



## QVM farewells the Caiafas

After 52 years M&G Caiafa bread and pastries has been sold. Three generations of the family said goodbye to the shop, and Michelle and her siblings worked their last day there on Sunday, March 15, having sold the business to new owners Two Bakers. More on page 14.

## Collins Street Precinct in Melbourne-first BID pilot as council backs new funding model

“  
A Melbourne-first trial of a new business-led funding model has been approved by the City of Melbourne, with the Collins Street Precinct emerging as one of the clearest early test cases for how the concept could work in the central city.”

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



At its March 17 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, councillors unanimously endorsed voluntary co-investment pilots in the Collins Street and Docklands precincts as a first step towards establishing formal Business Improvement Districts, or BIDs, in Melbourne.

While the pilots will share a common framework, the Collins Street Precinct appears particularly well placed to benefit from the model given the strength, profile and concentration of major businesses, property owners and institutional stakeholders already active along the corridor.

In simple terms, a BID is a way for businesses and landlords within a defined area to collectively fund improvements to their precinct, above and beyond what a council normally provides. Internationally, BID-style models have been used to fund things such as streetscape upgrades, lighting, cleaning, marketing, safety initiatives and precinct activations.

Under Melbourne's proposed approach, nothing compulsory is being introduced yet. Instead, the council will spend the next year working with Collins Street Precinct and the Docklands Chamber of Commerce on a voluntary pilot basis to test what kinds of projects businesses would support, how contributions might work and whether there is enough backing for a future special rate scheme.

The report adopted by councillors noted that both Collins Street Precinct and Docklands had already shown an appetite to explore such a scheme, following engagement with the two precinct groups. It said the pilots would provide a "low risk" and practical way to test the concept before any move to a formal BID structure.

Continued on page 3.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VOICE, PAGE 02

## Why do international students choose Melbourne?

ECONOMY, PAGE 07

## Strong rebound in Melbourne's CBD economy

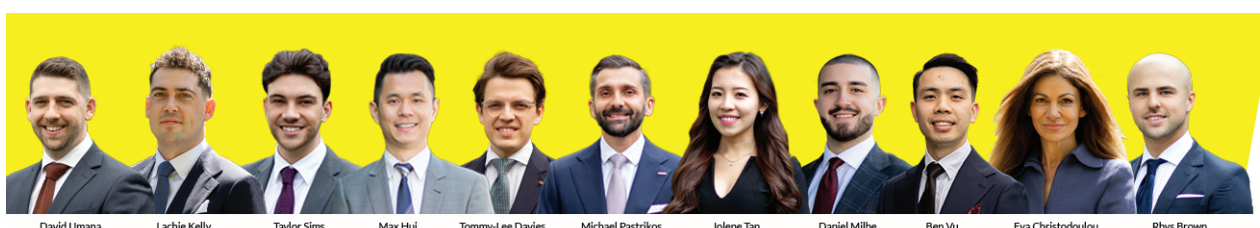
EVENTS, PAGE 12

## Comedy Festival returns for its 40th anniversary



## Hyperlocal News launches podcast exploring the city's big issues

A new podcast examining the ideas, debates and decisions shaping Melbourne's future has launched this month, with the first episode focusing on one of the city's most iconic institutions: Queen Victoria Market.



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Why do international students keep choosing Melbourne?

“ Amid the playful sound at the pedestrian signals, tram bells, and an unlimited spread of cuisines, Melbourne continues to rank as one of the best student cities in the world, currently sitting fifth in global QS rankings, and for good reason.

**WORDS BY**  
HARIKA POTNURU



Walking through its streets, you would not just hear “how are you, mate?” but also “ni hao”, “namaste”, “hola” and many more. This city is not only a thriving business hub but also a genuine home for students whose entire lives once fitted into two suitcases.

At the heart of what makes Melbourne so magnetic is its cultural diversity. One student says he “can see life here” – a statement that might sound simple at first, but he goes on to elaborate ...

“Melbourne offers the opportunity to build the life students came for: entry into a world-class university, global standard education, a job in their aspirational field, and a network built around the city and the companies that can make it all possible. It is not just a place to study but also a place to dream and grow.”



And many students feel it. They describe the city as welcoming, alive, and full of possibility. “There is a lot to do here,” one says, and that is no exaggeration. You will simply never run out of things.

There are so many ways to make Melbourne feel like home. Whether it is the food at Mr Ramen San, where a bowl hits the spot even on your very first try, or the endless opportunities to meet people and build friendships along the way.

Students are encouraged to be part of something bigger through volunteering programs with the City of Melbourne, the Couch and Future Forte, and much more. These experiences do not just build connections; they build character and skills too.

As one student puts it: “there are no rules here ... well, there are rules to keep you safe ... but mentally, there are no limits. You can have it all: a social life, amazing food,

recreation, an understanding of Melbourne, work, income, and on top of it all, your studies. It is a blend of everything. You can be everything, or nothing, at the same time.”

It is freedom. Beyond the social and academic, students also find Melbourne refreshingly practical. “Living here is pretty manageable,” another student says. “The trams and buses are pretty neat. The only pressure is when the free tram zone ends and I sometimes worry about the PTV officers,” she added with laughter. For students navigating a new city without a car, Melbourne’s public transport network makes everyday life feel less daunting.

But it is not just the infrastructure that keeps students grounded; it is the city itself.

“The other thing I love about Melbourne is nature,” the student continued. “I love it when I sometimes stroll around the city and stand by the Yarra River, watching people relax on the grass. It makes me feel grounded, and sometimes I just lie down too. It feels pretty amazing.”

In a life that can often feel overwhelming, those quiet moments by the river mean more than they seem.

Melbourne does not just give you possibilities. It gives you the strength to keep going. Sometimes it pushes you into situations you never asked for. But you push through, and you wake up again. Because behind every smile, there is a quiet resilience being built, one day at a time.

And that is perhaps why, above everything else, this city remains the top choice for students for both domestic and international.

*Harika Potnuru is a current international student at RMIT University studying a Master of Human Resource Management. She loves attending events in Melbourne, sharing student stories and volunteering. ●*

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# Collins Street Precinct in Melbourne-first BID pilot as council backs new funding model

Continued from page 1.

For Collins St, the idea has obvious appeal. The precinct remains one of Melbourne's most prestigious commercial addresses and is already home to a well-established business association, major landlords, luxury retail, hospitality venues and office towers. That kind of concentrated economic weight is precisely the sort of environment where BIDs have historically flourished overseas. Collins Street Precinct director Luke Harris said there were clear opportunities for the model to support improvements in areas such as destination marketing, lighting, streetscape upgrades and safety.

"We have observed the success of BIDs globally in different parts of the world and how they enable the rejuvenation and growth of an area through private-public partnerships," he said.

"There are some best-in-class examples in the UK and the US and we look forward to putting Melbourne on the global BID map." The council report points to major international examples such as New York's Times Square Alliance and London's New West End Company, both of which have used BID models to drive significant investment, stronger marketing and public realm upgrades in high-profile city precincts. It notes that BIDs are now a globally proven model for structured collaboration between business and government, funded primarily by property and business owners and focused on return on investment.

Speaking at the meeting, Lord Mayor Nick Reece said the proposal could help Melbourne join global cities like New York, London and Singapore in using a proven model to improve key precincts.

"Led by business, for business – this



Melbourne-first proposal could see us join global cities like New York, London and Singapore using this proven model," he said. Cr Reece said the city wanted to "breathe new life into our high streets and business precincts", with the voluntary pilot allowing local businesses to pool resources and

deliver improvements that attract visitors, boost trade and create more vibrant places. The council's city economy and business portfolio lead Cr Kevin Louey said businesses themselves had driven the proposal. "Businesses want to explore this model – that's why we're proposing pilots in

Docklands and Collins St. This model has transformed cities worldwide, now it's Melbourne's turn," he said.

At the committee meeting, officers said all 10 of Melbourne's business precinct associations had been approached, but Collins St and Docklands were the two that put their hands up as ready and willing to take part.

The report makes it clear that successful BIDs must be business-led rather than council-imposed, and that Melbourne's relatively fragmented business community means the council needs to take a proactive role in helping shape the local model.

Under the proposed timeline, structured workshops and precinct engagement will take place between March and June this year, followed by co-investment trials from July 2026 to April 2027. The council is due to receive a further report in May 2027 on the outcomes and the next steps toward any formal BID.

Importantly, any projects funded through the pilots are intended to be additional to standard council services, not a replacement for them. The report suggests likely focus areas could include public realm enhancements, destination marketing, promotions, events and activations.

For Collins St, that could open the door to a new layer of coordinated investment in one of the city's most important business spines at a time when the CBD is still working to rebuild momentum after the pandemic.

Any future formal BID would likely require a ballot process and, if it proceeded under a special rate scheme, compliance with the Local Government Act. Council officers also acknowledged that further education and deeper engagement with the wider business community would be needed before any final model could be settled. ●

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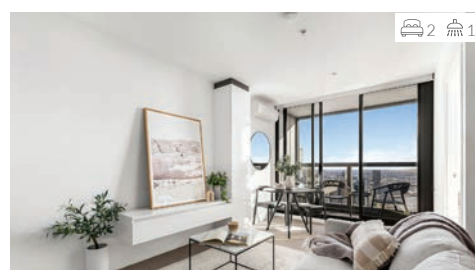


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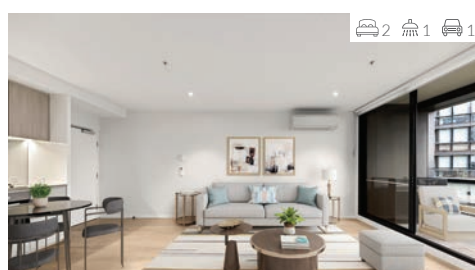
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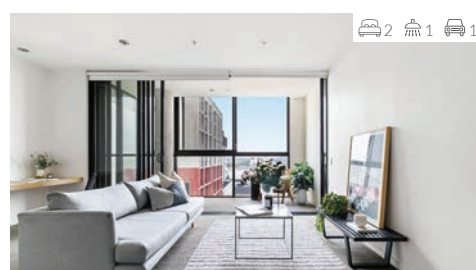
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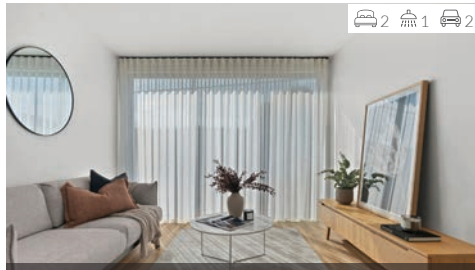
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 Jolene Tan

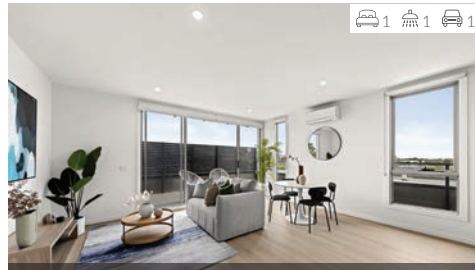
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 9.2/15 Collins Street, Melbourne (Office Space)  
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 806n/889 Collins Street, Docklands  
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 Max Hui

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 612/253 Bridge Road, Richmond  
 \$555,000 – \$590,000  
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 503/8 Garfield Street, Richmond  
 \$460,000 – \$500,000  
 David Umana

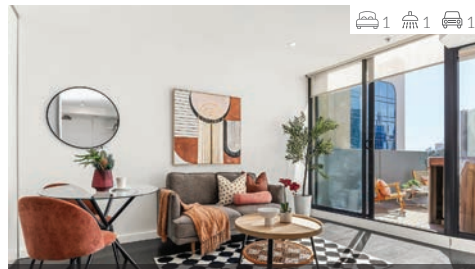
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 1/63 Cobden Street, Kew  
 \$660,000 – \$710,000  
 Daniel Milhe

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 302/450 Bell Street, Preston  
 \$350,000 – \$385,000  
 Max Hui

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 1722/18 Mt Alexander Road, Traralgon  
 \$370,000 – \$395,000  
 Max Hui

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 15/174W Toorak Road, South Yarra  
 Under Offer  
 Zekria Tawafi

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 1110/83 Queens Road, Melbourne  
 Under Offer  
 David Umana

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 416/338 Kings Way, South Melbourne  
 Sold for \$350,000  
 Daniel Milhe

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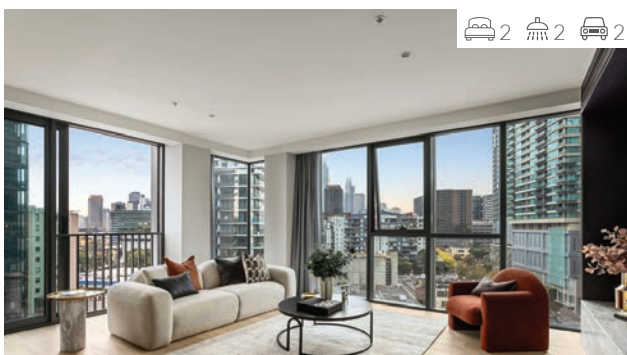
1207/55 Queens Road, Melbourne  
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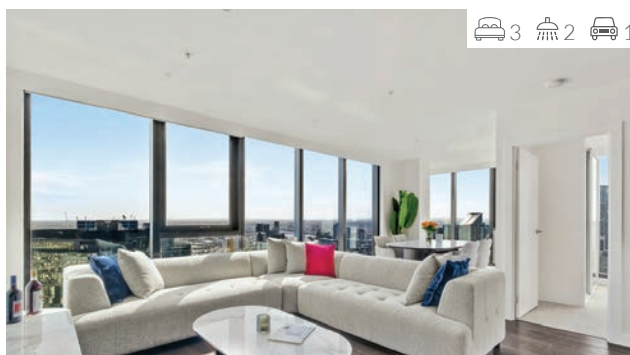
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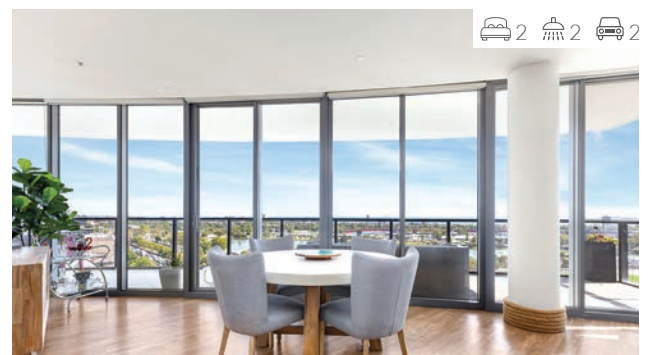
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# Labor Cr Davydd Griffiths to challenge Ellen Sandell for Melbourne

City of Melbourne councillor Davydd Griffiths has announced he will run as a Labor candidate for the seat of Melbourne at the upcoming state election in November.

