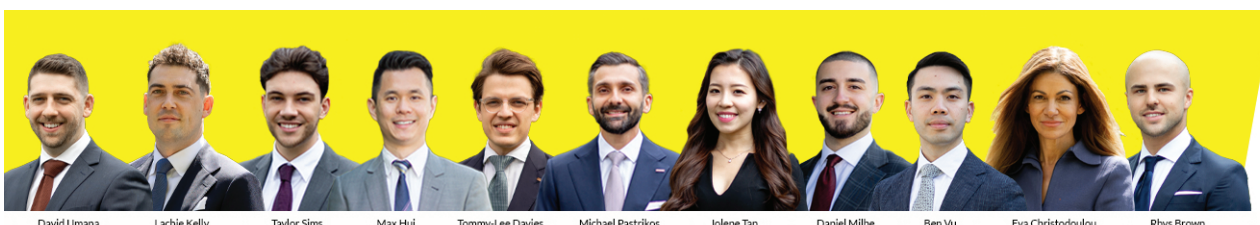
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CBD laneways explore ways to connect

When the “convenors” of Guildford and Hosier lanes met they wanted to find ways of collaborating with each other and other laneways on their inspiring work. A recent workshop run by Regen Melbourne helped to explore the issues.



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City of Melbourne touts cleaner streets as graffiti crackdown ramps up

“The City of Melbourne says its intensified approach to graffiti management is delivering tangible results, with stronger partnerships, improved reporting systems and a renewed focus on cost recovery forming the backbone of its strategy.”

WORDS BY SEAN CAR



A detailed progress report was considered by councillors at the February 17 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, outlining actions taken since a February 2025 council resolution calling for improved graffiti management outcomes.

Presenting the report, the council’s director of waste and recycling Vince Macolino said advocacy and partnerships would remain central to the city’s approach.

“In addition to the actions and outcomes achieved as part of this resolution, we will continue to monitor the top taggers, with relevant data provided to Victoria Police,” he said.

“We’ll seek to recover the cost of graffiti removal and report on this through the annual plan and budget process. We’ll continue to have regular meetings with Victoria



Police to identify upcoming graffiti-related cases where council can supply evidence or victim impact statements.”

Mr Macolino said the council would also “work closely with Corrections Victoria to prioritise graffiti offenders to undertake their corrections orders within the municipality of Melbourne, look to establish new agreements and memorandums of understanding with third-party asset owners and stakeholders, and issue unsightly premises notices in accordance with the local law requirements.”

The report highlights several key agreements already in place, including memorandums of understanding with the City of Yarra and VicRoads, as well as an agreement with the Department of Justice and Community Safety to prioritise graffiti offenders completing community corrections orders within Melbourne.

Under this arrangement, offenders can be directed to undertake work within the municipality, reinforcing the council’s “You Spray, You Pay” principle.

Mr Macolino also pointed to the rollout of the Snap Send Solve reporting app, which

has reduced duplicated work orders by more than 40 per cent.

“In addition to that, we’ve seen our customer service satisfaction rating go up by over 10 per cent, which is now at 88 per cent and our customer service score at 4.7 out of five, which is excellent,” he said.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece praised the progress.

“When I think about the things that we’ve made real progress on as a council in this term, this sits right at the top of the list,” Cr Reece said.

“The city is looking cleaner. And that hasn’t happened by chance. It hasn’t happened by magic. It’s because there’s a lot of hard work, effort and focus that is going into lifting standards here at the city.”

He acknowledged more work was needed but said the council was “definitely on the right trajectory”, singling out the one-hour removal policy for racist and hateful material as a “great initiative”.

Community representatives welcomed the strategic partnerships but urged the council to maintain focus on on-the-ground performance. Southbank Residents’ Association president Tony Penna said residents continued to experience “persistent tagging in high foot traffic areas” and “slow response times to non-offensive graffiti”.

The report notes council currently spends more than \$200,000 a year servicing third-party assets but has recovered \$79,000 through new arrangements and trials. Civil proceedings against offenders remain an option, though the report cautions they can be resource-intensive.

With new victim impact statement guidelines now published online and ongoing monitoring of repeat offenders, councillors resolved to note the report and continue strengthening Melbourne’s graffiti management framework. ●

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Heritage strategy scrap exposes deep cracks in Melbourne council chamber

Continued from page 1.

Cr Owen Guest lit the fuse. In remarks that framed the strategy as overly weighted toward Aboriginal heritage, he questioned the consultation process and argued the emphasis was "disproportionate", claiming he did not believe Melbourne was an Indigenous city. That line of argument was quickly joined by Cr Gladys Liu, who sought to amend the document to replace "Melbourne is an Aboriginal city" with "Melbourne is a multicultural city." Then the debate unravelled.

The amendment morphed in real time. After Cr Dr Olivia Ball offered a compromise to combine the phrasing, Cr Liu and Cr Rafael Camillo withdrew the initial wording and substituted a new line: "Melbourne is a multicultural city respecting Aboriginal heritage." What followed was less a careful discussion of language and more a visible test of numbers, discipline and temperament.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece opposed the change, arguing that recognising Melbourne as an Aboriginal city was not a denial of multiculturalism, but an acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and tens of thousands of years of connection to Country. Cr Andrew Rowse reached for analogy, calling it a false choice: Melbourne can be "a city of art" without ceasing to be "a city of sport". Cr Guest pushed back harder, claiming the phrasing would lead to prioritisation of one group "over and above" others and warning of "one thing leads to the next", including jobs and decisions made in closed sessions. It was at this point that the meeting began to resemble less a deliberative forum and more an argument searching for a landing place.

Cr Camillo attempted to quiz fellow councillors mid-debate, repeatedly testing what questions the chair would allow.



The meeting's chair Cr Campbell, at times, struggled to keep the process tight, shutting down lines of questioning that were clearly sliding into personal views rather than procedural clarification. Cr Camillo punctuated Cr Dr Ball's contribution with a "point of order", forcing Cr Campbell to intervene. Then came the moment that most obviously captured how quickly the discussion had turned. Cr Phil Le Liu asked the Lord Mayor whether, at Sunday's Chinese New Year celebrations, he would tell the Chinese Australian community that the Aboriginal community was "more important" than them. Cr Reece responded bluntly: "No." The exchange landed with the thud of a culture war talking point rather than a heritage policy question.

By the time the amendment was put, it was effectively a proxy battle over values, identity, and political positioning. It failed. But the damage was not limited to the four councillors who voted for it. The sharper story was how rapidly the debate became heated, and how easily the chamber was pulled off the actual policy in front of it. Several councillors called that out explicitly. Cr Mark Scott's intervention was the night's clearest expression of institutional frustration. He apologised to the community watching, describing the on-the-fly

"editorial" approach as unprofessional and embarrassing, and labelling the claim that Aboriginal heritage was "disproportionate" as "completely false and ridiculous", given the scale of history being acknowledged. Cr Davydd Griffiths said he was "genuinely at a bit of a loss" that the chamber was even having the argument, pointing out it took until well into the document to reach the contested line. He also framed "respect" for Traditional Owners as a "low bar", and yet one the council was still fighting over. Even beyond the cultural flashpoint, the meeting revealed other fault lines. Earlier, the chamber had already been manoeuvring around an alternate motion relating to a commitment to develop guidance on when "economic, social or environmental considerations will outweigh heritage objectives". That debate was technical, but it was also telling: councillors were already testing how the strategy might be used, and how much discretion it might create for heritage trade-offs.

Outside the chamber, the submissions underline a practical concern that should have remained front and centre: implementation. In a submission EastEnders president Dr Stan Capp supported the strategy but urged the council to treat it as a "living document" and to strengthen governance

and resourcing, including a Community Heritage Committee and even a dedicated General Manager of Heritage.

That is a serious proposition about how the strategy is carried, monitored and enforced, and it speaks directly to the community's long-running anxiety that heritage policy is only as strong as the council's follow-through.

Instead, the meeting became an uncomfortable preview of what year two of this term may look like.

This is not the first time the council has drifted into marathon debate that critics describe as performative. Late last year's injecting room debate, widely seen as a political stunt given the state government has ruled out a CBD facility, sits in the background as an example of how the chamber can burn time while achieving little. Add in the procedural delays and protracted scrutiny that have characterised other meetings, and the heritage debate begins to look less like a one-off and more like pattern formation.

None of this is to say councillors should not test language or challenge assumptions. But there is a difference between scrutiny and spectacle. On February 17, a significant policy shaped by extensive work and consultation was briefly reduced to a symbolic fight, and in doing so, the chamber displayed a deeper division: a conservative grouping willing to contest the framing of Aboriginal heritage, up against a larger bloc determined to hold the line.

In the end, the strategy passed. The amendment failed. The city moves on.

