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FREE

CBD

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Welcome new students

Newly-arrived international students in Melbourne received warm welcome at the Lord Mayor's Student Welcome held at the Immigration Museum on March 17.

The event started with a documentary screening of *Act of Translation*, a theatre program featuring international students' daily struggle and experience of studying in Melbourne.

The *Act of Translation* cast gave a short live performance following the screening.

Vegemite toast and Tim Tam eating contest, Bollywood dance workshop, Vietnamese dances and Aboriginal smoke ceremonies were some of the highlights at this annual community event.



The "Act of Translation" cast, directors, Acting Lord Mayor Arron Wood and Cr Philip Le Liu at the Lord Mayor's Student Welcome. Photo by Andrew Coutler.

CEO buries Freckelton investigation

By Shane Scanlan

The full extent of allegations against former lord mayor Robert Doyle will probably never be known as council CEO Ben Rimmer tries to kill off the \$1million investigation he started last December.

Having achieved Mr Doyle's resignation in

February, it comes as no surprise that the leader of Victoria's most secretive council is now hell bent on preserving what's left of its reputation.

Mr Rimmer on March 13 released to councillors and the public a mere 805 words from a 100-page, so called "First Report" from investigator Ian Freckelton QC.

His strategic timing, stage management and content of a 4pm special council meeting and its resulting human drama and pathos conspired to divert attention away from his intention to kill off the investigation process.

It was "lights, camera, action" in the council

chamber just in time to catch the nightly news bulletins. The apologies, the tears, the hugs and the promise by councillors to make the City of Melbourne a better place was the story of the day.

And, considering that councillors were given just a few hours and the press about an hour before the meeting to digest his 3345-word, carefully crafted report, it is no surprise that the theatre of the occasion took centre stage.

Like the ancient Romans, who maintained control of their population by providing "bread and circuses", Mr Rimmer is an artful bureaucrat.

What was less apparent on the night was the relative insignificance of what Mr Rimmer chose to release.

His material added nothing to what was already publicly well known about a small number of accusations. And the "First

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*Views expressed by contributors are not
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Sean Car and Shane Scanlan.

Changing of the guard

Journalist Sean Car has bought into "CBD News" and will become its sole director in July 2019.

Mr Car, 26, and Shane Scanlan have formed a new company, Hyperlocal News Pty Ltd, to publish *CBD News* and sister publications *Docklands News* and *Southbank Local News*.

60-year-old Mr Scanlan acquired *Docklands News* from the state government in 2007. On the strength of success in Docklands, he established *Southbank Local News* in 2011

and, in 2014 he started *CBD News*. Mr Car has edited *Southbank Local News* since 2014.

Mr Scanlan said: "Sean has excelled in all aspects of the business and has taken *Southbank Local News* to new levels of quality and commercial success."

"I have no doubt that *CBD News* will remain in the best possible hands in the future."

Mr Scanlan said he hoped to maintain a strong involvement in *CBD News* beyond July 1, 2019, when he intends to resign as a director.

"I've got plenty left to give but am happy to hand over responsibility to a younger person," he said. "The publications will thrive under the direction of a new generation."

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Lord mayoral election is a lottery

By Shane Scanlan

Melbourne votes for a new lord mayor this month, but the winner won't necessarily be the most popular.

Without the dominant figure of Robert Doyle in the race (with 45 per cent of the primary vote in 2016), the field is wide open and the prize is likely to be claimed by the candidate who organises the best flow of preferences.

It is even possible that the eventual winner could poll the least number of primary votes. There is a current Melbourne councillor whose team in 2016 received just 1534 votes.

Voting within the City of Melbourne is unlike any other municipality. Its special electoral system has morphed and evolved from a desire from both Labor and Coalition state governments to prevent the capital city council falling into the hands of local, parochial interests.

But is it fair? Is it democratic? Is it corrupt? It is certainly unique.

Lowest participation

To start with, Melbourne has the lowest level of voter participation. In 2016, ballots were received from only 55 per cent of eligible voters. Eligibility in Melbourne is broader



than anywhere else, which goes some way to explain the poor turnout.

While the city in 2016 had an estimated residential population of 148,000, only 54,791 were on the state electoral roll.

A further 77,939 voters were on the City of Melbourne's roll which, combined, added up to 133,801 eligible voters (before 1607 additions and 536 deletions).

The numbers show there were tens of thousands of residents who were not enrolled. And, no doubt, there were plenty of enrolled voters who did not even know they were required to vote.

But there are also other factors to explain the poor participation rate of two years ago.

Postal

Does anyone maintain faith these days that a correctly-stamped item entrusted to Australia Post will reach its destination?

City of Melbourne elections are run purely as a postal ballot. And ballots have to run the postal system gauntlet twice – once from the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to the voter and again on the return journey.

This system is open to routine abuse. Stories abound of theft of ballots from letter boxes on the day they arrive. And hundreds, if not thousands, are discarded (to be harvested by others) by residents who receive mail addressed to a previously-correctly-enrolled voter.

And, because the VEC does not have matching signatures from actual enrolled voters, there is no way of validating that the ballots being received are genuine.

On top of all this potential abuse, ballots destined for absentee landlords are routinely sent in bulk to real estate agents acting on their behalf. No audit is conducted about what happens to these ballots.

Gerrymander

Much is made of the unique situation in Melbourne, where corporations are given two votes, whereas residents are restricted

to one. Supporters of this anomaly justify it on the basis of the percentage of commercial rates underpinning the council's operations.