WORDS BY  
JENNY DENTON



The 51-year-old, who was elected to the council in 2020, has been a member of the Labor Party for 30 years, and said there had been "a long, slow fuse" to his upcoming tilt at parliament.

He had put up his hand for Labor pre-selection because of the opportunity it offered to address issues that he was passionate about, Cr Griffiths said. "And obviously the lessons and things I've seen, being a local councillor have helped inform that," he told CBD News.

The Flemington resident will face a significant challenge lining up against incumbent Ellen Sandell, who has held Melbourne since she won it for the Greens in 2014.

In 2022 Ms Sandell received 37.29 per cent of the primary vote compared to Labor candidate Rebecca Thistleton's 30.65 per cent, and after preferences were distributed had 60.19 compared to Labor's 39.81 per cent.

The seats of Melbourne and Prahran were the first Greens lower house wins in Victoria.

Before that Melbourne had been held by the ALP since 1955 and for much of the first half of the 20th century.

Cr Griffiths said he wasn't motivated by the idea of winning the seat so much as a belief in the "real need for a strong local voice".

He sees "services for residents and locals, particularly as our population grows locally" as the key issue for the electorate.

While every level of government worked together, he said, "certainly some of those big things, like schools and hospitals and public transport, obviously fall into the bailiwick of the state government".

Born and raised in Bendigo, Cr Griffiths moved to Melbourne when he was 18 to study teaching and spent six years working at Glen Waverley Secondary College and Mac. Robertson Girls' High before moving into politics – first as an electorate officer, then a policy advisor in health, mental health and education to ministers in the Victorian parliament.

After leaving policy work and spending a few years as a stay-at-home dad, he made the unusual shift to hospitality, setting up a beer and burger bar in Macaulay Rd with a friend, which they operated for just under two years, before buying and running the Royal Mail Hotel on Spencer St for another two-and-a-half years.

As a councillor he has been involved in a broad range of areas, including education, infrastructure and economics, and is currently the portfolio lead for environment and deputy for community, health and city services.

Cr Griffiths said his family – wife, former councillor and former Labor member for Melbourne Jen Kanis, and 14-year-old son, Blake – had played a genuinely meaningful role in the council work he had done, with Blake also providing a constant, very real link to the future.

As for the unusual Welsh spelling of his first name, Davydd, "it doesn't cause me any grief at all," Cr Griffiths said.

"It makes you stand out, so people don't forget you, and that's why you've got to make sure that you're always delivering, because they can track you down pretty easily."



Asked if he would remain on the council until the state election in November, Cr Griffiths said he would be following the appropriate protocols.

If there is a need to replace him, it's highly likely that his fellow Labor candidate at the 2024 election Zainab Abdi Sheikh – who ran second on the group's councillor ticket – would replace him on council.

With the 2024 Labor ticket having received more than 0.5 quotas and preferences from other teams, it's anticipated that if Cr Griffiths were to defeat Ms Sandell, Ms Sheikh would become the first woman of African descent to serve on the City of Melbourne.

Ms Sheikh is a dedicated and passionate senior community development worker who currently serves as operational manager at Somali Women's Development Association Inc. and as a community

advisory committee member at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

And there could be more appetite for change in Melbourne. Cr Griffiths will take a lot of heart from last year's federal election, where new Labor MP Sarah Witty claimed the seat of Melbourne from Adam Bandt, who had held the seat for the Greens since 2010.

A beer lover and the president of the Flemington and Kensington Bowling Club, Cr Griffiths said that being pre-selected for the Labor Party was an opportunity "lots of really good people don't get" and was something he was "genuinely really honoured" by.

"To have that chance is really meaningful to me, it's meaningful to my family and I want to make every post a winner now that that's happened," he said. ●

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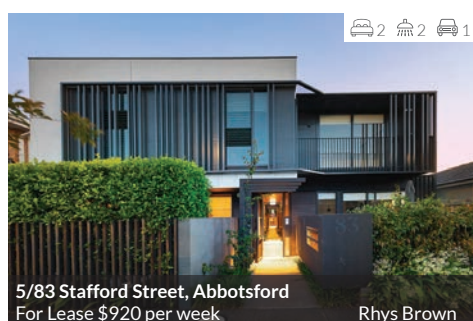


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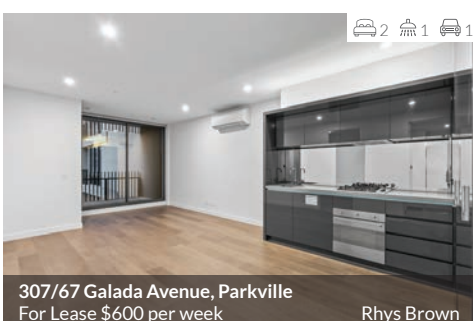
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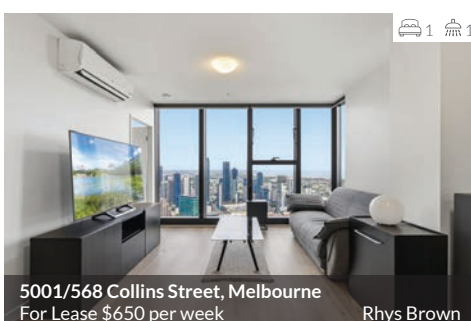
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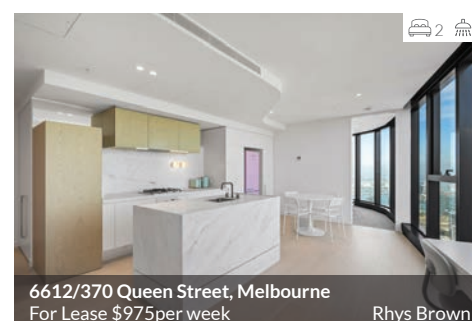
307/67 Galada Avenue, Parkville  
For Lease \$600 per week

Rhys Brown



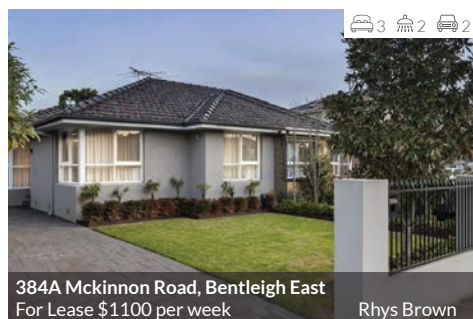
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Rhys Brown



384A Mckinnon Road, Bentleigh East  
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Rhys Brown



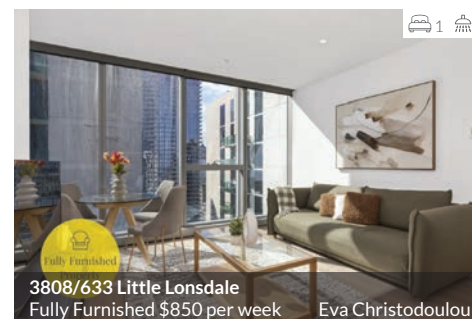
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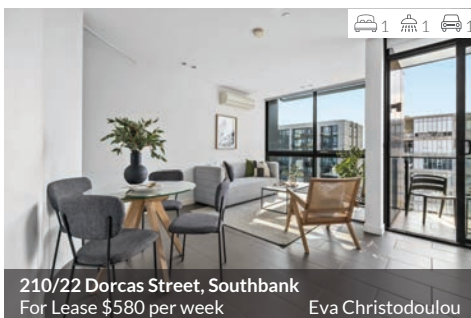
2403/88 Queensbridge Street, Southbank  
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The bustling Collins Street precinct is part of this Melbourne-first (photo by Arianna Leggiero)

## POWER TO THE PRECINCTS

One of Melbourne's most iconic CBD precincts, Collins Street, could soon level up.

Melbourne is a global powerhouse when it comes to what it can offer – unmissable events, unrivalled on the world sporting stage, a melting pot of senses, tastes and cultures and a business mecca. What if it could get better?

We're exploring a new way to work closer with businesses to help achieve shared goals – one that would put local precincts in the driver's seat and see every Melburnian reap the rewards.

Across Melbourne, business owners see opportunities every day to improve their streets, attract more visitors, and strengthen their local economy.

The City of Melbourne is exploring a new way to partner with businesses to help bring these ideas to life.

By pooling resources, businesses could invest in improvements that would take their precincts to the next level.

On Tuesday 17 March 2026, councillors discussed trialing a Voluntary Co-investment Pilot in the Docklands and Collins Street precincts – and agreed unanimously to give it a go.

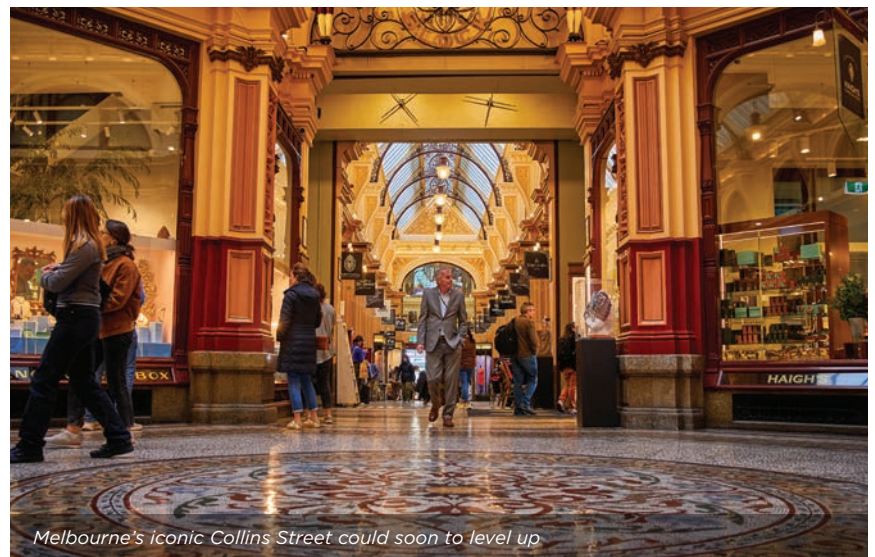
In these private-public partnership models, local businesses identified improvements they wanted to see in their areas and worked with councils to deliver them.

Participation in the proposed City of Melbourne trial would be completely voluntary.

Globally, Business Improvement Districts generate significant economic value. They are tailored to local contexts and often supported by a range of complementary funding sources.

Luke Harris, President of the Collins Street Precinct, is excited to see councillors discuss the trial.

"We have observed the success of this strategy in different parts of the world and how they enable the rejuvenation and growth of an area through private-public partnerships.



Melbourne's iconic Collins Street could soon to level up

There are some best in class examples in the UK and the US, and we look forward to putting Melbourne on the global BID map."

Daniel Hibbard, President of Docklands Chamber, agrees.

"We are excited to understand more about the huge potential a collaborative effort of this nature can provide in addressing some of Docklands' major need areas."

"These initiatives can put the direction of change in the hands of those who care most, enabling the outcome of achieving the greatest positive impact for the precinct."

Now that the pilot is endorsed, businesses in the Docklands and Collins Street precincts will help shape priorities through a series of co-design workshops. They will decide on the upgrades they want to see, and the possibilities are endless.