But for anyone who cares about the City of Melbourne's reputation as a serious governing body, the bigger takeaway is harder to ignore: on a night that should have showcased patient policy-making, councillors instead served the public an avoidable circus, and a blight that many Melburnians will hope is not repeated. ●

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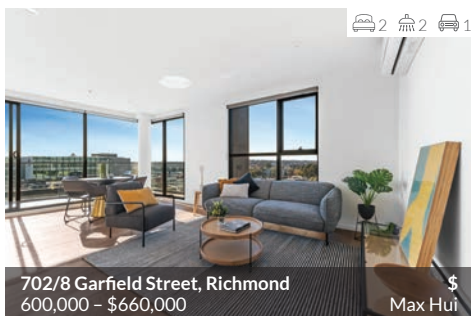
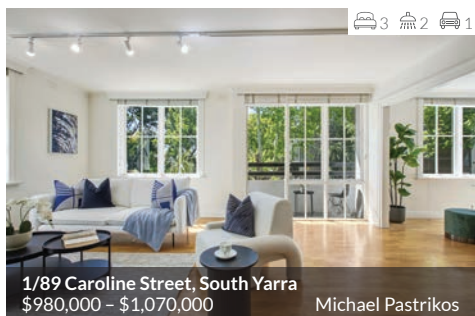
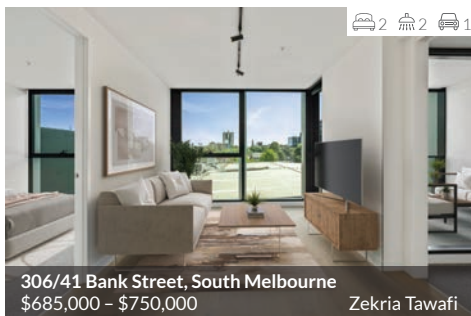
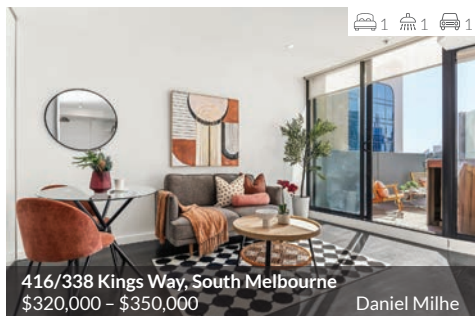
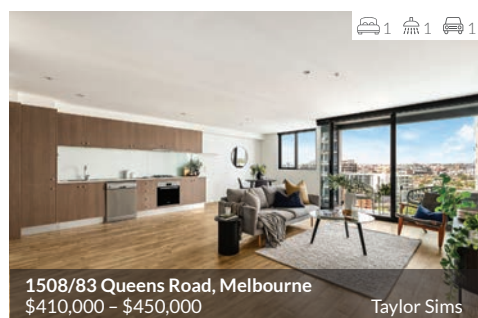
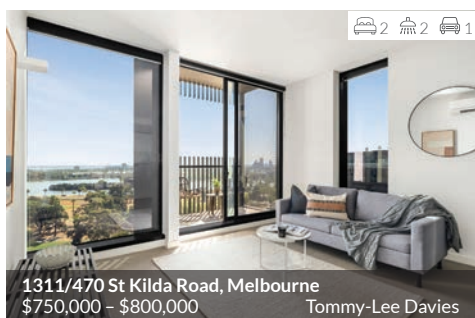


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CBD laneways explore ways to connect

When the “convenors” of Guildford and Hosier lanes met they wanted to find ways of collaborating with each other and other laneways on their inspiring work. A recent workshop run by Regen Melbourne helped to explore the issues.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



Katherine McPherson in Guildford Lane.

When social architect Katherine McPherson first tried putting plants out, after she and her husband moved to Guildford Lane from South Melbourne more than 20 years ago, they were gone within 10 days.

A decade later she tried again. By then the neighbourhood had changed. The motorbike mechanics had mainly gone, and a couple of art galleries had opened up along with the first corner café.

There was foot traffic, she said, and “curiosity about the plants”.

In response “small gestures of gratitude” started to appear and be reported – a watercolour of some plants left in the lane; news that residents of the nearby social housing units had become protective of the geraniums.

The real turning point came with the City of Melbourne’s 2015-16 pilot greening project.

“That project was the catalyst, and the council’s efforts in bringing us together to meet on a regular basis and come up with a vision together was the key – something that galvanised the community,” Katherine told *CBD News*.

It also involved her swearing to look after the plants.

“I’m a good girl scout, my word is my bond, and also, they said, literally, ‘if you don’t do this, we will take the plants we’ve contributed away.’”

The expanding potted greenery “changed the ecology” of the lane, according to one long-term local shopkeeper – Wilson from Matcha Inc – creating “an oasis” just a block from the CBD.

It also created a meeting place – for visitors, who come with their friends and families, cameras, tour groups and occasionally, wedding parties – as well as for local residents.

“You walk your dog, you’re out there watering the plants, you have a chit chat, you have a cup of tea,” Katherine said.

“I would come down in the mornings and have my coffee, or I would sit and knit, and it was a real place to just be and observe, and you would meet people.”

Among those she met, casually and at organised gardening talks, was a neighbour who recruited her to the Gardens for Wildlife program and people from other small city laneways who were interested in native gardening and in what Guildford Lane had achieved.

Meanwhile Nina Sharpe, who is the



head of a liveable streets project at Regen Melbourne, had been working with Katherine’s counterpart at Hosier Lane.

Robyn Bunting had received financial support for 12 months to coordinate development and activities in the popular graffiti-tied lane.

“She was funded by a local philanthropist to work as a lead convener, to amplify the community voice and to activate the laneway, essentially,” Nina said.

When Nina introduced Katherine and Robyn, they of course hit it off, she said.

Out of their relationship and links to other laneway groups the idea of a workshop arose.

An October 30 event, organised by Regen Melbourne, saw people representing 15 laneways come together at Melbourne Town Hall to discuss ways of sharing resources and working together.

“It was one of the most professional and

inspiring workshops I have ever been to,” Katherine said.

The workshop helped connect the laneways – among them Drewery and Driver lanes, Coromandel Place and Baptist Place – with a messaging group established and social events planned.

It also identified both challenges and solutions, Nina said.

“They’re now having conversations about Neighbour Day and lighting and how to more effectively work with council, and there’s a long list of other things.”

“But in order to keep working together like that they are going to need ongoing support.”

That probably had to come through some form of funding, she suggested.

“Maybe street by street it’s unrealistic to have paid convenors, but is there a ‘laneways of Melbourne CBD convener’ who’s funded?”

“That is not a ridiculous idea.” ●

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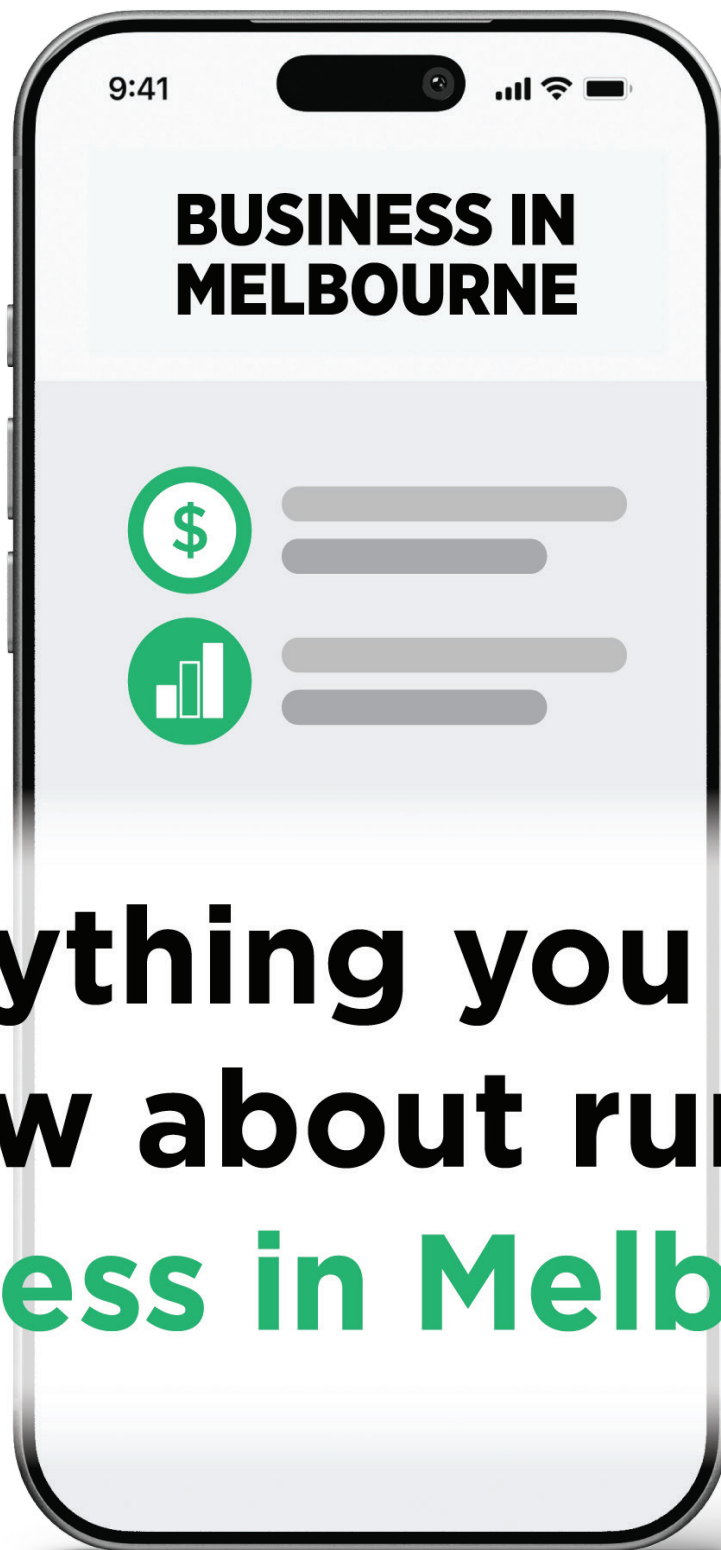
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CITY OF MELBOURNE

Fresh food traders warn Queen Vic Market is “on life support” amid redevelopment

The future of the Queen Victoria Market as a place to buy good quality, reasonably priced fruit and vegetables is under threat, according to the market’s friends’ group, with fresh food traders warning many businesses may not survive the precinct’s ongoing redevelopment.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



Around 40 people attended the Friends of Queen Victoria Market annual general meeting on February 17, where members of what the group describes as its “passionate community” raised concerns about a lack of genuine consultation and engagement by the City of Melbourne and its management company, QVM Pty Ltd (QVM PL).