Whether it's better curated retail offerings, more lighting and accessible street furniture, or improved signage – this model could put the power in the hands of locals.

Melbourne is a city full of bright ideas, just waiting for the chance to make them a reality. This pilot could be that chance.

Right now, more than 2,000 Business Improvement Districts operate worldwide – increasing revenue, attracting more visitors, and transforming local economies.

Will Melbourne join them?



Daniel Hibbard, President of Docklands Chamber, is keen to get started on the trial



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## Record December caps strong rebound in Melbourne's CBD economy

Melbourne's CBD economy ended 2025 on a high, with December recording the biggest spending month ever captured in the City of Melbourne's economic data, according to the council's latest Economy Snapshot.

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



The March 2026 snapshot paints an increasingly upbeat picture for the central city, showing rising consumer spending, stronger pedestrian traffic, more retail and hospitality businesses, and a growing number of previously vacant shopfronts being brought back to life.

The headline figure is December's all-time spending record across the municipality, which reached \$1.205 billion, ahead of December 2024's \$1.136 billion and above previous December peaks in 2022 and 2023. The snapshot notes this was the highest spending level ever recorded by the City of Melbourne, even when adjusted for inflation in 2025 dollars.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said the figures confirmed Melbourne's strength as a retail destination.

"Melbourne is officially Australia's shopping capital – and the latest figures show that December was the biggest spending month on record in the city," he said.

Cr Reece added that new flagship retail openings were helping drive momentum, particularly in the core city.

"With new flagship stores like MECCA and Rodd & Gunn opening their doors and more big names like MUJI set to follow, Bourke Street Mall is the beating heart of Melbourne's retail scene."

The snapshot points to the opening of major new stores such as Pop Mart and MECCA's flagship along Bourke Street Mall as key contributors to stronger visitation and spending through the second half of the year. It also shows pedestrian traffic near the Bourke Street Mall south sensor was up sharply in 2025 compared with 2024, with increases of 39 per cent in November and 37 per cent in December. Across the April to December period, monthly pedestrian growth turned strongly positive from late winter onward.

That rebound has been matched by improvement at street level. In the six months to November 2025, 84 vacant shopfronts were reactivated across the municipality, including 43 in the CBD, representing a 13.5 per cent reactivation rate in both areas.

"It's fantastic to see so many exciting shopfronts lighting up the city, powered by low vacancy rates," Cr Reece said.

The council's latest data also shows the retail and hospitality base continuing to expand. In 2024 there were 4570 retail and hospitality businesses operating across the municipality, up by 273 businesses, or eight per cent, since 2022. Food and beverage was the standout sector, adding 167 cafes, bars and restaurants, while retail added 77 businesses. The growth also translated into jobs, with food and beverage creating nearly 4000 new positions and retail adding almost 2400 more between 2022 and 2024.

"Stronger pedestrian numbers indicate people are just loving the city as a place to shop, dine and experience everything Melbourne has to offer," the Lord Mayor said.

The latest snapshot suggests the CBD's recovery is no longer just about bouncing back from the pandemic, but about building fresh momentum. While challenges remain in parts of the central city, the combination of record spending, busier streets and more occupied shopfronts points to a retail core that is regaining confidence.

And with Melbourne recently named *Time Out's* best city in the world, the council is betting that the city's retail revival still has more room to run. ●

## Citizen scientists log the city's top three insects

Insects were under the magnifying glass around the City of Melbourne in the first week of March, with the launch of a local guide to the critters followed by a series of events aimed at getting to know them.

WORDS BY  
JENNY DENTON



Insects play a vital role in the environment, helping to pollinate plants, maintain healthy soils, control pests, and provide food for bigger animals. In the City of Melbourne more than 1500 species call the parks and gardens home.

Many species are facing extinction as a result of habitat loss, pollution and climate change and there are several key ways to help.

So reads the City of Melbourne's new eye-opening insect guide, which recommends planting indigenous species; keeping rocks, logs and leaves lying around; avoiding chemicals; turning off lights at night; and contributing to science by observing and recording local insects.

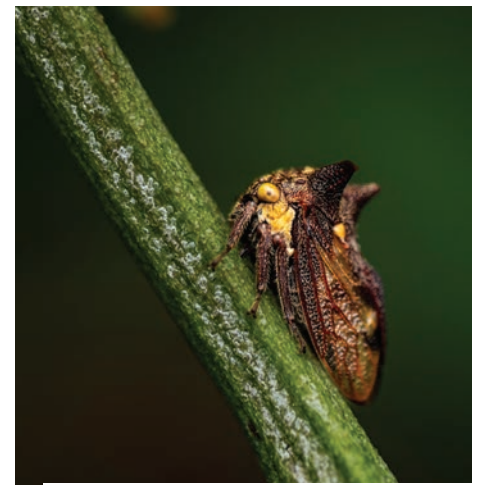
Produced by council staff, together with Federation Square and the community organisation Heartscapes, and "native bee man" Clancy Lester, the simple, 16-page guide features information on insect anatomy and metamorphosis and illustrated pages on different categories of the critters. It also contains facts such as: "One in four of all animals on Earth are beetles".

According to Cr Davydd Griffiths, the council's portfolio lead for environment, since its creators officially launched the guide on February 28 they had run out of copies.

"I don't think we expected it to be as popular as it was," Cr Griffiths said.

The same was true of the launch event at Federation Square venue The Edge, which saw people turned away.

The crowd of 500 heard from a range of leaders involved in insect-friendly initiatives, including the City of Melbourne's Senior Urban Forester; the founder of a community-led "pollinator corridor" project from Westgate Park to the Botanic Gardens, and representatives from the Melbourne Zoo and new Melbourne Arts Precinct



Insect BioBlitz iNaturalist photo competition winner – a tri-horned treehopper.  
Photo: Jason Walters.

garden, Laak Boordap.

City of Melbourne resident Heather Wheat told CBD News the guide and its launch were "fantastic".

An avid gardener, Ms Wheat already monitors and encourages her local insect populations.

The guide, which contains "a good spectrum of beetles and wasps and bugs and butterflies and other things", was "really good for raising awareness of what's around," she said.

"And once you've seen the insects, you think, 'oh, gee this is pretty,' and you start looking at them differently."

The launch of the guide kicked off a week of "BioBlitz" sessions and other events around the municipality, from March 1 to 8, where attendees logged insect sightings using crowd science app iNaturalist and took part in walks and other expert-led activities.

According to Cr Griffiths, more than 800 individual observations were made at the BioBlitz events, with 237 different species recorded.

Of these, the top three were the chequered cuckoo bee, lesser grass blue butterfly and wingless grasshopper, he said.

The series of events had promoted positive actions people could take such as building "bee hotels", planting insect habitat, linking green spaces and avoiding pesticides, as well as recording insect sightings, he said.

"The enthusiasm Melburnians have shown for going out and engaging with them is really exciting." ●

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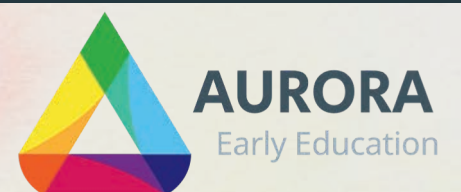
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## SECONDS THAT SAVED A LIFE

Another potentially life-saving free swim lesson in progress

When Anna (name changed to protect privacy) signed up for a free adult swimming program in Melbourne last summer, she never imagined it would one day help her save her child's life.

Anna, who moved to Australia from Malaysia 14 years ago, had never learned to swim growing up.

"Culturally, water safety isn't really a thing. Not being able to swim was perfectly acceptable in Malaysia," Anna said.

In January 2025, she noticed a City of Melbourne initiative offering free, intensive swimming lessons and decided to enrol.

"I thought, give it a go and see how it works, particularly over that summer period in January ... and I got so much out of it."

The five-day intensive course at Melbourne City Baths was challenging. Anna describes herself as a weak swimmer, but by the end of the program she had learned basic survival techniques and a few strokes.

"I was still weak, but I could go half a lap. I feel like you almost have to be brave."



Anna and her son at the beach

That bravery proved critical months later.

Last December, Anna and her family were on holiday overseas, staying at a busy resort with extended family. The pool was crowded with children playing on an inflatable obstacle course.

Her youngest son, five-year-old Mark, couldn't swim and was usually nervous around water, but that day he was growing in confidence as he played in the shallows with an inflatable ring.

Anna was standing at the pool's edge, watching Mark while also keeping an eye on her older children.

"We've got multiple cousins everywhere," Anna recalls.

In the chaos of the pool, Mark slipped off the obstacle course into water that was 1.4 metres deep and over his head.

"When I looked up, I saw him by the side of the structure, submerged and not moving.

"My heart raced and immediately I just screamed for help."

Anna was the closest adult. Despite knowing she wasn't a strong swimmer, she jumped in and swam about 20 metres to reach her son.

When she got to him, Mark was unconscious, floating vertically just below the surface.

With help, Anna dragged him to the pool's edge, where her husband, who is trained in CPR, began resuscitation. Mark responded almost immediately.

"He was back to breathing. We were just so grateful."

"Until that day, not being able to swim had never felt life-threatening. That moment showed me how crucial it was and ultimately saved my son's life."

Anna says without the free lessons, she wouldn't have had the confidence to act.



Free swimming lessons in January at City Baths

"I wouldn't have even tried, and if I hadn't, who knows what the outcome would have been?"

Last year, 357 people drowned in Australia — a figure 27 per cent higher than the 10-year average — reinforcing why the City of Melbourne continues to fund free swimming lessons.

Since launching in 2025, the City of Melbourne's free swimming program has delivered more than 5,000 lessons to over 1,000 people.

Today, Mark can confidently swim five metres and kick back up from under the pool.

"We are just so grateful to the City of Melbourne and feel very lucky to be part of a Council that has really thought through these programs," Anna said.

"Without those free swimming lessons, I may never have had the impetus to learn to swim, and the outcome of that day could have been different."

While our free summer swimming lessons program has closed for 2026, you can book in for regular swimming lessons at our recreation centres. All ages and abilities welcome.

- Melbourne City Baths (year-round indoor pool)
- Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation Centre [External link](#) (year-round indoor pool)
- Carlton Baths [External link](#) (seasonal outdoor pool)
- North Melbourne Recreation Centre [External link](#) (seasonal outdoor pool)

# Ghost bikes become flashpoint between council and cycling advocates

“Decommissioned, white-painted “ghost bikes” left at sites where riders have died are emerging as a contested issue between the City of Melbourne and cycling groups, which claim they are memorials and a reminder of the need for better bike lanes.

“We’re kind of at the point that we are taking the same stance as the City of Melbourne, where we’re going to do whatever it takes to keep our monuments or memorials in place, and we’ll just keep putting them back.”

A City of Melbourne “informal policy” of removing ghost bikes was revealed at a February Future Melbourne Committee meeting, when Mr Moon asked, in the wake of the disappearance of another ghost bike – commemorating 19-year-old cyclist and crash victim Will Richter, in Kensington – if the council would agree to keep the bikes in place.

Given the council’s commitment to protecting memorials, would it recognise “informal road death memorials such as ghost bikes as legitimate memorials worthy of protection and respectful treatment,” Moon asked.

“Much like flowers, these white bicycles mark a life lost and serve as a quiet reminder of the human cost with our road trauma.”

“For grieving families, friends and the broader cycling community these memorials are deeply meaningful.”

“These bikes are an act of remembrance for them.”

In response, Lord Mayor Nick Reece had described the City’s practice of leaving ghost bikes in place for “a period of time” before removing them.

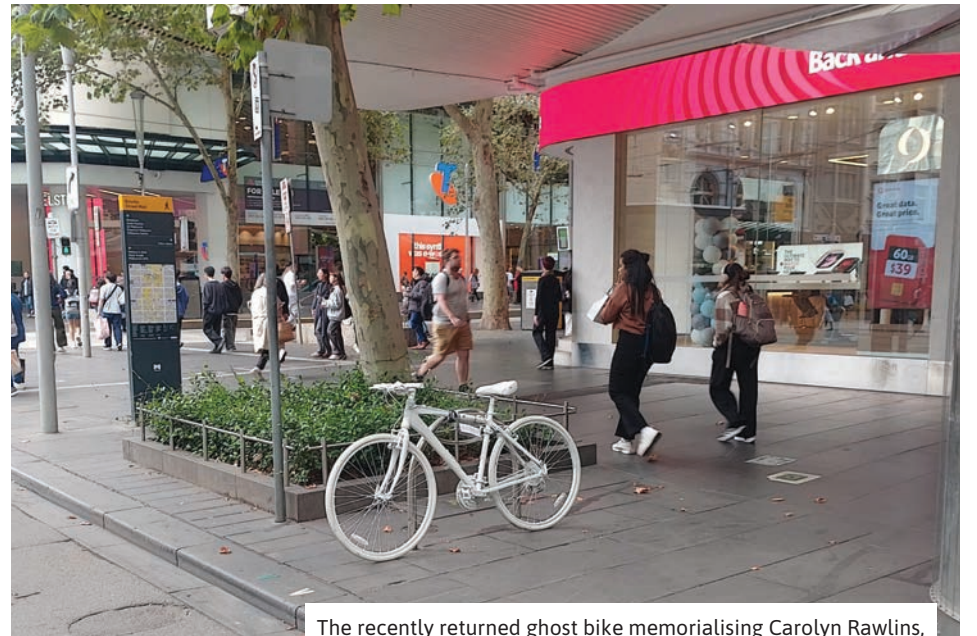
This was due to a requirement to balance the needs of pedestrians, cars, bikes, street life and visitors, he said.

He also advised that the bikes didn’t fall within the scope of a council “plaques and memorials” policy.

However, the Lord Mayor suggested that the treatment of the bikes could be reviewed.

“At the very least we should have a position at the City on something as important as this,” he said.

Speaking later to *CBD News*, Mr Moon



The recently returned ghost bike memorialising Carolyn Rawlins, who was killed on Swanston St in 2008. Photo: Bike Melbourne.

WORDS BY  
JENNY DENTON



In March, cycling activists returned a ghost bike to Swanston St in memory of 33-year-old rider Carolyn Rawlins, who died after being hit by a tourist bus there in 2008.

A ghost bike was first left at the scene of the crash, on the corner of Bourke St, in the weeks after the Parkville woman’s death 17 years ago.

The latest white-painted bike, now locked to a metal hoop adjacent to the Bourke St mall, had previously been removed by council workers a couple of months after it was put in place and was left in lost property.

Cycling advocate Aaron Moon said this time the activists planned to keep the ghost bike’s tyres pumped up and move it around to stop it from being taken.

“It’s devastating for everyone when a 33-year-old 12-week pregnant woman dies on Swanston St. It should be remembered by everyone,” Mr Moon said.

reiterated that ghost bikes in Melbourne were part of a longstanding global movement, whose primary purpose was “to highlight that the roads people ride on are not safe enough at the current time”.

The council’s argument that footpaths were too crowded to accommodate them felt like “a bit of a strawman argument,” he said, considering the use of bikes by “a lot of businesses” that locked them in the street to display advertising material – a practice he claimed the council wasn’t clamping down on.

More recently, following a March 17 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, Mr Mr Moon said the cycling community had been shocked and “extremely disappointed” to learn that the City of Melbourne had the ghost bike on the corner of Macaulay and

Rankins roads in Kensington removed.

After the council earlier denied responsibility for taking it, the cycling community had been “trying to track it down” and were left to conclude it had been stolen, Mr Moon said.

Also coming to light at the meeting was news that the council was discussing the creation of a memorial to Will Richter with Will’s family.

This was a very positive development, Mr Moon said, but he was unsure if the honour would be extended to other, less well-known road victims.

“I’m really happy about Will getting a memorial but I wonder: is there a longer-term solution as well?” he said.

“Or will they just make better bike lanes so that this doesn’t happen again?” ●

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## Helen Silver appointed new president of State Library Victoria

State Library Victoria will enter its next chapter under new leadership, with respected public sector figure Helen Silver AO appointed as the 25th president of the Library Board of Victoria.

WORDS BY SEAN CAR



The appointment, announced by Creative Industries Minister Colin Brooks, comes as the State Library marks its 170th anniversary and follows the retirement of Christine Christian AO, who served on the board from 2013 and as president since 2021.

Ms Silver is one of Victoria's most experienced governance figures, with a career spanning senior roles in both the public and private sectors. She served as secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet from 2008 to 2013 and has also held leadership and board roles across the arts, infrastructure, banking and insurance sectors.

She currently chairs the Australian Children's Television Foundation and has previously served on the boards of the Victorian Arts Centre Trust and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

In a statement, Ms Silver said she was honoured to take on the role.

"The library's mission is vital, to provide free access to knowledge, support research and learning, and enrich the lives of all Victorians," she said.

"I look forward to supporting the library's continued service to the community and helping expand opportunities for every Victorian to discover, learn, and connect."

The appointment has been widely welcomed as a strong and experienced choice for one of Victoria's most important public institutions, particularly given Ms Silver's long-standing links to the creative and cultural sectors.

At the same time, some concerns have been raised in light of her role leading the Silver Review into the Victorian Public Service, with critics questioning whether her appointment will reassure those still uneasy after recent tensions over the library's direction.

The leadership change comes only weeks after a significant backlash over a proposed reorganisation at the State Library, which would have reduced public-facing librarian roles in favour of more digitally focused services. The proposal was ultimately withdrawn following fierce opposition from staff, union members, writers, academics and library users, who argued the institution's core public service role was under threat.

That controversy placed fresh scrutiny on the library's board and executive leadership, and sharpened debate about how the institution should evolve while preserving its traditional strengths, particularly its specialist staff and face-to-face research support.

Against that backdrop, Ms Silver's appointment is likely to be closely watched by the library's many stakeholders, not only as a matter of governance but as a signal of how the institution intends to balance reform with trust.

Minister Brooks praised Ms Silver as an "extraordinary leader" and also paid tribute to outgoing president Christine Christian for her leadership and long service.

During her tenure, Ms Christian championed free access to the library's spaces and collections and supported initiatives such as StartSpace, the library's free entrepreneurial hub.

For now, the appointment marks both a transition and a reset moment for the State Library, as it looks to move beyond recent internal unrest and into what the government is calling its "next era". ●

## Hidden secret of Melbourne: Athenaeum Library

Above the trundling trams, ever-present cars and the comings and goings of bikes and pedestrians on Collins St sits a venue that has been there since Melbourne's beginnings.

WORDS BY JENNY DENTON



James Baker at the Melbourne Athenaeum Library circulation desk.

The Athenaeum Library, "a quiet, space in the heart of the city," is the oldest library in Victoria and "one of Melbourne's better kept secrets", according to librarian James Baker, who has worked there for more than a decade.

Opened as a mechanics' institute in 1839, just four years after Melbourne was founded, the library has been owned and controlled by its members ever since.

"We've been here since 1839, and for all of that time we've had a library and loaned books," Mr Baker said.

"But we're a lot more than that. We have a cultural program that includes music performances, author talks, book launches – all sorts of things like that."

"In the past we had an art gallery, and we still have some artwork related to that, including an Arthur Streeton, *The Ruins of Peronne*."

Behind the neoclassical façade of its Collins St address – whose 1880s renovation saw a statue of namesake goddess Athena installed – the library exudes an atmosphere of sanctuary due to its space, quiet and old-world charm.

Tables and chairs sit in front of large windows looking out onto the foliage of plane trees and the Regent Theatre opposite.

Original timber bookcases, supplemented with more recently made shelves modelled on them line the high-ceilinged room, with a large, curved 1920s librarians' desk sitting at the centre of it.

Other historical features include a mermaid-themed brass wall lamp, which once ran on oil, a suggestion book dating back to 1871, a brass sign advertising membership for one guinea a year, and the 1930s lift – its engine recently replaced – said to be the oldest working lift in Melbourne.

At the same time, with its current collections, colourful artwork and flyers for coming events, the library conveys a contemporary atmosphere.

On display you might find a new release by best-selling author Di Morrissey and a travel guide to Southeast Asia near a copy of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.

"We do try and keep as diverse a collection as possible while trying also to make sure we're meeting the tastes and interests of our members," Mr Baker said.

The library was particularly "strong" on biography and crime fiction and had separate sub-genres of historical and romance fiction, horror and sci fi-fantasy, he said.

It also stocked DVDs.

The librarian said staff try to make the room as welcoming and relaxing and the

resources as useful as possible.

While anyone can have a quick look around, to settle into the comfy chairs and make use of the desks and the tea and coffee station you need to take out a membership.

For \$99 a year – \$89 concession and \$30 for kids – that entitles you to six-day-a-week access, free cultural events and borrowing up to 30 books at a time.

"We do encourage people to come up and check out the space because we are one of Melbourne's best kept secrets," Mr Baker said.

"Actually, too well kept for our liking." ●



This feature is proudly supported by Hidden Secrets Tours. To find out more:

[hiddensecretstours.com](http://hiddensecretstours.com) or call 9663 3358 to book a tour

## Hyperlocal News launches *Future Melbourne* podcast

**A new podcast examining the ideas, debates and decisions shaping Melbourne's future is continuing to build momentum this month, with new episodes now live on the city economy and Docklands, and another on housing to be released next.**

Produced by Hyperlocal News, the publisher of *CBD News* and its network of local newspapers across the City of Melbourne, *Future Melbourne* aims to provide a platform for deeper conversations about how the city is evolving and what lies ahead.

Hosted by Hyperlocal News publisher and editor Sean Car, the podcast features interviews with key voices from across Melbourne's civic, planning, business and cultural sectors, unpacking the challenges and opportunities facing the city.

The series launched with its first episode focusing on one of Melbourne's most iconic institutions, Queen Victoria Market, with CEO Matt Elliott discussing the precinct's ongoing renewal and the future of one of the city's most recognisable public spaces.

Since then, the podcast has expanded into some of the biggest questions facing the municipality.

A recent episode features former City of Melbourne councillor, Crikey founder and shareholder activist Stephen Mayne, who joins the program to discuss the future of Melbourne's CBD and the economic forces shaping it in the years since the pandemic.

That conversation explores the long shadow of COVID on the central city, from office vacancies and hybrid work to what the City of Melbourne can realistically do to help drive economic recovery and renewed activity in the CBD.

Another new episode, now also live, turns the spotlight on Docklands, with former City of Melbourne councillor Jamal Hakim joining the podcast to discuss the waterfront precinct's challenges, opportunities and long-running revitalisation efforts.

The next episode will examine housing pressures and affordability challenges in the City of Melbourne, with Housing All Australians founder Rob Pradolin joining the conversation.

Mr Car said the podcast was created to extend the role Hyperlocal News has long played in covering local issues and community conversations across the municipality.

"For many years our newspapers have reported on the key decisions shaping Melbourne, from planning and development to major civic projects and local issues affecting our neighbourhoods," Mr Car said.

"The podcast gives us a new platform to take those conversations further and to hear directly from the people involved in shaping the city's future."

He said the idea behind *Future Melbourne* was to provide thoughtful, accessible discussions about topics that often shape everyday life in the city but can be difficult to unpack in traditional news formats.

The series is supported by Good One Creative, with episodes set to cover a wide range of topics affecting Melbourne's future,



including Arden-Macaulay, Fishermans Bend, the Melbourne Arts Precinct, the future of Lygon St, the Yarra River, city safety and the role of public space in shaping community life.

Mr Car said following an initial pilot of 12 episodes, the aim was to build the podcast into an ongoing forum for informed discussion about the direction of the city.

The *Future Melbourne* podcast is produced by Hyperlocal News and is available online now, with new episodes released weekly on Wednesdays. ●



## Queen Victoria Market records strongest visitation in years despite renewal works

“  
Queen Victoria Market has recorded its strongest visitation in years, with a new annual report showing the historic precinct continues to draw growing crowds even as major renewal works reshape the site.

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



The annual report, noted by councillors at the City of Melbourne's February 24 council meeting, shows the market welcomed 7.9 million day market visitors in 2024-25, representing a 48 per cent increase since mid-2022 and marking a third consecutive year of visitation growth. The report says that growth has continued despite the disruption of major construction works across the precinct.

Customer satisfaction also remained high, with the market scoring 8.9 out of 10, one of its strongest recent results, while its Net Promoter Score also improved, signalling continued confidence from shoppers as renewal continues. The annual report says those results show customers value both the market's current offer and the longer-term transformation taking shape.

A notable trend in the latest figures is the market's growing appeal to younger

shoppers, with six in 10 visitors now aged under 50. The annual report also points to a new generation of traders emerging at the market, with 20 new businesses establishing during the year and the number of day traders rising from 701 to 723.

That is a particularly strong result given the scale of works still under way.

Speaking at the February 24 meeting, Lord Mayor Nick Reece said the market had recorded 8.5 million visitors over the year and described it as “the Southern Hemisphere's largest open air market”.

“We should be very proud of everything that's been achieved at QVM,” Cr Reece said, thanking chair Jane Fenton, the board, and chief executive Matt Elliott.

The report paints a picture of a market that is not only recovering strongly but adapting. It notes that the refreshed “Melbourne's Home of Fresh” campaign, a stronger digital presence, seasonal events and an expanding night market program have all helped build visitation and engagement. Forty night market events across four seasonal programs attracted more than 670,000 additional visitors, while website traffic rose from 3.5 million to 3.7 million page views. Email newsletter open rates also jumped from 38 per cent to 58 per cent.

The market's broader business health was more mixed. Queen Victoria Market Pty Ltd reported a loss of \$654,975 for 2024-25, compared with a profit of \$419,513 in 2023-24, although the previous year included a \$1 million City of Melbourne grant. Total revenue rose to \$27.36 million from \$25.96 million, with market rental revenue climbing to \$18.48 million.