Several speakers suggested the market’s traditional role as a working fresh food hub was being sidelined in favour of tourism and special events.

Federal Member for Melbourne Sarah Witty addressed the meeting, voicing strong support for the market’s core purpose.

She said she wanted to see it remain “a genuine, working fresh food market at its core”, supporting its traders and “serving locals first”.

“Because this place does not belong to one council term, one government, or one campaign; it belongs to Melbourne,” Ms Witty said, offering to add her voice to the group’s advocacy.

Attendees cited falling customer numbers linked to parking, traffic management and operational disruptions caused by both the market precinct renewal program



and preparatory works for the \$1.7 billion Gurrova Place housing development.

Fruit and vegetable stall worker Fahna Ammett told City of Melbourne infrastructure manager Rick Kwasek that it was not an exaggeration to say the market was “on life support”.

“These are really desperate times and some of those traders are in debt,” she said.

Ms Ammett argued that council decisions had “ripped infrastructure [away], limiting the capacity of traders to actually operate a fresh market”, while QVM PL was making “decisions that aren’t responsive to the traders [or] the site”.

A longstanding point of contention has been truck access and parking. Trader Rosa

Ansaldo, whose family has operated at the market for 38 years, said she had recently been told her heavy rigid truck would not fit into the planned parking system.

“We’ve been a trader for 38 years, we’ve got a big truck, we’ve got a big business. We’ve been told we’ll have to park elsewhere. Can you please tell me where in the city of Melbourne?” she asked Mr Kwasek.

His suggestion that she consider purchasing a smaller vehicle drew an audible gasp from the room.

“I think what you’re doing is starting to force some of the bigger and better players to move off site,” another trader responded.

“These guys will go, and you won’t have that good quality fresh fruit and vegetables

at a reasonable price within the city.”

The planned closure in 2028 of the open-air car park – set to be converted into the 1.8-hectare Market Square park – remains a major concern. The council has described Market Square as the first new park developed in Melbourne in decades, providing green space for more than 2200 new built-to-rent apartments and student accommodation beds at Lendlease’s Gurrova Place.

However, Ms Ammett argued that decision-makers had failed to recognise the car park’s function as “infrastructure for the operations of the working market”.

Other complaints focused on day-to-day operational issues. One stallholder described the “nitty gritty” problems, including tour bus parking being abolished without warning, detours introduced without adequate signage and changes to access and traffic flow that have made it harder for customers to enter and exit.

“It’s like there’s no planning to make sure, with all these works going on, that the market can still function. And we’re losing customers daily because they can’t get into the market and they can’t get out easily. It’s become too hard,” the stallholder said.

QVM PL told CBD News it maintained direct engagement and regular communications with traders through multiple structures.

A spokesperson said the renewal program was “a period of significant change for traders” and that support had been “built into every stage of the program”.

“When traders face financial difficulty, we actively engage with structured support, flexible arrangements and access to the City of Melbourne Trader Support Fund,” the spokesperson said.

They added that visitation had increased by almost six per cent in 2025, returning to pre-pandemic levels, and that the Christmas period had delivered strong trading results for many stallholders. ●

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Melburnians cast almost 25,000 votes for our floral emblem, making it our most popular community engagement campaign ever. They chose from a field of 9 floral finalists.

After trailing behind billy buttons for most of the vote, the swamp everlasting rose up at the last minute to win by a paper-thin margin of just 200 votes. As it does in nature, the swamp everlasting defied all odds.

“Swamp everlasting is a beautiful flowering endangered species which was once abundant in our swampy wetlands,” our First Nations Garden City Ambassador, Margaret Parisi said.

When picturing a ‘swamp’, your mind may not conjure a field of paper daisies – but this formidable flower is a wonder of the wetlands.

“Seeing a flower which automatically says ‘Melbourne’ is a great way to create an immediate, recognisable identity ... grounded in place, respectful of Country, and distinct from any other city,” Margaret said.

HOW WILL WE USE OUR FLORAL EMBLEM?

With the winner now chosen, we’re rolling up our sleeves to embed the swamp everlasting into Melbourne’s identity. It’s all part of the plan to make sure Melbourne is known as the garden city – a city where nature is never far.

We’ll make sure the swamp everlasting is planted in our parks and gardens, and when in flower it will feature in planter boxes outside Melbourne Town Hall. Community plantings will be timed with the weather to help this local stunner thrive again.

We’ll also honour the swamp everlasting in paint, in print and maybe even on Melbourne merch.

Newly minted Aussies will receive swamp everlastings at our citizenship ceremonies, which according to Royal Botanic Gardens seed ecologist Megan Hirst is a beautiful way to show we care.



Melbourne’s floral emblem: swamp everlasting

“I’m rather fond of the idea that flowers can express our feelings. If someone were to give me a posy of everlastings well that would be saying quite a lot, florally speaking. Don’t you think?”

Megan is a self-confessed swamp everlasting superfan who is committed to finding ways to save the species from extinction.

“It’s likely the swamp everlasting was once common across our wetlands – some of the most biodiverse ecosystems on the planet – and since colonisation it has been pushed into small, scattered pockets.

“And yet, it’s still here, holding on with steady resilience,” Megan said.

Like other Australian flora and fauna, the swamp everlasting responds deftly to unpredictable weather.

The plant will go dormant after flowering in summer in drier conditions, but continue to grow through summer if kept moist.

The swamp everlasting needs full sun and a well-watered garden bed or pot. It’s also the king of cut flowers. If picked when freshly opened, they can hold onto their vibrant colour for many months or even years.

You can find the swamp everlasting and other indigenous seedlings at specialist nurseries such as Bili Nursery in Port Melbourne – which is preparing to move into new digs in the City of Melbourne – and bring the floral emblem into your home.



Garden city ambassadors Margaret and Paul

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Nicholas Building will mark centenary in March

“

After a reported \$80 million sale fell through in 2022, major rent hikes saw a significant attrition of artists from its studios, but an eclectic range of creative types still work in the Nicholas Building, which turns 100 in March.

”

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



On days of extreme heat like some the city sweltered through this summer, the tenants of the Nicholas Building, on the corner of Swanston St and Flinders Lane, don't celebrate the "Commercial Palazzo" style edifice so keenly.

The 1926 structure, which marks its centenary this year, is loaded with cultural cachet.

It featured in a Courtney Barnett film clip, has hosted cult arts figure Vali Myers and is reportedly where the blockbuster *Shantaram* was written.

But it has no cooling or heating and no running water outside of the bathroom sinks.

Its toilets – located on the mezzanine levels between floors – are often said to be substandard and inadequate in number.

Heritage protections and the age of the building reportedly prevent renovations being carried out that might bring them closer to 21st century expectations.

There are widespread claims, too, that the building's managing agents are not responsive to maintenance issues.

On the eighth floor the female toilet was said to have been left open to the elements for years, its window frame empty of glass or flyscreen.

Another reported problem was flooding of studios on the upper floors, which lasted for several years and saw tenants' work repeatedly damaged.

But one long-term tenant, who like others at the building didn't want to be named, says it has been "looked after beautifully and respected in every way".

Allard Sheldon senior partner and property manager Anne Magee also flatly denied that the agency had failed to respond to tenants' issues appropriately.

Responding to reported criticism about the imposition of dramatic rent increases in 2023, Ms Magee said they had "brought rent more up to a realistic amount for what the costs of running the building were".

Where tenants had received very large

hikes it was probably because they had been there for a long time and hadn't had any increases in years, she said.

"The bottom line is if people don't want to be there, they don't have to be."

"It's a commercial building on commercial terms."

Stories published in the media in early July 2022 got ahead of a planned sale that year by the consortium owner to Forza Capital, reporting it occurred at a speculated price of \$80 million.

The sale in fact didn't go ahead.

Ms Magee wasn't prepared to discuss what went wrong in 2022 or any future plans for the building, saying these were "a matter for the building's private owners".

In her top floor internal studio photographer Jess Illichmann says it gets a bit hot.

But Jess, also known by her business name Mad Dame, realised a decades-long dream when she moved into the Nicholas Building last July.

On her wall is a picture of herself as a teenager posed in the stairwell dreaming of a future where she might one day work in the building.

The 39-year-old's creative venture involves covering her clients in full body glitter and taking glamorous studio portraits of them.

Her work is about the process, she says, which relates to transformation and ritual and gives her clients a feeling of freedom.

And business is booming. "People think you are in this building, you must be important," Jess laughed.

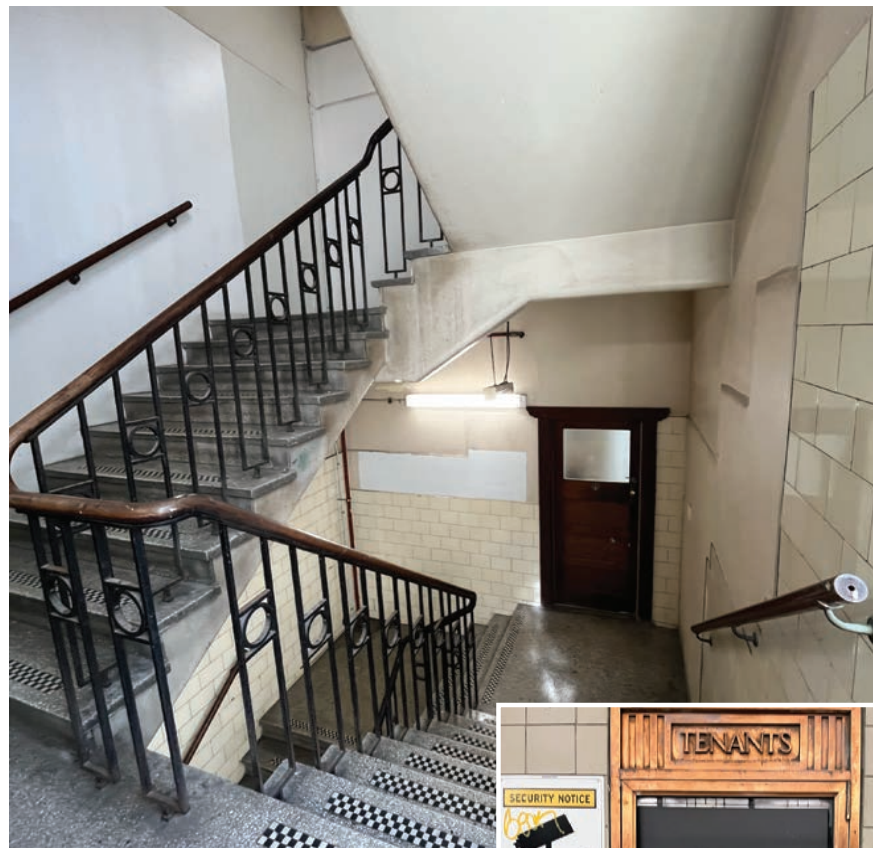
Taking the big step of moving in had opened up her world and seen her client numbers double.

Despite the limitations of the old building, which makes cleaning up after messy shoots difficult, "the pleasure of it overrides its quirks".

"For me it's like a sanctuary, it's the safest spot to create the magic," she said.

"It's definitely a building that has an artist's vibe."

"No-one's doing anything boring."



Darcy Neve from Welcome Tattoo has been based on the third floor for the past seven years and is quite happy there.

Street-front premises are mostly out of reach for tattooists now, he says, with the inky art, despite its popularity, one of the first things to be sacrificed in a cost-of-living crisis.

"It's very fair for me here," he said. "If you've got a small business, it's not too expensive."

As well as a great location, the building offered "a lot of nice history and good neighbours".

"There's shops in here that I like to visit myself, some cool bookshops," he said, singling out specialist art book sellers World Food Books.

Before the rent went up Louise Macdonald had a 50-sqm studio overlooking St Paul's Cathedral.

The veteran milliner, who in her time has made costume hats for Tom Cruise and Vanessa Redgrave, has been in the building since 1995 but downsized to a studio half the size after receiving a large rent increase in 2023.

"It's definitely changed the make-up of tenants," she says of the wave of rent hikes of up to 50 per cent that saw many artists move out.

There are still sculptors, jewellers, painters, gallerists and perfume-makers in the building, she noted, "but you've got to be making a proper living" to be able to afford to work there.

These days there are more nail bars and tattooists among the tenants and "a constant flow of hard hats and high vis vests



coming out of the second floor," which "the Metro Tunnel people" have been sharing with José Zarpán the bespoke tailor.

The Nicholas Building, like Flinders Lane more generally, was part of her community, Louise said, "and it puts me in touch with people of different ages, which I like".

While a tenants' association that flourished for a few years had now folded, the opening of the ground floor Cathedral Café, which at times doubles as a wine bar, had been positive, she said.

"It's a little bit like a staff room, something that's added to the community."

Another long-term creative craftsman, shoemaker Brendan Dwyer, is philosophical about his Swanston St workplace, summarising the situation there succinctly.

"I've been in the building a long time and there's been rumours of [it being] 'sold' many times over," he said.

"The tenant mix is disparate and random as ever, some [are] professional, some random; some stay, some don't; rental pressure is ever upward." ●

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From Melbourne pantry to national shelves: Aunty Jenny spices up independent grocers

“ Just four months after officially launching in Melbourne’s CBD, homegrown spice brand Aunty Jenny is heading national. ”

The ethical pantry label, founded by Melbourne entrepreneur Evangeline Tee and co-founder Ramneek Wayne, has secured its largest retail expansion to date, rolling out across independent grocers including IGA and Ritchies – bringing its “no nasties, no middlemen” philosophy to shelves across the country.

For a brand that began with one daughter trying to cook for her mother, the move marks a significant milestone.

Aunty Jenny was born from a simple frustration. Ms Tee’s mother, Jenny – who inspired the company’s name – loved flavour but struggled with overly hot, heavily processed supermarket spice blends.

“My mum was visiting, and we opened up the pantry to cook her something, but there was nothing in there she could have,” Ms Tee previously told CBD News.

“She loves food, but we had no products that made the distinction between chilli, which is heat level, and spicy, which brings this strong flavour to food.”

Unable to find pure, pesticide-conscious options that delivered depth without overwhelming heat, Ms Tee began exploring direct sourcing from growers in India and Malaysia. The result was a brand built around transparency, freshness and fair trade — sourcing directly from farmers, reducing intermediaries and packing spices within weeks of harvest.

That model now underpins its national expansion.

Co-founder Ramneek Wayne said the rollout reflected growing demand from independent retailers for pantry staples that combined strong margins with clear differentiation.

“Independent grocers are highly discerning when it comes to product quality, consistency and supply reliability – they’re also price sensitive,” Mr Wayne said.

“The products each make four meals and

have a RRP starting at \$2.60 to ensure they are easily accessible. This rollout reflects the confidence retailers have in our ability to deliver a differentiated range that performs on shelf, backed by robust systems and transparent sourcing.”

The range includes core blends such as Butter Chicken, Mild Curry, Garam Masala and Peri Peri Tandoori – developed through long-term grower partnerships and rigorous quality testing. Each blend is designed for both vegetarian and vegan cooking, packaged in resealable pouches aimed at reducing waste.

The national push follows what the founders describe as a period of “operational and retail readiness” – ensuring supply chains, warehousing and distribution systems were robust enough to scale.

It is a notable achievement for a Melbourne startup launched less than a year ago at Elchi restaurant in the CBD, where civic and business leaders gathered to celebrate what Cr Rafael Camillo described at the time as “a celebration of everything Melbourne stands for – diversity, innovation, and connection through food.”

For Ms Tee, the growth is about more than retail footprint. Born in Malaysia, educated across China, Scotland and Australia, she has spoken openly about stepping out from behind-the-scenes roles to build something of her own in an industry where women remain underrepresented.

“There are a lot of women doing the work quietly. They just haven’t had the platform yet,” she said ahead of the product’s launch last year.

“It’s not just about launching a business – it’s about being counted.”

Her journey into entrepreneurship followed what she has described as a difficult personal period that ultimately gave her the confidence to step forward.

“There was a time period where I was really struggling. I hit the bottom, and it was actually very freeing,” she said. “At that moment, it was like an invitation to do whatever the hell I wanted. I decided to just get on with it.”

That mindset now sits at the heart of Aunty Jenny’s rapid ascent – a brand rooted in family, fairness and flavour, but built with commercial discipline.

As jars and pouches begin appearing on independent grocery shelves nationwide – including locally here in Melbourne – the founders say further range extensions and in-store activity are planned throughout 2026. ●



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Councillors approve amended Flinders St tower despite heritage concerns

The City of Melbourne has unanimously approved an amended permit for a new office tower at 376–388 Flinders St, backing a \$59 million proposal that will integrate a significant heritage substation while enforcing stricter setback conditions to protect its prominence.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The decision was made at the February 3 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, where councillors considered an amendment to an existing planning permit for an 18-storey mixed-use building comprising retail and office space. The amendment followed the acquisition of adjacent land at 11–27 Tavistock Place, introducing new heritage considerations, which protects a graded significant substation on the site.

The council's planning chair Deputy Lord Mayor Roshena Campbell outlined the key issue before councillors: whether built form extending into the airspace above the heritage substation was appropriate under the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

"The key issue before us tonight is consideration of whether this development, in particular on the new land, delivers an appropriate built form and heritage response," she said.

While the applicant, Wincrown Pty Ltd, represented by Tract Consultants, sought the removal of a condition requiring an increased upper-level setback, council officers recommended retaining it to ensure compliance with heritage policy.

Cr Campbell made clear that the planning scheme's heritage controls were central to the assessment.

"It's worth making it very clear that council's heritage policy and the planning scheme specifically requires that additions to a significant or contributory building do not build over or extend into the airspace directly above the front or principal part of the building," she said.

Officers advised that the proposed cantilever above Tavistock Place would diminish the heritage significance of the substation. A render presented to councillors showed an overhang supported by pillars intersecting visually with the heritage building.

In response to a question about commercial feasibility, council management reiterated that such considerations were not part of the statutory test.

"Feasibility isn't a consideration under the planning scheme," officers said. "We're required to assess the planning merits of the application as per the policies within the planning scheme, and that's not one of the considerations."

The applicant argued that without regaining floorplate efficiencies, the project



would be unviable as a Grade A office building. Wincrown's chief operating officer Jim Lough told councillors that "any further reduction to that floor plate will basically render the project unfeasible".

Tract town planning consultant Luke Chamberlain also urged councillors to consider removing the setback condition, saying the project would make "a wonderful contribution to this city block".

However, Cr Campbell emphasised that the council's role was to balance investment with policy compliance.

"It is worth reminding the committee that this council's responsibility is to ensure that the development aligns with the objectives and policies of the Melbourne Planning Scheme," she said. "And that does include

protection and respectful integration of heritage places."

She noted that council had already granted a permit for the broader development and supported the amendment subject to conditions.

"We are delighted that it retains and incorporates the heritage substation," she said, describing the adaptive reuse as "strongly aligned with our planning policy objective to encourage adaptive reuse of heritage places as an alternative to demolition".