Alongside the annual report, councillors also received the latest update on the Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal Program, which confirmed total expenditure since 2013 had reached \$212 million as at December 31, 2025. The quarterly report



said the new seven-level Trader Shed had reached a major milestone, with structural works almost finished, while water main upgrades had commenced and the Deli Lane enhancement was nearing completion. Planning is also continuing on the Queen Street public realm, historic market buildings, a future waste solution and Gurrwa Place.

Cr Reece said he was pleased the renewal program was continuing to progress well.

“The Trader Shed is very, very close to structural completion which is a major

milestone,” he said, describing it as a critical part of building a market fit for the 21st century.

For the city, the latest report offers reassurance that even amid the ongoing disruption, Queen Victoria Market remains one of Melbourne's most resilient and magnetic public places.

The challenge now is to maintain that momentum as the next phase of renewal unfolds. But if the latest numbers are any guide, shoppers and traders alike are continuing to back the market's future. ●

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Oona Doherty's *Hard to Be Soft: A Belfast Prayer*.

## RISING returns with city-wide winter program led by music, dance and spectacle

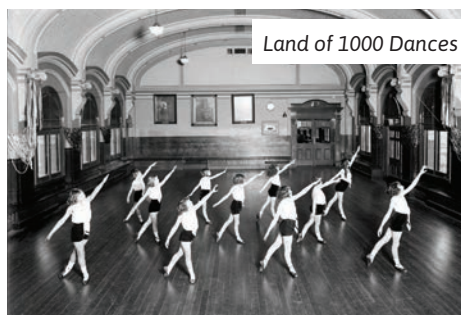
Melbourne's signature winter arts festival will return in late May with an expansive 2026 program set to transform the city into a stage for music, dance, performance and public art.

WORDS BY SEAN CAR



Running from May 27 to June 8, RISING will present more than 100 events featuring 376 artists, including seven world premieres and 11 Australian premieres, across theatres, town halls, galleries, churches, civic spaces and underground venues throughout the CBD and beyond.

The festival, now firmly established as



Land of 1000 Dances

one of Melbourne's major cultural drawcards, is promising another ambitious city-wide takeover, with a particular focus this year on music and movement.

At the heart of the program is the launch of the inaugural Australian Dance Biennale, a new platform that will be presented by RISING every two years and unfold across theatres, public spaces, club nights and dance classes.

Among its centrepieces is *Land of 1000*

*Dances*, which will reopen the historic Flinders Street Station Ballroom as a participatory dance academy. Once a legendary social dance hall, the ballroom will host classes spanning everything from Bollywood to ballet, jazz, jive, voguing and Polyswagg, reconnecting the public with one of Melbourne's most storied civic spaces.

The Biennale will also bring major international and Australian dance works to the city, including Oona Doherty's *Hard to Be Soft: A Belfast Prayer*, Lucy Guerin Inc's new work *The Forest*, a revival of Chunky Move's landmark *Glow*, and a closing night *Sissy Ball* at Melbourne Town Hall.

A major drawcard will be *Defend the Throne*, a Hamer Hall showcase by world-renowned New Zealand street dance powerhouse The Royal Family Dance Crew, who will also headline a free public event at Fed Square.

Music remains central to the festival's

identity, with RISING again leaning into Melbourne's reputation as a live music capital. *Day Tripper*, the festival's multi-room music marathon, will return across Max Watt's and Melbourne Town Hall, with a line-up that includes Kae Tempest, Saul Williams, Kahlil El'Zabar, The Congos, The Bats and Chanel Beads.

Other headline music acts include Brooklyn rap icon Lil' Kim, Afrobeats artist Seun Kuti & Egypt 80, Welsh songwriter Cate Le Bon, TR/ST, Saint Levant, Daniel Avery, Wednesday and Dry Cleaning.

One of the program's most significant presentations will be *Gil Scott-Heron* by Brian Jackson & Yasiin Bey, a world premiere performance honouring the legacy of the influential poet and musician.

Beyond music and dance, RISING will again animate unusual and iconic city spaces.

St Paul's Cathedral will host Raven Chacon's *Voiceless Mass*, a free but ticketed performance that turns the landmark church into a site of reflection and sonic reckoning. ACMI will present the Australian premiere of *The Vinyl Factory: Reverb*, a large-scale multi-sensory exhibition exploring sound, music culture and vinyl through immersive installations and listening experiences.

At The Substation, Brooklyn artist Narcissister will present *Voyage Into Infinity*, a warehouse-sized performance installation described as a giant Rube Goldberg-like machine on the verge of collapse.

The performance program also includes Florentina Holzinger's *A Year Without Summer* at Arts Centre Melbourne, Khalid Abdalla's *Nowhere* at Malthouse Theatre and Brian Lipson's *A Large Attendance in the Antechamber*.

RISING's public art program will once again be a major feature of the festival's city presence. Barkindji artist Kent Morris will present *Flower Power* in City Square, centred on the murnong or yam daisy as a symbol of cultural survival and reclamation. The annual *Calling Country* projection will illuminate Hamer Hall's façade each night, while the First Peoples Melbourne Art Trams will return to the network for another year.

RISING artistic director and chief executive Hannah Fox said Melbourne was a city "shaped by music and movement".

"Music and dance are universal ancient languages and remain the most loved way we gather as a community," she said.

With free events, large-scale installations, club nights and major international works all packed into less than a fortnight, RISING is again preparing to turn the city inside out just as winter begins. ●

## Comedy festival hits the spot

◀ Bron Lewis. Photo: Ian Laidlaw.

This year the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, which opens on Wednesday, March 25, marks its 40th anniversary with its biggest-ever event, taking in more than 800 shows.

WORDS BY JENNY DENTON



As usual, there are a lot of different kinds of events going on at this year's comedy festival, its director, Susan Provan AO, says.

A series of galas, set to be broadcast on the ABC, include *Comedy Allstars*, *Asian Allstars*, *Upfront* female and non-binary comics, and *The Big Four Oh* celebration are happening.

The grand finals of the high school *Class Clowns*; *First Nations Deadly Funny* and emerging comic *Raw Comedy* events – which are "about discovering the most fabulous artists of the next 40 years" – are taking place.

Meanwhile, *The Great Debate*, at the Melbourne Town Hall, will examine the

claim "That it was better in the olden days" while a documentary about the 50-year career of Rod Quantock, *Comedy Warrior*, is set to premiere at ACMI.

Over the school holidays Fed Square and the City Square will host the (Very) *Big Laugh Out*, with free all-ages programming, packed with "world-class street performers and the best stand-up, physical and musical comedy in da biz" kicking off from Good Friday.

These are among nearly 50 kids shows on the program, with events held also at Melbourne Museum, ACMI and Melbourne Town Hall.

"Then there is just a huge program of artists from all over Australia and all over the world coming in with their best new shows," Provan says.

Given the sheer volume of performers, it



can be hard to poke a stick at them.

One place to start might be festival club Max Watt's on Swanston St, where 21 events with different themes and "massive line-ups" promise to offer "the most ridiculous and remarkable and musical performers from across the festival".

In addition, the club is a place to "let loose on the dance floor" later on.

International highlight acts Provan points out include Malaysian "weirdo" Phil Wang, New York "toxic optimist" Zainab Johnson, English animal lover Josie Long and "delusional queer icon" Sam Nicoresti.

As for locals, there is a long list of well-knowns and up-and-comers, including Denise Scott, Geraldine Hickey, Lizzy Hoo, Celia Pacquola, Lano & Woodley, Bron Lewis, Melanie Bracewell, Nazim Hussein,

Ray O'Leary, Tom Cashman, Reuben Kaye and Chris Ryan.

And there are so many more. For instance ...

ABC presenter Sammy J, whose autobiographical show focused on his lifelong obsession with superhero The Phantom has earned excellent reviews.

Greek-Australian actor and trained clown Casey Filips, known for his "lovable buffoonery" performs a "shapeshifting" new character comedy show.

Debutante First Nations comic Tarsh Jago, "inspired by a tweet that read, 'You don't look Aboriginal, you look like the cherub from the Pears soap', performs a solo show which promises to blend "razor-sharp comedy with heartfelt storytelling about race, queerness and identity".

"We always urge people to go and see some acts they haven't heard of," Provan says.

"Just take a punt. The tickets are not that expensive compared to big music concerts or big theatre shows - our average ticket price is somewhere around \$35.

"You just never know what you're going to see - comedy is constantly surprising, which is great, and we need it at the moment!"

The Melbourne International Comedy Festival runs from March 25 to April 19. ●

## Why *ART* still stings, sparkles and lands 30 years on



“

Some plays arrive, make a splash and fade. Others burrow deeper into theatre culture and refuse to leave. *ART*, Yasmina Reza's internationally celebrated three-hander about friendship, taste and the detonating power of one very expensive painting, belongs firmly in the second category.

”

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



Now the award-winning modern classic is heading to Melbourne's Comedy Theatre from April 22, with a heavyweight cast of Richard Roxburgh (*Rake*, *The Correspondent*, *Elvis*), Damon Herriman (*Better Man*, *Mr Inbetween*, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*) and Toby Schmitz (*Boy Swallows Universe*, *Gaslight*, *Grief is the Thing with Feathers*), in what feels less like a routine revival than a reminder of how satisfying a sharply written adult comedy can be when it is handed to actors who know exactly what to do with it.

Directed by Lee Lewis, the production opens with a famously simple premise: one friend buys an extremely expensive white painting, another cannot believe he has done it, and an argument that begins over art quickly becomes something much larger; about taste, ego, honesty and the fault lines of long-term friendship.

For Schmitz, the relationship with the play goes back nearly 30 years.

"I came to the script in the late '90s," he told *CBD News*. "By the time I got to it in 1997, someone had a copy of it, like a printed-out, beaten-up copy that was passed around, I remember. And we all just loved it."

Even then, he said, the appeal was immediate. Though he and his friends were far too young for the play's middle-aged male roles, they were drawn to it anyway.

"It's such a cracking bit of writing," Schmitz said. "A lot of me and my chums learnt some of the monologues and did scenes at drama school in the late '90s because it's just such a fun, and at times a moving, bit of writing."

That instinct has proved accurate. *ART* has never really gone away. Since premiering in the 1990s, it has been revived again and again around the world, and for Schmitz that endurance says something important.

"It's always been revived somewhere because it was sort of an instant classic. Yasmina Reza just wrote a jewel," he said.

Part of that comes down to the sheer precision of the writing. Schmitz, who started in stand-up and knows stage comedy intimately, spoke with admiration about the mechanics embedded in the script.

"I'm very aware just even looking at the page of the setups, the repeated gags, the misdirection, all the real technical stuff," he said. "But it's right there in the text."

Performing it now has only reinforced that view. He said the production had been drawing "waves of rolling laughter", often at exactly the same moments each night, which was one of the clearest signs that the play's comic engine was doing its job.

But *ART* lasts because it is not just funny. Beneath the laughter sits a more uncomfortable question about intimacy and truth: how honest should we really be with the people we love?

It is a deceptively ordinary question, but one that opens into rich territory. What do you say when a friend introduces you to a partner you secretly dislike? How honest are you when the thing being judged is no longer hypothetical, but already chosen, bought and lived with? That is where *ART* moves beyond satire and into something

more lasting and recognisable.

In Schmitz's reading, the play is not only about modern art or even male friendship. It is also about the performance involved in everyday life: the different selves we present depending on who is in the room.

"We're all actors," he said. "We all talk to our mum differently than we talk to the tradie who comes to fix the plumbing."

That idea gives the play much of its bite. Radical honesty sounds noble in theory, but in practice it can be destabilising, even destructive. Reza's script teases out the tension between affection and frankness, loyalty and self-expression, and the little social fictions that often keep friendships intact.

The chemistry between Schmitz, Roxburgh and Herriman also seems central to this production. Schmitz said rehearsal began, as it should, with the text, but quickly deepened once the three actors started properly playing off one another.

"Once you look up from the page and look into the eyes of someone else who has genuinely funny bones, then the experience explodes exponentially," he said.

He described both Roxburgh and Herriman as actors with "wicked comic timing", and said there was already a familiarity there that helped. In a play like *ART*, where so much depends on rhythm, reaction

and tiny changes in emotional temperature, that shorthand matters.

And while the play is rightly sold as a razor-sharp comedy, Schmitz is clear that the humour only works because the emotional stakes are real.

"I think that great comedy has to pass through a bedrock of tragedy," he said.

That duality is part of what keeps the play feeling fresh. It also shapes the audience response. Schmitz described a point in each performance where the room seems to realise, with delight, that the play is going to keep delivering.

"The quality of the laughter changes suddenly to a really sort of open, relaxed, free-for-all of giggling and shrieking," he said.

At a time when theatre is often sold through urgency, spectacle or prestige, *ART* offers something more direct: a tightly wound, 90-minute, no-interval play that is smart, funny and built for adults.

Schmitz hinted that this kind of out-and-out comedy has become rarer than it should be.

"I hope people are still thinking, 'Why haven't I seen such an outrageously entertaining show like that for so long?'" he said.