Importantly, she said, the setback condition would "ensure an appropriate transition between the heritage building and the addition, keeping the new built form recessive, subservient and importantly, in this heritage context, clearly distinguishable". ●

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Chrissy Amphlett's rock and rage return to Melbourne stage

“ One of Australia’s most electrifying music stories is set to roar back to Melbourne next month, with *Amplified: The Exquisite Rock and Rage of Chrissy Amphlett* playing a strictly limited season at the Comedy Theatre from March 19 to 22

WORDS BY SEAN CAR

The production, channelling the fierce spirit and unforgettable songs of the late Divinyls frontwoman, will play just five shows in the CBD before moving on – offering audiences a chance to see the acclaimed tribute following sell-out seasons interstate.

Fronted by performer and co-creator Sheridan Harbridge, *Amplified* traces the rise of Chrissy Amphlett from suburban pub stages to international stardom. Harbridge said she felt compelled to revisit Amphlett’s legacy after her death in 2013.

“I felt really strongly that we hadn’t had a chance to reflect back on such a powerful, unique and electrically charged artist,” she told CBD News. “I did feel that I was at a point in my career where I had the capacity as a performer and a writer, to try and articulate what exactly was that electricity that she had.”

Known for her audacious stage presence – often in a school uniform – Amphlett burst onto a male-dominated scene with raw talent, a distinctive rock rasp and a fearless blend of sexuality and vulnerability that reshaped Australian rock. For Harbridge, the challenge was not imitation but immersion.

“From the very top, we knew to do an imitation would be just a waste of everyone’s time,” she said. “It’s not about imitating Chrissy on stage, it’s about conjuring the whole decade and the whole art form.”

The show features Harbridge backed by a raucous four-piece band led by musical director Glenn Moorhouse, whose credits include *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. Together, they recreate the power and

volatility of Amphlett’s stage presence while weaving in stories that explore the woman behind the icon.

Harbridge said performing with a live band reshaped her storytelling approach.

“One of the great things we’ve done is let the songs do so much of the work for us,” she said. “Let Chrissy’s own lyrics, Mark McEntee’s music, do the storytelling, and say less. She said so much in her music.”

Directed and co-created by Sarah Goodes, the production draws inspiration from a one-woman show Amphlett had been developing before her passing. Harbridge described that knowledge as both a responsibility and a gift.

“We didn’t get Chrissy’s third act,” she said. “I felt responsible to explore what she would have wanted out of this show ... but also like I could give a gift back to it, by going really far and hard with the questions the show could ask.”

Goodes has said, “no-one can be Chrissy.” Harbridge agrees, explaining that her approach was to begin “inside out”: “The best thing you can do is start inside out, instead of outside in,” she said. “You’re just giving the audience enough to go, ‘Oh God, I think I saw her just then.’”

The show premiered in Melbourne in June 2025 before heading to Sydney’s Belvoir St Theatre for a five-star, sell-out season. It has since played in Ballarat and Geelong – Amphlett’s hometown – earning glowing reviews along the way. Harbridge said bringing the show back to Melbourne carried particular resonance.

“Melbourne in the band era, was a hot bed of art and live music,” she said. “I hope they sit in the theatre and hear the sound of us and revel in the glory.”

More than just a jukebox musical, *Amplified* delves into the cultural and personal impact of Amphlett’s work, exploring how she challenged expectations of women in rock and became a voice for a generation.

“I feel really honoured to stand on the shoulders of women like Chrissy,” Harbridge said. “I am the product on stage in 2026. I am the product of the trail that Chrissy blazed.”

Living inside Amphlett’s world has also sharpened her own artistic instincts. “It’s made me want to be a much riskier, much more disobedient woman.”

Developed by Jacaranda Productions and UMAC, with support from Geelong Arts Centre, the Comedy Theatre season is presented by Marriner Group and will play at the Comedy Theatre from 19 – 22 March. Tickets via Ticketek. ●

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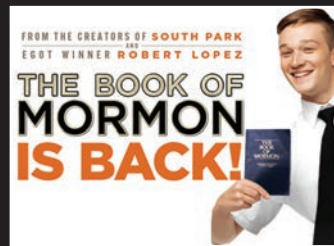
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Australia's largest Antarctic art exhibition opens at RMIT

A sweeping new exhibition exploring more than a century of Australian artistic engagement with Antarctica has opened across two major Melbourne venues.

Creative Antarctica: Australian Artists and Writers in the Far South launched at RMIT Gallery and Design Hub Gallery on February 20, bringing together historical and contemporary creatives who have shaped how the frozen continent is imagined, documented and understood.

Spanning more than 100 years, the exhibition traces the evolution of Antarctica's cultural story – from the era of heroic exploration to today's climate-conscious creative responses. While Antarctica is often framed through the lens of science and discovery, this exhibition foregrounds the role of artists and writers as critical witnesses to one of the world's most remote and fragile regions.

The show features works by historically significant figures including photographer Frank Hurley, explorer Douglas Mawson, painter Sidney Nolan and artist Lin Onus, alongside leading contemporary names such as Janet Laurence, Alison Lester and Leila Jeffreys. The works range from rare archival material to new, site-responsive projects developed through time spent in Antarctica.

Contributing artist Polly Stanton, who recently returned from an Australian Antarctic Arts Fellowship, described the experience as transformative.

"There's truly nothing that compares to the fellowship. It exists in a category of its own, much like Antarctica itself," she said.

"Antarctica has a way of transforming everyone who spends time there. It strips away the non-essential and leaves you with something fundamental about your work, about yourself and about your place in the world."

Lead curator Philip Samartzis said the exhibition reveals an alternative Antarctic history; one shaped not just by expeditions and research stations, but by creative interpretation.

"Antarctica has long been framed through the language of heroism and science," he said. "What this exhibition reveals is another history – one shaped by artists and writers who have listened, observed and translated the continent in ways that are sensory, reflective and deeply human."

"Creative practice doesn't sit alongside Antarctic research; it changes how we understand it."

A key theme is the impact of the Australian Antarctic Arts Fellowship, which has enabled generations of artists and writers to travel south and contribute to public understanding of the region. At a time of accelerating climate change and global



Keith Jack, Mt Erebus Ross Is., c. 1914-1917.

environmental uncertainty, the exhibition highlights how creative responses can deepen awareness and engagement.

Presented by RMIT University as part of an Australian Research Council Discovery Project, the exhibition runs until May 2

across both RMIT Gallery and Design Hub Gallery.

Entry is free, with an accompanying suite of public programs designed to further explore Antarctica's cultural and environmental significance. ●

Behind the Lines returns to Old Treasury Building with sharp focus on political year

“One of Australia's longest running and most beloved political cartoon exhibitions is returning to Melbourne, with the Old Treasury Building set to host *Behind the Lines 2025: Are We Rolling?* from March 2 to May 3.”

Now in its 30th year, *Behind the Lines* brings together 45 of the nation's leading political cartoonists to capture the twists, turns and turbulence of the past year in Australian politics. Using humour, satire and sharp

critique, the exhibition offers a snapshot of 2025 through the lens of some of the country's most incisive visual commentators.

Staged annually by the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House in Canberra, the exhibition has become a cultural fixture, touring nationally and drawing thousands of visitors. Its Melbourne showing at the Old Treasury Building continues that tradition, offering free access to a curated collection of the year's most striking political cartoons.

This year's theme, *Are We Rolling?*, draws inspiration from the language and spectacle of cinema. The exhibition uses the tropes of moviemaking to frame the drama of contemporary politics, both at home and abroad. From comedy and tragedy to suspense and unexpected plot twists, the cartoons on display mirror the emotional highs and lows of the political stage.

According to the organisers, the works

create a time capsule of the political year, presenting multiple viewpoints side by side. The exhibition's strength lies in this multiplicity, encouraging audiences to engage with differing – and at times conflicting – interpretations of the events and personalities that shaped 2025.

As one of the longest-running annual exhibitions in Australia, *Behind the Lines* has become a place where art meets critique and politics meets humour. Over three decades, it has established itself as a forum for reflection, providing Australians with an opportunity to look back on the year that was with both laughter and insight.

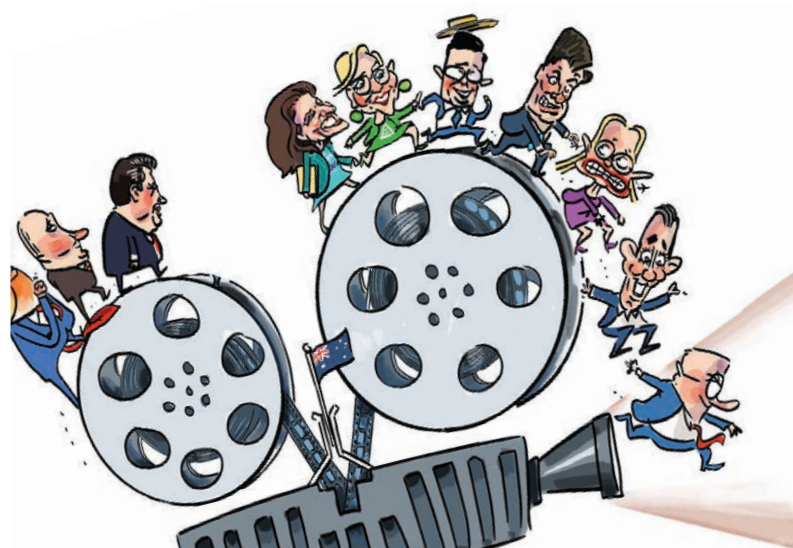
The Melbourne exhibition is supported by the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program, an Australian Government initiative designed to improve access to the national collections for communities across the country.

Set within the historic surrounds of the



Old Treasury Building on Spring St, the exhibition offers visitors a chance to experience contemporary political commentary within one of the city's most significant heritage spaces.

Behind the Lines 2025: Are We Rolling? runs from March 2 to May 3, with free entry. ●



BEHIND THE LINES

The year in political cartoons 2025

On display at Old Treasury Building 2 March - 3 May 2026

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This exhibition is supported by the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program, an Australian Government program aiming to improve access to the national collections for all Australians.

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Man wanted on warrant

Victoria Police are appealing for assistance to help locate a man wanted over a raft of offences.

Sixty-year-old Warren John Jennings has been charged with burglaries, dishonesty offences, stating a false name, drug offences and breaching a condition of bail.

Described as Caucasian in appearance and approximately 165cm tall, with short brown hair, fair complexion and thin build, he was known to frequent the Melbourne, St Kilda, Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and Sale areas, police said.

Anyone with information about his whereabouts is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or make a confidential report at crimestoppersvic.com.au.

“Aussie” art offence

Police said they were investigating after several posters featuring Bondi gunman Naveed Akram were put up in Richmond, the CBD and surrounding areas over the long weekend in January.

The posters, which mimicked the multicultural series featuring the word “Aussie” by artist Peter Drew, had been put up by anti-immigration rally organiser and neo-Nazi group associate Hugo Lennon, according to a report in *The Age*.

Police said they had reviewed CCTV footage and were making ongoing inquiries about the offence of billposting and other more serious offences.

They had also been liaising with Melbourne City Council about the incidents, they said, appealing for anyone with information to contact Crime Stoppers.

Flag burning

A 20-year-old woman was arrested after allegedly burning two flags, which caused minor fire damage to a tram stop near Parliament during protests over the visit of Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

Police said about 5000 people had gathered and marched from Flinders Street station to the State Library on Monday, February 9, with some protesters then continuing on to Parliament.

The woman was interviewed and released and was expected to be charged with wilful damage, police said. ●

Council backs early years review in push for “fair start” for every Melbourne child

The City of Melbourne will undertake a comprehensive review of its early years services after councillors unanimously backed a notice of motion from Deputy Lord Mayor Roshena Campbell at the February 17 Future Melbourne Committee meeting

WORDS BY SEAN CAR



Titled *Fairer Melbourne – Better Early Years*, the motion calls on council CEO Alison Leighton to report back within two months on how the council can strengthen early literacy, increase physical activity, improve access to nutritious food and family violence support, and provide earlier interventions for children experiencing developmental delays.

Moving the motion, Cr Campbell described

the issue as urgent and deeply personal for families across the municipality.

“It’s a tragedy that in this lucky country almost a quarter of kids start school developmentally behind,” she said.

“In the City of Melbourne, around 24 per cent of children are starting school developmentally vulnerable. In some parts of our municipality, that is much higher. In Carlton, the figure is over 50 per cent. More than half the children starting school are developmentally behind.”

The motion notes that early childhood development – particularly from birth to five years – is critical to lifelong wellbeing, with around 90 per cent of brain development occurring before a child turns five.

Cr Campbell said that while the City of Melbourne already played a significant role through immunisation, maternal and child health services, playgroups, kindergartens and libraries, “it is clear that we as a council can do more to set up every child to thrive.”

“Fairness in Melbourne starts when everyone gets the best possible start in life,” she said.

“The best place to level the playing field in the early years, it’s local government. We are the level of government that is closest

QVM TRADER PROFILE

How love sparked Kadio’s rise at Queen Victoria Market

“After arriving in Melbourne from Port Macquarie, Tash Macleod “fell in love with the diversity, the bustle of the city”, and decided to stay.

WORDS BY JENNY DENTON



She had come to study baking and patisserie but had a job as a waiter in the market’s food court.

“I’d walk through in the early morning, through the fruit and veg section as they were setting up, and then back in the afternoon when everyone was packing down,” the 27-year-old told CBD News.

One of the things she noticed there was Omer Kadioglu, who is now her partner and the inspiration for their business name, Kadio.

“He was working in the fruits and vegetables, and so we naturally passed each other every day,” she said.

“And then, you know, it grew from there.” In 2021 it was Omer who talked Tash into turning her COVID hobby of polymer clay jewellery-making into a business, and the pair got themselves a market stall.

“Omer was the big motivator, the big push to leave the regular jobs and jump into running our own business,” Tash said.

He also had computer skills and created a website to take things online.

Around the time of the lockdowns, polymer clay jewellery really took off, Tash said.

People were drawn to “the fun and colour” of the earrings she was making, especially because in that time “extra vibrancy was needed”.

“As life settled back to normal, that fashion adapted and we noticed people were looking for simple everyday jewellery,”



Tash said.

She and Omer identified a gap in the market for quality, durable, waterproof pieces that wasn’t too expensive.

She still has a small range of clay polymer earrings and makes items – recently some bridal earrings – on request but the main focus of the business now is waterproof jewellery.

Kadio also offers personalised laser engraving and does a lot of portraits of pets and tributes to grandparents.

“It’s really special for us to be able to put that memory onto something physical for people,” Tash said.

After starting small, with a single table under the sheds, Kadio has grown to having a permanent container in String Bean Alley for the past year-and-a-half.

In that time the workload and hours have increased.

“We’ll often find ourselves when we go out for a nice dinner still talking about business,” Tash said.

“But that being said, we wouldn’t change it at all.”



The couple are now shipping their creations to countries around the world and have featured in promotional campaigns organised by the market.

When she arrived in Melbourne, Tash would not have imagined she would one day see herself on the side of a tram and pasted up on the carpark wall.

Kadio is open Thursday to Sunday and at the QVM night market. ●

Hidden Secrets: A historic glow returns to Swanston and Collins

“

Amid the rush of trams, shoppers and office workers at the corner of Swanston and Collins streets, a small but significant piece of Melbourne's past has quietly been brought back to life.

”

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



Standing outside the Hugo Boss store, directly opposite Melbourne Town Hall and the now-open Town Hall Station, a restored heritage gas lamp once again draws the eye. Freshly repainted and carefully refurbished by the City of Melbourne, the lamp has been returned to working order, reclaiming its place in one of the city's busiest intersections.

For years it stood largely unnoticed – weathered, unlit and blending into the streetscape. But to some, it was more than a decorative relic. Dr David Horne, who began making enquiries about its restoration back in 2017, saw it as an important link to Melbourne's early urban history.

"I believe it needs to be highlighted in literature about the history of Melbourne and monuments that are important for the public to know about," he wrote to the City of Melbourne following its restoration. "I continue to point it out to many people to go and have a look at it and admire it."

Dr Horne's interest in gas lamps dates back to his time living in England, where street gaslighting remained common well into the mid-20th century. London today still maintains more than 1000 operational gas lamps around landmarks such as Buckingham Palace and Covent Garden, preserving a tradition that began in the early 19th century when gaslight first transformed city streets.

Melbourne was quick to adopt the same technology. In the 1800s, gas lighting represented cutting-edge infrastructure, illuminating public spaces and reinforcing the city's image as a modern and prosperous colony. While electric lighting eventually replaced most of the network, remnants of that earlier era remain.

According to City of Melbourne records, there are 36 gas lamps across the municipality, along with 17 gas lamp bollards – former lamps that have been shortened over time. One example can be found at

the north-west corner of Little Collins and Russell streets.

The council maintains these heritage structures, undertaking painting, structural checks and glass cleaning, and occasionally facilitating relighting where possible. In some cases, however, older fittings cannot be retained due to modern safety standards.

The Swanston and Collins lamp now stands as a carefully restored reminder of that layered history. Whether viewed as a working light source or as a sculptural heritage feature, it adds a sense of continuity to an intersection defined by constant change.

With the transformation of Melbourne Town Hall and the new underground metro station nearby, the revived lamp offers a quiet counterpoint – a tangible link to a time when lighting a street was a technological marvel.

In a city known for reinvention, it's easy to overlook these smaller details. But sometimes it's the enduring fixtures – polished, preserved and standing their ground – that tell the most compelling stories. ●



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Swamp everlasting crowned Melbourne's new floral emblem

Melbourne's new official floral emblem has been decided, with the swamp everlasting (*Xerochrysum palustre*) narrowly claiming victory in one of the City of Melbourne's most popular ever community engagement exercises.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



More than 8500 people cast nearly 25,000 votes in the competition, each voter given three selections. The tall, golden native daisy secured almost 4000 votes – edging out common billy buttons by just 200 votes in a tight finish. Chocolate lily (3600 votes) and purple coral-pea (3000 votes) rounded out the top four.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said the result confirmed Melbourne's affection for the endangered native species.

"We're delighted to have the swamp everlasting as Melbourne's floral emblem. Gritty, beautiful and tenacious, it is the perfect symbol for Melbourne," he said.

"The swamp everlasting is Melbourne through and through – resilient, understated and stronger than it looks. A true underdog, and a worthy winner."

Before colonisation, swamp everlasting thrived across Melbourne's wetlands. Today, it stands as a reminder of the city's unique ecosystem and the importance of caring for Country as urban development continues.

When in bloom – often for almost half the year – its bright yellow flowers will feature prominently outside Melbourne Town Hall, where they will brighten planter boxes in the heart of the CBD. The emblem will also be used in civic gifts for new Australian citizens and visiting dignitaries, artistic displays and plantings across the municipality.

Environment portfolio head Cr Davydd Griffiths said the competition had sparked widespread interest in Melbourne's native flora.

"These iridescent golden daisies have flourished in our wetlands for thousands of years. Now, as our floral emblem, they'll be proudly woven into Melbourne's future," he said.

"This has been a fantastic opportunity for Melburnians to learn more about the plants that grow around them and to think about their connections to the local environment."