*ART* features at the Comedy Theatre from April 22 to May 3.

[arttheplay.com.au](http://arttheplay.com.au) ●




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# Fresh

PART OF THE *Autumn* SERIES

OPEN TUESDAY + THURSDAY TO SUNDAY  
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[qvm.com.au](http://qvm.com.au)



## Our plan to stop the waste and corruption

For more than a decade under this Labor Government, the purpose of infrastructure has not been to get Victorians off to work and back home quickly and safely, but to chase headlines and – as we continue to learn – keep their union masters happy and well paid with little care for the Budget bottom line.

WORDS BY  
EVAN MULHOLLAND

To some extent, Victorians have tolerated this as necessary for a proud and growing city, even as the blowouts got bigger and the debt got worse.

But revelations that at least \$15 billion has been rorted from hard working taxpayers is not something we can accept.

Public confidence in how taxpayer money is managed has been seriously damaged by the biggest corruption scandal in the history of this state.

\$15 billion has been lost to the criminal underworld and bikies. Labor can deny, they can obfuscate, but the fact is that it is gone.

And Labor knew.  
The Premier, Jacinta Allan, knew.

This cannot be accepted and this cannot go on.

But under Labor it will.

Just this week, as I write this, Labor stood alone in Parliament as every other party followed the leadership of the Liberals and Nationals and voted to give the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) the powers it says it needs to 'follow the money' and get to the root of the corrupt behaviour that has cost every Victorian household at least \$5000 in rorts.

This says everything about the priorities of Labor under Jacinta Allan.

By blocking this law, Labor has given the green light for organised criminals to continue to rort Victorians' money on major project sites

This is just another reason why we need a change of government this November.

In the first 100 days after taking office, a Jess Wilson Liberals and Nationals Government will call a Royal Commission in to CFMEU corruption, to end the cover-up that has cost Victoria at least \$15 billion.

We will also establish Construction Enforcement Victoria, a tough cop on the beat which will have the powers to clean up corruption on construction sites and end the violence and union thuggery.

This tired Labor Government are more interested in protecting their mates and donors in the CFMEU than they are in protecting your hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

Their priorities are wrong and they cannot be trusted.

Labor has failed Victorians. Only a Liberal and Nationals Government will end the waste, stop the corruption and clean up Victoria.

Evan Mulholland MP is the Liberal Member for Northern Metropolitan Region. ●

# Farewell to the Caiafas: a beloved family business at Queen Victoria Market

“After 52 years M&G Caiafa bread and pastries has been sold, with the siblings who ran it for the past three decades now starting to experiment with sleeping in.”

WORDS BY  
JENNY DENTON

The week after the family walked away from the half-a-century-old business, Michelle Caiafa was still waking up at 1am worrying about the croissants.

“It does feel strange, the last few days,” she said. “I used to get up at 3am.”

The stall, selling pastries, bread, baguettes and chocolates, was established by her Italian-Australian parents in 1974.

It also sold family-produced nut butters, muesli, triple-chocolate brownies, amaretti biscuits and biscotti.

On Sunday, March 15, three generations of the family turned up to say goodbye to the shop, and Michelle and her siblings worked their last day there, having sold the business to new owners Two Bakers.

While the business had given the family a good life, Michelle said, she and her siblings hadn't known anything else.

“We kids were straight out of high school into the market.”

“So, we decided if we wanted to try something different, we couldn't wait another five, 10 years; it was probably best to do it now.”

It was 1995 when the teenaged Michelle and her sister Mary-Jane took over the running of the business following the death of their mother, Grace – nicknamed “Rosie” – from a brain tumour.

“We never thought of not [reopening]. It didn't even cross anyone's mind,” Michelle said.

“Mum was one of the strongest people I know and through her sicknesses she kept finding the strength, and I suppose we learnt from her.”



Three generations of the Caiafa family, most of whom have worked there, on the last day of trade at their Queen Vic market bakery. From back left – Siblings Amanda, Micheal, Mary-Jane and Michelle with their dad, Michael Senior (in pink shirt).

“She was our inspiration really.”  
For their father, Michael, though, there were so many regular customers and reminders of his wife that he couldn't return for some time.

“The market was their life,” Michelle said. “They loved it.”

So, the sisters got on with things. And after a few years they were joined by their brother, Michael Junior, when he finished school.

“My elder sister, MJ, was pregnant,” Michael told CBD News. “So, it was a bit like one in, one out.”

That was 26 years ago.

When the Friends of Queen Victoria Market posted on social media that the family were leaving, more than 500 people made comments about being sad to see them go.

“We grew up there and we formed so many friendships and got to see so many families grow,” Michelle said.

“We could write a book about all the people we've met in that place.”

Not all of those mourning the Caiafas' departure had been customers of late.

The market had changed over the years, Michelle said, and there weren't as many regulars as before COVID.

“But you've got a lot of new regulars – students and people living in the city, then you've got a huge tourism trade as well.”

“It's still buzzing, it's still got that vibrancy. You still get the buzz on the Saturdays and Sundays.”

The customers commenting on Facebook said they would miss the almond and raspberry croissants, Portuguese tarts and gourmet bread as well as the siblings' friendly faces, cheerful service and banter.

The good news is that they won't need to, because the new owners will not only keep the Caiafas' business name but will sell the same range of goods.

The family had wanted to make sure of it, Michael said.

“For [the sake of] the market and continuity and stability.”

While Michael and Michelle are still unsure about what they plan to do next, their father, Michael Senior, is these days making peanut butter and generally “keeping busy”, they said. ●

## Community CCTV appeal

Local police are appealing to members of the community with public-facing CCTV cameras to register them in a database used to help solve crimes.

WORDS BY  
JENNY DENTON

Local Area Commander Inspector Kael Oosthuizen told CBD News the existing state-wide Victoria Police Community CCTV register was already “incredibly useful”, and police wanted to continue to build it.

“Essentially the register allows our members to see on a map the location of privately-owned CCTV systems and cameras and contains the contact details for who owns them if for some reason we think CCTV is going to benefit an investigation,” he said.

In the last month alone police had used the register numerous times to identify CCTV that might help investigations, he said.

In one instance officers investigating the theft of a vehicle from a multi-storey car park in the CBD were able to identify the owners of nearby CCTV systems, request footage and identify an offender.

In a second instance, in the case of the theft of an e-bike from outside a Melbourne hostel which had no useable CCTV, a check of the register located a nearby property that did, resulting in potential offenders being identified.

The register, which was started in September 2021 with an initial 415 cameras had since grown to more than 6000 across the state, Inspector Oosthuizen said.

It was growing daily, with more than 130 cameras added in the month of March.

“It's becoming an increasingly useful tool for our investigators.”

The register didn't include internal cameras in businesses, the inspector stressed.

“Really what we're after is CCTV that captures an element of community space – whether it's a street or footpath or a shared space.”

It was important to note that the process of registering was entirely voluntary, he said, and wouldn't give police automatic

access to any systems.

“We don't have any ability to dial into anyone's system or anything like that, just the knowledge of where it is and the fact that someone has indicated their willingness to share.”

All personal details would be stored in a secure police database, he said, and footage, if required, could be uploaded to police online.

“This is an organisational platform we're keen to make people aware of,” the inspector said.

“It's use really supports my investigators and my police members and we're keen to see an increased awareness of it so that the community can register their interest if they choose to do so.”

People willing to provide the location of their CCTV, or with questions about the register, should contact their local police station (Melbourne North 8379 0800), (Melbourne West 9624 3999), (Melbourne East 9637 1100) or Acting Sergeant Nick Parissis at [nektarios.parissis@police.vic.gov.au](mailto:nektarios.parissis@police.vic.gov.au)

They will be asked to fill out a one-page form sent by email. ●

## The beginning of a square, and the end of history

For those who are young or new to Melbourne, it might be a shock to discover that buildings once occupied the site of Town Hall Station, at the corner of Swanston and Collins streets.

This photograph from the 1960s shows Melbourne in transition. Between the familiar landmarks of St. Pauls Cathedral and the Nicholas Building (with the Olympic advertisement), part of the city's history was being erased to make space for the city's future.

The site was once occupied by the Victoria Building. Initially opened in 1888 for the Freehold Investment and Banking Company, it was home to the bohemian Yorrick Club, a number of businesses, and formed part of the Queens Walk arcade. Notably, the arcade was the site of clothes manufacturer Henry Bucks, and the Cavalier tea rooms. By the 1960s, the building was bought by British-based developer Hammerson Group, with plans to replace the site with a new 16 storey building. By 1966, they had the Victoria demolished by Whelan the Wrecker.

The City Council however wanted a public square to bring people back into the city. Under Mayor Evans, an early suggestion was to have the square connected to Town Hall by a tunnel under Collins St. While



the land was in private hands, the council acquired the site for \$2.75 million in 1966, turning the vacant corner into a temporary planted plaza.

In the next few years, the council spent millions buying the rest of the block up to Regent Place. By 1969 the buildings at the Flinders Lane corner including the 1883

Cathedral Hotel (where the Dulux sign is), and its Swanston St neighbour, the Chandris Building (formerly Surrey House) were reduced to rubble. So too the ANZ bank at 60 Swanston St, and finally the Greens Building in 1971.

Next to go were the Wentworth (Collins St) and the Regency Buildings (Flinders

Lane). This ended a fondly remembered era for the Regent Place laneway. The dresses at Irresistible Frocks, the books at the Regency bookshop, and – to the delight of children – Tim the Toy Man, were no more. All that remained by the mid-1970s was a concrete plaza.

The Regent Theatre however had the narrowest of escapes. Opened in 1929, and surviving a fire in 1945, the picture palace was bought by the council and closed in 1970, with plans to replace it with a skyscraper hotel.

This was met with backlash by the community, and the "Save the Regent" committee was formed to fight the plans. This included a petition with more than 2000 signatures, including that of ballet dancer Sir Robert Helpmann.

The theatre's fate would be determined by a public inquiry in 1975 and, after three days of arguing, the government sided with its preservation. Even then it lay dormant for another two decades before a redevelopment scheme would refurbish the Regent into the musical theatre it has become, re-opening in 1996.

As for the square, it finally opened in 1980, complete with its fountains and infamous yellow Vault. Redeveloped in the 1990s, the square itself closed in 2017 to allow for an entrance to Town Hall Station, ironically now providing the tunnel beneath Collins St first suggested more than 60 years ago. ●

## Salvos' Project 614 partners with University of Canberra on new training pathway

The Salvation Army's Melbourne Project 614 has announced a new partnership with the University of Canberra aimed at strengthening its frontline workforce as demand for community services continues to grow.

WORDS BY  
SEAN CAR



The partnership will create a tailored education pathway for Project 614 employees and volunteers, who work with people experiencing homelessness, isolation, poor health and other complex social barriers. Under the arrangement, staff and volunteers will be able to undertake a Professional Certificate in Foundations for Working and Volunteering in Community Organisations.

The course was co-designed by the

University of Canberra's Faculty of Health and Salvation Army staff, with the aim of combining academic knowledge with the practical realities of frontline support work. The certificate will include six microcredential units covering areas such as trauma-informed care, mental health, communication

and mediation, reflective practice, and ethical and cultural considerations when working with at-risk groups.

University of Canberra Vice-Chancellor Professor Bill Shorten, who appeared at The Salvation Army's Bourke St headquarters on March 10 to launch the initiative, said the

partnership would help prepare community workers for the next decade of service. He described it as an investment in people, community and "the future of compassionate care".

Project 614 leader Major Brendan Nottle said the tailored course would give staff and volunteers the tools to respond "faster, more safely, and with greater care".

Based at 69 Bourke St in the CBD, Project 614 has operated at the frontline of community support for more than a decade. Since 2011, its Magpie Nest Café has provided free meals and a safe place for people seeking dignity, connection and practical assistance, while also hosting a range of integrated health, disability and support services.

The announcement comes as Project 614 looks to expand its model, including through a new café in Footscray and growing interest from councils in establishing similar service hubs in their own municipalities.

The partnership signals a push to build a more skilled and sustainable workforce around one of the city's best-known integrated community support hubs. ●

Proudly representing the  
community in Melbourne's CBD

**Evan MULHOLLAND MP**

Liberal Member for the **Northern Metropolitan Region**

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





## Construction begins on major student tower at 570 Little Bourke St

Construction has officially begun on a major new student accommodation tower at 570 Little Bourke St, with project partners marking the milestone at a ground-breaking and time capsule ceremony in the CBD on March 23.

WORDS BY SEAN CAR



The \$300 million purpose-built student accommodation project will deliver 892 beds across 748 units in a 26-level building, making it one of the largest student housing developments to commence in the CBD in recent years. UniLodge has also been confirmed as the operator, with students expected to move in for semester one, 2028.

Representatives from Hickory, MaxCap and UniLodge were joined at the ceremony by Lord Mayor Nick Reece, former Lord Mayor Sally Capp, and representatives from RMIT University and The University of Melbourne.