The full results of the public vote placed the swamp everlasting first, followed by common billy buttons, chocolate lily, purple coral-pea, yam daisy (murnong), tall bluebell, kangaroo grass, rounded noon-flower and austral storksbill.

The council said the emblem was a key part of its broader Garden City vision, reflecting Melbourne's identity as a city that values nature, honours Traditional Owners and celebrates its distinctive environment.

As part of that push, the City of Melbourne has also launched a "super-sized" round of its Urban Forest Fund, offering up to \$1 million in matched funding to support greening projects across the city.

"The floral emblem is a reminder that nature is never far in our Garden City, and now the swamp everlasting will be forever part of Melbourne's story," Cr Reece said. ●

Proudly representing the
community in Melbourne's CBD

Evan MULHOLLAND MP

Liberal Member for Northern Metropolitan Region

9651 8242 | [EvanMulhollandMP](https://www.facebook.com/EvanMulhollandMP) | Evan.Mulholland@parliament.vic.gov.au

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Authorised by Evan Mulholland MP, Shop 24/55-63 Paringa Boulevard, Meadow Heights VIC 3048.



Living in high-rise in Melbourne

At Residents 3000's November meeting three guest speakers gave an insight into a number of important issues relating to owners' corporations (OCs) ...

WORDS BY
LYN GAZAL

- Anton Block, principal lawyer, KCL Law, outlined a recent decision of the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal, the effect of the amendments to section 18 of the *Owners Corporation Act 2006* and its implications for residents.
- Hedley Gaudin, general manager of Australian OC Management gave some strategies used by OC managers to deal with rule breaches.
- John Dall'Amico, from CBD Facility Management, presented an informative presentation on apartment security, highlighting the unique safety and security challenges that are faced by residents living in vertical or high-rise density residential developments within the city of Melbourne.

A key takeaway from the evening's meeting ... invest in strategies to live harmoniously and safely in Melbourne's CBD.

Intended outcomes, going forward, should include risk reduction, avoiding unnecessary costs, ensuring safety, avoiding damage and most importantly creating a harmonious living environment for residents. Strategies were outlined to achieve best practice outcomes of communal fairness, respectful communication and navigating difficult conversations.

My experience

Data shows our city is experiencing some of the fastest growth in the country. Although I had lived in high-rise as an expat abroad, I had always lived in detached homes in lower density neighbourhoods while residing in Australia.

When returning home in 2002, I moved from suburbia into Melbourne's CBD. It was indeed a steep learning curve.

Navigating city living was quite different to living in a Melbourne suburb. In the early days I walked the city streets of an evening understanding the laneways and streets and discovering some hidden treasures.



The night life was divided up into city precincts with clubs etc. in certain districts, similar to the present, however rooftop venues have become a feature of our nightlife. Cafes and restaurants in and around the main streets and adjoining lanes grew into the culinary capital of Australia with the best chefs inhabiting the CBD and nearby suburbs.

Later I accepted a nomination as a committee member on our body corporate and the experience opened my eyes to the need to understand fully security and safety within my home building and city living in general.

My next big challenge was the legality associated with OC management. Luckily other committee members were familiar with this aspect, and I listened and learned much! In hindsight a meeting as convened by Residents 3000 on these topics would have been so helpful back then.

residents3000.org.au ●

The Melbourne Home

In the late 19th century, a number of female immigrants fresh off the ship from England would arrive at Victoria with no planned accommodation or nearby connections that could help them settle.

Fortunately, there was a place close to the Mint that could provide shelter: The Melbourne Home and Governesses Institute.

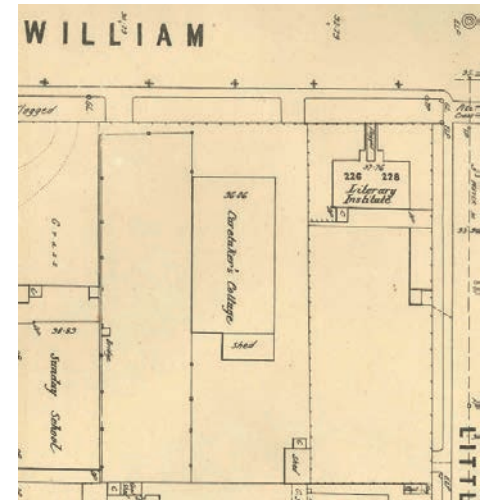
Melbourne saw an influx of immigration in the 1850s; there were perceived concerns for female immigrants, many of whom arrived alone to make a new start or work as domestic servants. *The Age* in 1857 (February 14), brought up the demoralisation for any woman who made the treacherous trip to Australia alone, stating that "nine out of every 10 females so sent become surrounded by temptations which it is almost impossible to evade, and presently sink into a career of wretchedness and infamy."

They especially warned of a particular correspondence where one female servant's office in the city ended up engaging its girls "for the Woolshed brothels under the pretext of requiring them for ordinary service."

In response, The Melbourne Home would be established in the early 1860s and first settled upon the Prince of Wales Hotel in Flinders Lane (as a temporarily building until they could raise funds for a new one), located behind where the Regent Theatre is today. It opened on November 1, 1863, and according to its rules, was eligible for "all respectable females, governesses, needlewomen, shopwomen, and servants not suffering from bodily infirmity or disease".

By the end of 1864, the Home had registered 2063 women, (448 of those called the Hostel as a place of residence while looking for work). Depending on the woman's status, pay for weekly lodging was 7 to 8s for a partial board, 10s for a servant, and 18s for a governess (and that didn't include a registry fee for anyone looking for an work engagement). Notably the institution was run by an all-female committee, though a gentleman's committee was also involved whenever needed.

By July 1867, due to concerns on the steep rent (up to £300 a year), the Home's services moved to a building near the corner of Russell St and Little Collins St. Then in 1868, enough funds were acquired to build and move into a new permanent residence at Little Lonsdale St, between William and Queen St, across the street from the Mint Building.



The new home was a two-storey brick building, which due to funding shortages was only a portion of the planned building (extensions finishing in 1884), and reportedly could lodge as many as 40 people. In 1875, cooking classes were introduced in hoping to add to the skill sets of servants, and later dressmaking, clear starching and ironing were also introduced.

By the 1890s however, the Institute was becoming less relevant as a wider range of employment became available to women. Only 57 inmates were welcomed in 1896 alone, and the Institute eventually decided to sell the building. Elsewhere, the Victoria Hospital was established in 1896 by several women of the medical profession. It initially served as an outpatients' clinic at St. David's Hall, La Trobe St, and as it gained traction, a "Shilling fund" was made for a new building, raising over £3000. Renaming itself the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, they were able to buy the Governesses Institute's building for £2000 in July 1898 and re-opened at the site on July 12, 1899.

The Institute would survive as a Fund, its members having annual meetings at the St Paul's Cathedral into the 1930s. Among their achievements was donating to establishing a home for retired governesses and teachers, known as Lovell House in Caulfield, which opened in 1927.

As for the Home building, it would be demolished during the Hospital's expansion, but the hospital would remain on the site until 1946, when it moved to Bourke and Lonsdale St (later to be QV).

The site would then be run by a tuberculosis hospital, and then the Peter McCallum Clinic up until the 1990s, before being demolished for the construction of the County Court Building. ●

STATE MP

Upcoming events to celebrate our wonderful multicultural community

We are so lucky to live in such a diverse, multicultural community.

In Melbourne's inner city, it's not unusual to hear three or four languages spoken on a single tram ride, or to see different cultural events happening side by side in our parks and public spaces.

The start of the year brings many important cultural celebrations, and each one is a reminder of the richness that multicultural communities bring to our shared home.

Earlier this month, I was honoured to celebrate Thai Pongal with members of our local Tamil community at Parliament. Thai Pongal is a harvest festival, and a time for gratitude, generosity and family. The celebration was filled with dance, music and incredible food.

Sadly, several Tamil women shared with me that wearing their beautiful cultural



attire in public can sometimes make them feel unsafe. That's heartbreaking. No-one should feel that expressing their culture – through clothing, language or faith – puts them at risk.

While Melbourne proudly calls itself multicultural, we know that racism and stigma haven't disappeared. For some, they are a daily reality. At a time when divisive, far-right rhetoric is growing louder, it's more important than ever that we actively show support for our multicultural communities by standing alongside each other and celebrating openly.

On Saturday, March 7 at 2pm, I'll be hosting a Chinese New Year meetup at the Chinese Museum, and I'd love you to come along. It's a chance to meet people in your local community and celebrate the Year of the Horse with exciting live performances and refreshments. Everyone is welcome. You can find out more and RSVP at ellensandell.com/event/chinese-new-year-meetup.

[com/event/chinese-new-year-meetup](http://ellensandell.com/event/chinese-new-year-meetup).

And as the month of Ramadan comes to a close, I'm also proud to be co-hosting the Greens 13th annual Iftar, to share a meal with my community that symbolises reflection, gratitude and togetherness. This year's event will be held at Collingwood Town Hall on Thursday 12 March at 6:30pm. If you'd like to join us, please RSVP at greens.org.au/vic/iftar.