The project is being developed as a joint venture between Hickory and MaxCap, with Hickory also acting as builder. It is the first project Hickory has delivered under its integrated builder-developer model, which the company says helps reduce planning and delivery risk while providing greater certainty around construction outcomes.

Designed by Nettleontribe, the development will include a library, gymnasium, cinema, music room, group dining areas, lounges and games spaces. The design also aims to improve a long-neglected stretch of the western CBD by reinterpreting the site's historic character and surrounding blue-stone, sandstone and red brick streetscape.

Importantly, the project will also revive the historic Great Western Hotel, introduce new retail spaces, activate the adjoining Brown Alley and improve pedestrian safety and access between Lonsdale and Little Bourke streets.

The development forms part of a broader push by Hickory to reshape this part of the city. The company is also progressing a second major western CBD project at 580 Lonsdale St, the former Kilkenny Inn site, meaning the two developments will collectively deliver around 1250 student accommodation units while restoring two historic pubs, the Great Western Hotel and the Kilkenny Inn. ●

## Multicultural Hub marks one millionth visitor

Melbourne's Multicultural Hub at 506 Elizabeth St has reached a major milestone, recording its one millionth visitor after 18 years of supporting migrants, refugees, international students and other diverse communities in the heart of the city.

WORDS BY SEAN CAR



The millionth participant is Nepali international student Samrika Bhattarai, who now volunteers as a facilitator at the facility opposite Queen Victoria Market. Ms Bhattarai, who came to Australia two years ago and is studying for a bachelor's degree in Community Services, said the hub had become a place of connection and opportunity.

"I love volunteering at the Multicultural Hub. I enjoy meeting lots of diverse people from different communities, it's a true melting pot," she said.

"It was initially a place where I could meet other international students and now, I'm volunteering at the Hub. Soon, I'll be facilitating my first Welcome to Melbourne event for international students and I'm really excited."

Operated by AMES Australia in partnership with the City of Melbourne, the Multicultural Hub has become one of the city's most important settlement and community facilities, despite often flying under the radar in broader debates about the future of the CBD. Each year it welcomes almost 60,000 visitors, hosts around 1600 events, meetings and gatherings, and is used by more than 80 migrant and refugee communities.

The 2026 Social Impact Report says the hub also welcomed 241 individual multicultural groups in 2025 and provided volunteering opportunities to almost 60 people through programs designed to help newly arrived migrants build English skills, local work experience and social connections.

Hub manager Maria Tsopanis said the facility provided a safe and welcoming space for people from diverse and sometimes marginalised backgrounds.

"Patrons of the Hub say they find the space safe, convenient and welcoming. Many say they feel more comfortable at the Hub than in other mainstream community



spaces," she said.

Beyond its day-to-day programs, the Hub has also played a key role during major crises. It served as a welcome point for evacuated Afghan refugees during the COVID-19 lockdowns, an information centre following the 2011 Christchurch earthquake, a testing and vaccination site during the pandemic, and more recently a support point for people fleeing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.

The report also highlights a wide range of other services offered through the site, including free classes, tax help, community consultations, a book exchange, a community garden and a gig worker hub. ●

## RESIDENTS 3000

## Metro Tunnel – a story to tell

Residents 3000 was there from the start. Every year until the grand opening of the new rail service on November 30, 2025, the Metro Tunnel team presented at our February event.

On February 2, 2017 (nine years ago) Residents 3000 members and guests heard about a scheme to expand Melbourne's rail network. The presenters then were the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority and John Holland Group.

This was a proposal to upgrade Melbourne's train network via nine km twin rail tunnels under the city, connecting the Sunbury, Cranbourne and Pakenham lines with five new unnamed, state-of-the-art underground stations. This was the biggest upgrade since the City Loop opened in 1981. The City Loop was at capacity with Melbourne's population growing rapidly.

### Residents' first reaction ...

How can you possibly build a tunnel under our precious city? Right down the middle of Swanston St? Oh, that is so dangerous! The soil is not stable enough. The geology is so variable. The buildings will crack. Maybe even topple.

How are you going to remove all the rock and sand out of the city? There will be a lot of dust. It will disrupt our lives. You will use trucks? They will clog our roads.

You plan to go down 40 metres? How are people to get down there? Impossible.

You cannot block this street and that? What about the construction noise?

### What really happened

"Best for City" outcomes were achieved through consultation and planning with Yarra Trams, City of Melbourne, Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority, and Metro Trains. There was extensive public consultation throughout the design and planning stages.

At our ninth event on February 5, 2026, we heard from Barry McGuren (who was there for all nine events over the years), Yusuf Bardi (State Library Station plus others),



Alan Nargessi (architecture) and Minh Li (Metro Tunnel Project Office).

On the night, residents began to understand the inside story how such a huge project came together delivering some amazing infrastructure for our city within the planned time scale. The key principles followed were:

- Prototyping strategy – get it right above ground first.
- "Kit of Parts" to facilitate construction underground.
- "Value Engineering" to balance architecture and cost.
- Planning and re-planning for timing and construction logistics.
- Refinements to the construction methodology along the way.
- Design focus to determine an optimal solution.

Think about the logistics of building stations 40 metres underground. Imagine taking construction materials so far underground only to find they do not fit together or that they are not functional.

That scenario was avoided by setting up an offsite test station where all aspects of the station design were built, then re-built with considerations.

We were shown quite a number of photos (one included here) of first design and final design. Value engineering can mean changes to architectural niceties for practical cost considerations.

There was prototyping of complex structural elements (e.g. the State Library portal) involving large concrete structures that needed to be shipped to site on trucks and fitted together like Lego. These designs were practice built off site until construction techniques, strength and safety, and installation procedures were ironed out before they were applied in the middle of the bustling Melbourne CBD.

At this last meeting of the Metro Tunnel team, the Residents 3000 audience were given a small insight into the brilliance of the design and construction of this enormous project for Melbourne.

### Is there to be a documentary?

The general feeling was that this project needs to be recorded in a documentary! Letting the stories just fade away as the tunnel and its infrastructure becomes every day would be such a pity. Is there a documentary in the pipeline?

### Next Forum 3000

Thursday 2 April 2026, 6pm for a 6.30 start. Kelvin Club, 14-30 Melbourne Place

Topic: **Safety in the City – How are we progressing?**

We welcome Dean Robinson from the City of Melbourne to tell us what progress is being made. How is the safety officers scheme working? How effective is the enhanced CCT camera system in catching criminals? Are we winning the graffiti war? What is the situation with rowdy motor bikes and noisy motor vehicles?

These matters are so important to the amenity of living in the city. Come along and ask questions. Regular Residents 3000 members know Dean and look forward to his interesting presentations.

Further details will be found on our web site: [residents3000.org.au](http://residents3000.org.au) ●

Dr Sue Saunders  
VICE PRESIDENT



Quiz



- Which layer of the Earth's atmosphere is closest to the planet's surface?
- What type of fish is Nemo in the animated film *Finding Nemo*?
- Antonio Stradivari is best known for making what instrument?
- The Grand Canyon is located in which US state?
- What specific line in the City of Melbourne's new Heritage Strategy sparked a heated council debate in February?
- What is the chemical formula for methane?
- What historic piece of street lighting was recently restored near the corner of Collins and Swanston streets?
- What is Melbourne's new 'floral emblem'?
- What key heritage element had to be protected in the recently approved 376-388 Flinders Street office tower development?
- Tony Revolori (pictured) starred as Zero in which Wes Anderson film?
- What milestone is the Nicholas Building celebrating in March?
- Which female rock icon was celebrated in the theatre production *Amplified* at the Comedy Theatre in March?

QUIZ SOLUTIONS

- Troposphere
- Clownfish
- Violin
- Arizona
- Melbourne is an Aboriginal city
- CH<sub>4</sub>
- Heritage gas lamp
- Swamp Everlasting
- A heritage
- The Grand Budapest Hotel
- Its 100th anniversary (centenary)
- Christy Amphlett

5x5

No. 322

Insert the missing letters to make 10 words – five reading across the grid and five reading down.

F		N		L
	R		S	
C		C		E
	T		E	
T		E		S

SOLUTIONS

FINAL, ARISE, CACHE, ETHER, TEENS

Sudoku

No. 057

Fill in the blank cells using the numbers from 1 to 9. Each number can only appear once in each row, column and 3x3 block

EASY

	4				6			
6		2						8
5	8	9	1		3	7		
2				8	1	6		
			6		1			
	6	3		5				9
		6	2		8	5	9	7
7					3			4
		1						2

HARD

1		9		2				
		5						
			8	6	9	5		3
			3			4		8
	1		7		8		5	
8		2			5			
2		1	9	8	4			
							7	
				3	2			4

SOLUTIONS

EASY

9	2	8	7	3	8	1	8	6
7	4	1	8	9	6	8	5	2
4	3	6	1	2	2	9	3	4
6	8	4	2	5	7	3	9	1
5	1	7	2	1	2	7	8	8
3	9	1	8	6	5	7	2	4
1	2	4	1	2	2	1	9	5
8	8	5	3	9	1	6	1	7
3	8	8	6	7	4	2	6	9
1	6	5	1	9	2	7	8	4

HARD

4	7	6	2	7	3	1	8	9	5	8	6
1	8	7	9	5	2	8	3	4	6		
5	3	9	4	8	6	1	7	2	3	8	
6	7	1	5	4	9	2	3	8	8		
4	1	1	8	6	3	8	6	7	9	2	3
5	9	4	1	2	3	6	7	6	5		
7	2	4	8	4	8	7	9	1	9	2	3
3	8	5	4	2	6	1	7	1	7	4	5
9	2	6	1	7	1	7	1	7	4	5	8
1	6	5	1	9	2	7	8	4	6	9	5

Wordfind

Theme: Countries

The leftover letters will spell out a secret message.

O	C	A	M	D	S	A	P	A	V	A
A	A	I	A	N	O	N	H	I	E	I
U	M	P	L	A	U	I	I	S	N	R
S	B	O	A	L	T	T	L	E	E	A
T	O	I	Y	I	H	N	I	N	Z	G
R	D	H	S	A	K	E	P	O	U	L
A	I	T	I	H	O	G	P	D	E	U
L	A	E	A	T	R	R	I	N	L	B
I	C	H	I	L	E	A	N	I	A	U
A	I	B	I	M	A	N	E	R	W	O
B	A	R	B	A	D	O	S	R	L	D

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| ARGENTINA | INDONESIA   |
| AUSTRALIA | MALAYSIA    |
| BARBADOS  | NAMIBIA     |
| BULGARIA  | PHILIPPINES |
| CAMBODIA  | SOUTH KOREA |
| CHILE     | THAILAND    |
| ETHIOPIA  | VENEZUELA   |

Secret message: Our world

Crossword

No. 057

ACROSS

- Resource (5)
- Social exclusion (9)
- Arab country (5)
- Fine ceramic material (9)
- Put a file online (6)
- Italian church (8)
- Candle holders (10)
- Set (3)
- Tree (3)
- Repetition (10)
- Large marsupial (8)
- Gardening implement (6)
- Destroy (9)
- Chickens, pigeons etc. (5)
- Brazen (9)
- Now (5)

DOWN

- Sanctuary (6)
- Country in Horn of Africa (7)
- Drinking vessel (7)
- 'My bad!' (4)

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
9						10								
11						12								
						13								
						14								15
16														
17		18		19						20		21		
														22
23										24				
										25				
26												27		
28												29		

- |                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 5 Well-worn (10)             | 19 Accomplish (7)  |
| 6 Common name for the US (7) | 20 Show (7)        |
| 7 Medical technique (7)      | 21 Camouflaged (8) |
| 8 By hand (8)                | 22 Meaty (6)       |
| 13 Voters (10)               | 25 Tidings (4)     |
| 16 Docility (8)              |                    |
| 18 US state (7)              |                    |

SOLUTION

A	V	G	O	L	S	S	E	T	E	R	W	H	S
H	E	I	M	S	N	S							
S	G	H	I	E	L	O	I	O	I	D			
E	E	I	N	R	I	I	N						
E	L	A	O	H	S	O	O	B	V	O	D	O	N
F	O	X	E	R	E	O	E						
E	O	N	E	N	E	R	E						
A													
T	E	L	E	V	E								
T	N	O	G	E									
V	O	L	I	S	V	B	O	V	O	I	D		
N	B	H	E	R	S	X	T						
N	I	L	E	O	O	P	O						
V	M	M	H	A	V	O	S						
S	T	I	C	L	A	R	I	S					

Codeword

No. 057

		8				17				20		4			18			26	V
2		12	6		4	9		12				8	7		21	11	4	10	
		1				9				22		4			6			17	
18	11		22	23				23	12	21	11	4		6	4		14		
						7				23		17			19		6		
8	4		17	17	22	4		18			4	18	18	9		10			
		3						14			14						1		
8	9		19	4	14			13	9	24	22	4		18	17				
		16				3				15		16			14				
2		22		25	G	9		16	7	12	18			5	22	5	17		
		1				21			10		4			22		4			
11	4		17	17	5	4			5	22	1	22	1		25	G			
		6				18			6		18			25	G		14		

SOLUTIONS

V	G	Z	P	C	Q	W	S	T	M	F	D		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
N	B	X	R	E	L	R	O	J	A	Y	K	U	H

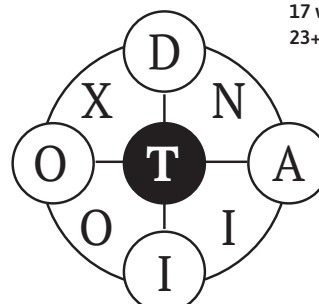
9-Letter

No. 057

Today's Focus:

- 12 words: Good
- 17 words: Very good
- 23+ words: Excellent

Using the nine letters in the grid, how many words of four letters or more can you list? The centre letter must be included and each letter may only be used once. No colloquial or foreign words. No capitalised nouns, apostrophes or plural nouns ending in 's'.