Our diversity is one of Melbourne's greatest strengths. Let's protect it, celebrate it and ensure everyone feels safe and proud to share who they are. ●

Ellen Sandell

STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE

OFFICE@ELLENSANDELL.COM





中国农历新年



今年的农历新年庆典由墨尔本唐人街商业协会主办，再次呈现了精彩纷呈的一天。活动充满了适合全家参与的欢乐气氛和令人惊叹的舞台表演，庆祝源远流长的中华文化，并在马年的精神鼓舞下，迎来充满力量、速度与成功的一年。



CBD小巷探索联动之道

当吉尔福德巷 (Guildford Lane) 和霍西尔巷 (Hosier Lane) 的“召集人”会面时，他们希望寻找彼此以及与其他小巷合作的方式，共同推进各自富有启发性的工作。近日，由“再生墨尔本” (Regen Melbourne) 举办的一场工作坊，进一步探讨了相关议题。

Jenny Denton

20多年前，社会建筑师凯瑟琳·麦克弗森与丈夫从南墨尔本搬到吉尔福德巷后，第一次尝试在巷子里摆放植物。然而不到10天，这些植物就消失了。

十年后，她再次尝试。那时，社区已经发生了变化。摩托车修理店大多已迁走，几家艺术画廊相继开业，街角还出现了第一家咖啡馆。她说，巷子里开始有了人流，也有了“对植物的好奇”。

随后，一些“微小的感激举动”开始出现并被传颂——有人在巷子里留下了一幅植物水彩画；附近社会保障房的居民也主动守护起天竺葵。

真正的转折点出现在2015至2016年墨尔本市政府的试点绿化项目启动之时。

凯瑟琳告诉CBD News：“那个项目是催化剂，而市政府努力将我们召集起来，定期会面并共同制定愿景，才是关键——这真正凝聚了社区。”

这也意味着她必须承诺照料这些植物。“我是个守信用的人，我的承诺就是我的保证。而且他们还真的说过：‘如果你不这么做，我们就把我们捐赠的植物搬走。’”

随着盆栽绿植不断增加，一位长期在当地经营商铺的店主——Matcha Inc的威尔逊表示，这些绿植“改变了巷子的生态”，在距离CBD仅一个街区的地方打造出“一片绿洲”。

它也成为聚会场所——不仅吸引游客带着亲友、相机、旅行团，甚至偶尔还有婚礼队伍前来，也成为本地居民交流的空间。

凯瑟琳说：“你遛狗时，会顺便给植物浇水，聊聊天，喝杯茶。”

“早晨我会下来喝咖啡，或者坐着织毛衣。那真的是一个可以静静待着、观察周围的地方，你也会在那里遇见人。”

在她结识的人中，有的是在日常闲聊中认识的，也有是在有组织的园艺讲座上认识的。其中一位邻居邀请她加入“野生动物花园”项目，还有来自其他市中心小巷的人们，对本土植物种植以及吉尔福德巷取得的成果表现出浓厚兴趣。

沼泽蜡菊加冕为墨尔本新官方市花

墨尔本的新官方市花正式揭晓，沼泽蜡菊 (Xerochrysum palustre) 在墨尔本市政府历来最受欢迎的社区参与活动之一中，以微弱优势胜出。

Sean Car

此次评选共有8500多人参与投票，累计投出近2.5万张选票，每位参与者可选择三种植物。这种高大、金黄色的本土雏菊获得近4000票，以仅200票的优势险胜普通比利纽扣花。巧克力百合 (3600票) 和紫色珊瑚豆 (3000票) 位列前四名。

市长尼克·里斯表示，这一结果印证了墨尔本人对这种濒危本土植物的喜爱。

“我们非常高兴沼泽蜡菊成为墨尔本的市花。坚韧、美丽而顽强，它是墨尔本的完美象征。”他说。

“沼泽蜡菊完全代表了墨尔本——坚韧、低调，却比外表看起来更强大。它是真正的黑马，也是当之无愧的赢家。”

在殖民时期之前，沼泽蜡菊广泛生长于墨尔本的湿地。如今，它成为这座城市独特生态系统的象征，也提醒人们在城市可持续发展过程中重视对土地的关怀与保护。

当花期来临——通常可持续近半年——其明亮的黄色花朵将被种植在墨尔本市政厅外的花箱中，为市中心增添色彩。该市花还将用于赠送新入籍澳大利亚公民和来访贵宾的市政礼品，以及各类艺术展示和全市范围内的绿化种植项目。

环境事务负责人戴维德·格里菲思议员表



示，此次评选激发了公众对墨尔本本土植物的广泛关注。

“这些闪耀金色光泽的雏菊在我们的湿地中繁衍了数千年。如今，作为市花，它们将自豪地融入墨尔本的未来。”他说。

“这为墨尔本人提供了一个绝佳机会，更深入了解身边生长的植物，并思考自己与本地环境之间的联系。”

完整投票结果显示，沼泽蜡菊位居第一，其后依次为普通比利纽扣花、巧克力百合、紫色珊瑚豆、山药雏菊 (Murnong)、高蓝铃花、袋鼠草、圆叶午花和南方鹤嘴草。

市政府表示，市花是其更广泛“花园城市”愿景的重要组成部分，体现了墨尔本珍视自然、尊重传统土地所有者并赞美独特环境的城市身份。

作为这一举措的一部分，墨尔本市政府还推出了“升级版”城市森林基金，提供最高100万澳元的配套资助，以支持全市范围内的绿化项目。

“市花提醒我们，在‘花园城市’墨尔本，自然从未远离。而如今，沼泽蜡菊将永远成为墨尔本故事的一部分。”里斯议员表示。

墨尔本市加强打击涂鸦力度，称街道更加整洁

墨尔本市政府表示，其强化的涂鸦管理措施已取得显著成效。更紧密的合作关系、改进的举报系统以及重新聚焦成本追回机制，构成了该战略的核心。

Sean Car

2月17日举行的“未来墨尔本委员会”会议上，市议员审议了一份详细的进展报告。报告概述了自2025年2月市议会通过决议、要求提升涂鸦管理成效以来所采取的各项行动。

在汇报中，市政府废物与回收部门主管文斯·马科利诺表示，倡议推动和合作伙伴关系仍将是市府策略的重点。

“除了本次决议所取得的行动和成果外，我们还将继续监控主要涂鸦者，并向维多利亚州警方提供相关数据。”他说。

“我们将寻求追回清除涂鸦的成本，并通过年度计划和预算流程进行报告。我们也会继续与维州警方定期会面，识别即将审理的涂鸦相关案件，在需要时由市府提供证据或受害影响陈述。”

马科利诺表示，市政府还将“与维多利亚州惩教部门密切合作，优先安排涂鸦违法者在墨尔本辖区内履行社区矫正令；寻求与第三方资产所有者和相关方建立新的协议和谅解备忘录；并根据地方法规要求，对影响市容的场所发出整治通知。”



报告指出，目前已达成多项关键协议，包括与亚拉市及维州道路管理局签署的谅解备忘录，以及与司法与社区安全部达成协议，优先安排涂鸦违法者在墨尔本市内完成社区矫正令。

根据该安排，违法者可被指示在本市辖区内从事相关工作，以强化市政府“你喷涂，你买单”的原则。

马科利诺还提到，“Snap Send Solve”举报应用程序的推广使用，使重复工单减少了40%以上。

“此外，我们的客户服务满意度提升了超过10个百分点，目前达到88%，客户服务评分为4.7分（满分5分），表现非常出色。”他说。

市长尼克·里斯对相关进展表示赞赏。

“回顾本届市议会任期内我们取得实质进展的事项，这项工作无疑名列前茅。”里斯议员表示。

WHAT'S ON March



There's something for everyone
this March in the city.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION BY HEART BODY SOUL
Heart Body Soul celebrates wellness and womanhood at Queen Victoria Market with yoga, healing, speakers, psychics, and 60+ conscious creators.

Queen Victoria Market
SUNDAY 8 MARCH, 10AM – 4PM



MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL
Celebrating 40 years, with a month-long, citywide program featuring favourites, rising stars, international acts, family shows and hundreds of performances.

Melbourne Town Hall
25 MARCH – 19 APRIL



FORUM 3000 – GREENLINE
Hosted by CBD residents' group Residents 3000, join other locals and hear an update about the council's Greenline vision for the north bank of the Yarra River.

Kelvin Club, 14-30 Melbourne Place
THURSDAY 5 MARCH, 6.30PM



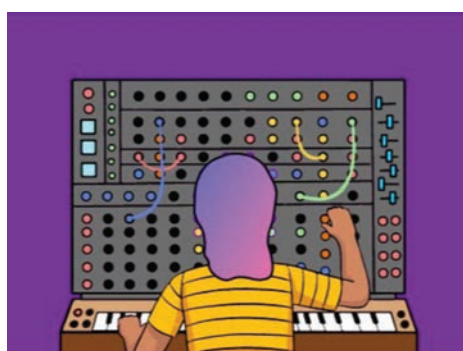
GAME WORLDS
Game Worlds spans 50 years of gaming, featuring 30+ titles from Minecraft to Hollow Knight: Silksong, 44 playable moments, rare materials and exclusive Australian-made microgames for ACMI.

ACMI, Flinders St, Melbourne
UNTIL 29 MARCH, 10AM – 5PM



MELBOURNE'S RIALTO RUN-UP
Rialto Run-Up returns March 22, challenging participants to climb 1,240 stairs up 54 floors, raising funds for Giant Steps' autism education, adult services and mental health support. Tickets \$50.

Rialto, 525 Collins St, Melbourne
SUNDAY 22 MARCH, 8AM – 12PM



SYNTHS FOR WOMEN, NON-BINARY AND TRANS PEOPLE
This workshop offers hands-on learning, one-on-one guidance, and creative sound exploration for all skill levels, focusing on connection, sharing, and experimentation.

The Atrium, Fed Square
SATURDAY 21 MARCH, 4PM – 7.30PM



SUMMER NIGHT MARKET
Melbourne's original night market celebrates 25 summers with food, drinks, shopping, live music, entertainment, and themed pop-ups, creating a vibrant, lively summer night atmosphere.

Queen Victoria Market
UNTIL 11 MARCH, 5PM – 10PM

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