Reference: Macquarie Dictionary

SOLUTIONS

adit, anti, date, dirt, dita, doir, idio, into, iodation, iota, nota, onto, oxid, oxidant, oxidation, taxi, taxon, toad, toado, toon, toxin, toxoid



## 墨尔本中央商务区经济强劲反弹，12月创下消费纪录

根据墨尔本市议会最新发布的《经济快照》，2025年12月成为墨尔本市区经济数据中有史以来消费金额最高的单月，标志着中央商务区经济在年底达到高峰。

Sean Car

2026年3月的经济快照显示，市中心的消费支出持续增长，行人流量增强，零售和餐饮业数量增多，许多曾经空置的店面重新焕发生机。

最引人注目的是12月全市消费总额创下12.05亿澳元的历史新高，超过2024年12月的11.36亿澳元，也高于2022年和2023年12月的峰值。报告指出，即使按2025年通胀调整后，这仍是墨尔本市区有记录以来最高的消费水平。

市长尼克·里斯称，这组数据证明了墨尔本作为购物目的地的强大吸引力。

“墨尔本正式成为澳大利亚的购物之

都——最新数据表明12月是该市消费最多的一个月，”他表示。

里斯议员补充，新开设的旗舰零售店推动了增长势头，尤其是在市中心核心区域。

“随着MECCA和Rodd & Gunn等旗舰店的开业，以及MUJI等更多知名品牌的进驻，伯克街购物中心已成为墨尔本零售业的中心。”

报告指出，伯克街购物中心新开的大型店铺如Pop Mart和MECCA旗舰店，是推动下半年访客和消费增长的重要因素。数据显示，2025年11月和12月伯克街购物中心南部传感器监测到的行人流量分别比2024年同期增长了39%和37%。从4月至12月，月度行人流量从晚冬开始强劲回升。

街面活力也得到了显著改善。在截至2025年11月的六个月里，市区共重新激活了84个空置店面，其中43个位于中央商务区，空置店面复活率在两个区域均达13.5%。

“看到这么多令人振奋的店面重新点亮城市，这都得益于低空置率，真是太棒了，”里斯议员说。



## 墨尔本市议员工党候选人大卫·格里菲斯将挑战艾伦·桑德尔

大卫·格里菲斯宣布，他将作为工党候选人，参加今年11月举行的维多利亚州议会选举，竞选墨尔本选区议席。

Jenny Denton

这位51岁的格里菲斯于2020年当选为墨尔本市议员，已是工党成员30年。他表示，自己参选议会是一个“漫长且缓慢的过程”。

格里菲斯议员说，他参与工党预选是因为这个机会能让他关注自己热衷的问题。“显然，作为地方议员的经历也帮助我形成了这份认识，”他对CBD新闻表示。

这位弗莱明顿居民将面临现任议员艾伦·桑德尔的强大挑战，后者自2014年代表绿党赢得墨尔本选区以来一直在任。

2022年，桑德尔获得了37.29%的初选票，工党候选人丽贝卡·锡斯顿获得30.65%，分配偏好票后，桑德尔以60.19%领先工党的39.81%。

墨尔本和普拉兰是维多利亚州绿党首次赢得下议院议席的两个选区。

此前，自1955年以来，墨尔本一直由澳大利亚工党（ALP）掌控，且在20世纪上半叶大部分时间亦是如此。

格里菲斯议员表示，他参选的动力并非单纯为了赢得议席，而是基于“强烈需要一个有力的本地声音”的信念。

他认为，“为居民和当地人提供服务，特别是随着我们本地人口增长”，是该选区的关键问题。

他说，虽然各级政府协作，但“像学校、医院和公共交通这样的大事，显然是州政府的职责范围”。

格里菲斯议员出生并成长于本迪戈，18岁时搬到墨尔本学习教育，曾在格伦韦弗利中学和麦考利·罗伯逊女子高中工作六年，之后进入政界——先是选区助理，随后成为维多利亚议会多位部长的卫生、心理健康和教育政策顾问。

离开政策工作后，他当了几年全职爸爸，随后罕见地转行进入餐饮业，与朋友合伙在麦考利路开设了一家啤酒汉堡店，经营不到两年后又购买并经营斯宾塞街的皇家邮政酒店两年半。

## 喜剧节正中靶心

今年的墨尔本国际喜剧节将于3月25日星期三开幕，迎来第40周年纪念，规模创历史新高，超过800场演出。



Jenny Denton

正如往年一样，今年的喜剧节活动丰富多样，导演苏珊·普罗凡 AO 表示。

一系列将在澳大利亚广播公司（ABC）播出的盛大晚会包括：喜剧全明星、亚洲全明星、女性及非二元性别喜剧人特别节目，以及40周年庆典“Big Four Oh”。

高中生“班级小丑”总决赛、原住民“Deadly Funny”和新兴喜剧比赛“Raw Comedy”也将举办，这些比赛旨在“发现未来40年最棒的艺术家的”。

与此同时，墨尔本市政厅将举办“伟大辩论”，探讨“过去的日子是否更美好”的议题，而关于喜剧战士罗德·夸托克50年职业生涯的纪录片将在澳大利亚电影电视博物馆（ACMI）首映。

在学校假期期间，联邦广场和市政广场将举办“超级大笑派对”，为所有年龄段免费开放，节目汇集“世界级的街头艺人，以及最佳的单口相声、肢体喜剧和音乐喜剧”，从耶稣受难日开始。

节目中包含近50场儿童专场，活动还将在墨尔本博物馆、ACMI和市政厅举行。

“此外，还有大量来自澳大利亚和世界各

地的艺术家带来他们最精彩的新秀，”普罗凡说。

由于演出阵容庞大，要挑剔实属不易。一个不错的起点是斯旺斯顿街上的Max Watt's喜剧俱乐部，那里有21场不同主题的活动，“阵容庞大”，将呈现“节日中最荒诞又精彩的单口、综艺、讲故事、小丑、角色扮演及音乐表演”。

俱乐部也是晚上“尽情跳舞”的好去处。国际重点演员包括马来西亚“怪才”菲尔·王、纽约“毒性乐观主义者”扎伊纳布·约翰逊、英国动物爱好者乔西·朗，以及“妄想的酷儿偶像”萨姆·尼科雷斯蒂。

本地演员方面，有众多知名及新晋喜剧人，如丹尼斯·斯科特、杰拉拉丁·希基、莉兹·胡、塞利娅·帕科拉、拉诺与伍德利、布朗·刘易斯、梅兰妮·布雷斯特、纳齐姆·侯赛因、雷·奥利奥里、汤姆·卡什曼、鲁本·凯和克里斯·瑞安。

墨尔本国际喜剧节将于3月25日至4月19日举办。

## 超本地新闻推出“未来墨尔本”播客

一档聚焦塑造墨尔本未来的理念、辩论与决策的新播客本月持续获得关注，最新剧集已上线，主题涵盖城市经济和码头区，下一期将聚焦住房问题。

由超本地新闻（Hyperlocal News）制作，该机构同时出版《CBD新闻》及覆盖墨尔本市区的本地报纸网络，“未来墨尔本”旨在为关于城市演变及未来走向的深入对话提供平台。

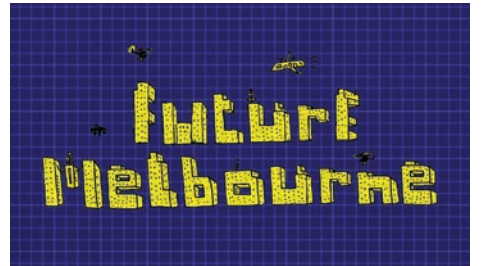
播客由超本地新闻的出版人兼编辑肖恩·卡尔主持，节目邀请来自墨尔本市政、规划、商业及文化领域的重要人物，深入剖析城市面临的挑战与机遇。

该系列首播聚焦墨尔本标志性场所之一的维多利亚女王市场，市场首席执行官马特·埃利奥特讨论了该区域的持续更新及这座城市最具辨识度公共空间的未来。

随后，播客内容扩展至墨尔本市政府面临的重大议题。

最近一期节目邀请前墨尔本市议员、新闻网站Crikey创始人及股东维权人士斯蒂芬·梅恩，探讨疫情后墨尔本中央商务区的未来及塑造其经济形势的力量。

讨论内容涵盖新冠疫情对市中心的深远影



响，包括写字楼空置率、混合办公，以及墨尔本市政府在推动经济复苏和激活中央商务区方面的实际行动。

另一期最新上线的节目将聚焦码头区，前墨尔本市议员贾迈勒·哈基姆参与讨论该滨水区的挑战、机遇及长期振兴工作。


下一期节目将探讨墨尔本市的住房压力与可负担性问题，邀请“全澳住房”创始人罗布·普拉多林参与对话。

卡尔先生表示，播客的创立旨在延续超本地新闻长期以来在报道地方事务和社区对话中的角色。

“多年来，我们的报纸报道了塑造墨尔本的关键决策，从规划发展到重大市政项目以及影响社区的本地问题，”卡尔说。

“播客为我们提供了一个新平台，使这些对话得以更深入展开，直接听取塑造城市未来的相关人士的声音。”

# WHAT'S ON April



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



**NGV TEENS ART PARTY**  
NGV Teens Art Party celebrates fashion with music, art activities, performances and exhibition access, inspired by designers Vivienne Westwood and Rei Kawakubo.

**National Gallery of Victoria**

**SATURDAY 29 MARCH, 6PM – 9PM**



**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**

**UNTIL 19 APRIL**



**THE GREAT GATSBY: A JAZZ BALLET ODYSSEY**

The Great Gatsby jazz ballet premieres, blending classic music, new compositions, and choreography, costumes, & spectacle retelling Fitzgerald's iconic story.

**Her Majesty's Theatre**

**UNTIL 5 APRIL, 7PM – 9PM**



**CACHIVACHES LATIN MARKET**

Cachivaches Latin Market celebrates Latin American culture with food, music, traders, performances, and community, supporting small businesses in Melbourne.

**C-D Sheds, Queen Victoria Market**

**18 – 19 APRIL, 9AM – 4PM**



**DAVID O'DOHERTY: HIGHWAY TO THE DAVID ZONE**

Comedian David O'Doherty delivers quirky, musical stand-up featuring songs, jokes, and playful commentary in a lively, unpredictable performance experience.

**Melbourne Town Hall**

**UNTIL 19 APRIL, 7.30PM – 8.30PM**



**EASTER AT SCOTS' CHURCH**

Celebrate Easter with Scots' Church! Join us for our Good Friday 11 AM service, Free performance of St John Passion at 7.30 PM, and 11 AM / 5 PM Easter Sunday services.

**Scots' Church – Cnr Collins/Russell St**

**FRIDAY 3 / SUNDAY 5 APRIL**



**PLAY SCHOOL: COME AND PLAY**

Play School: Come and Play! celebrates 60 years with a hands-on exhibition where families explore behind-the-scenes TV magic through role-play, songs, stories, games and creative activities.

**ACMI, Flinders St Melbourne**

**UNTIL 12 JULY, 10AM – 5PM**

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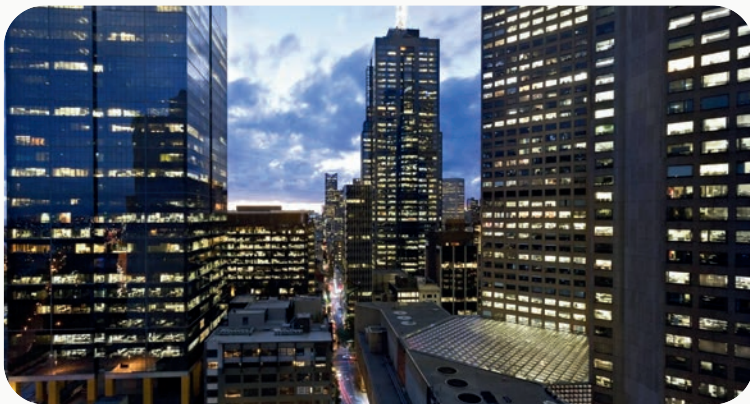


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