Critics say it just isn't fair. But this cuts both ways. Up to two residential renters per property can apply to be added to the council roll – and they don't even have to be Australian citizens. The only prerequisite is that they had lived at the address for a month before applications closed (March 16). No proof of occupancy is required.

Dummies and stooges

Like other Victorian municipal elections, candidates routinely enlist others to direct preferences their way.

As in the past, voters can expect to select from candidates whose sole role is to attract or block votes that may have otherwise flowed to an opponent.

The Greens are the only major political party to officially endorse candidates in local government elections. Labor and Liberal interests are unofficial. But they are there in the mix.

Motivations of parties and candidates vary. For Labor, blocking Greens influence in the inner city is high on the list. Last time around, Robert Doyle was supported by Labor as a brake on Greens' ambition.

The successful candidate will be the one who does the best preference deals. For the voters and the candidates, it's a lottery.



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CEO buries Freckelton investigation

Continued from Page 1

Report” deliberately confined itself to matters relating to Cr Cathy Oke and former councillor Tessa Sullivan (although it inconsistently mentions the also-publicly-known Melbourne Health incident, which Mr Rimmer calls a “further allegation”).

Reference to a “further allegation” implies that there have been just three women have made complaints against Mr Doyle. This is not the case. *CBD News* understands that many complainants have contacted Dr Freckelton since Cr Sullivan resigned with a 35-page letter of complaint on December 15.

Like many other aspects, Mr Rimmer’s report is silent on the number of complainants.

“The First Report does not consider other matters that have been raised by **OTHERS** (*our emphasis*) in relation to Mr Doyle’s conduct,” he says.

He goes on to say: “Such matters, where relevant to his role as Lord Mayor, **MAY** (*our emphasis*) be the subject of a further report.”

Is it too cynical to suggest that the determining factor of whether there will be a further report is whether anyone notices or cares about the paucity of detail to date?

Mr Rimmer says that his nine-page March 13 report is a summary “derived from the executive summary” of the first report.

Tactically, this is a departure from his February 6 announcement that there would be an “interim report” followed by a “final report”. At that time he said the “interim draft report” had been provided to Mr Doyle on January 30.

While Mr Rimmer has revealed that Dr Freckelton’s “First Report” found four adverse findings against Mr Doyle, we still know nothing about what Dr Freckelton’s terms of reference were. We have been given some answers without their questions.

We don’t know how broad or narrow the investigation was. Or:

- How many women came forward?
- How many allegations have been made?
- What is the nature of the allegations?
- Were allegations made against any other councillors?
- On what basis was an allegation judged worthy of investigation?

On February 6 Mr Rimmer said: “To date, no concerns about the conduct of any person other than the Lord Mayor have been

identified as requiring investigation.”

This does not say that no allegations have been made against other councillors. But it does say certain criteria must be in place by which allegations were judged worthy of investigation. So what are these criteria?

A suitably-redacted version of Dr Freckelton’s first report would adequately protect participants and, at the same time, satisfy the public interest.

For Ms Sullivan, public exposure of the breadth and quantity of her allegations about her time as a councillor would better explain why she resigned.

Among Mr Rimmer’s justifications for not revealing more on March 13 is that he is legally bound not to reveal “personal information”. This is a City of Melbourne favourite and is also frequently used to avoid its obligations under Freedom of Information legislation.

He brought a lawyer with him to discuss with councillors the risks of revealing more, another a classic strategy from the City of Melbourne playbook – pay for a consultant or lawyer to support your position.

And, judging from the March 13 special

meeting, there is little appetite from councillors to continue the pain. The consensus appears to be to move on, rebuild and put the matter behind them.

Cr Jackie Watts said: “I’m frustrated that, because of the various legal constraints and difficulties, we are seeing a summary. I understand fully why this has occurred but it is my deep position that more information is better than less, but the summary outlines the legal position and very well.”

Acting Lord Mayor Arron Wood said: “We now have a summary of findings, and it is a summary of findings for the various reasons outlined in the summary report. I know it’s probably going to fall on deaf ears and the public commentary will probably continue, but there is still an ongoing investigation in terms of the third complainant.”

“But people want to get on with their lives and start to rebuild their lives and start to focus on some of the good things that they wake up for every day,” Cr Wood said.

Whether other complainants feel the same way remains to be seen. Just don’t hold your breath waiting for more information about this sorry saga to come from the City of Melbourne.

Franchisee penalised for underpayment

By Lina Le

A former franchisee of a 7-Eleven retail outlet in the CBD faced court for underpaying three international students a total of \$6674 between November 2015 and October 2016.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has taken legal action against Xia Jing Qi Pty Ltd, which operated a 7-Eleven retail store on William St until March 2017, and the store’s former manager, Ai Ling “Irene” Lin, who was in Australia on a student visa.

The three employees were Chinese students, between the age of 21 and 24.

Details have emerged that after a high-tech payroll system was installed by the head office to ensure employees were paid lawful minimum rates, the three employees were required to pay back a weekly sum to a safe box in the store or to Ms Lin’s bank account.

The employees were then left with an hourly rate ranging from \$8.53 to \$26.52.

Xia Jing Qi also violated workplace laws by providing the Fair Work Ombudsman with false or misleading records in connection with the 7-Eleven outlet.

Xia Jing Qi Pty Ltd and its sole director Jing Qi Xia also faced a second charge for allegedly underpaying another foreign employee at Ajisen Ramen in the Melbourne

Central shopping centre by a total of \$9616.

It is alleged that the employee was paid \$11.50 per hour between May and October 2016, which was reduced to just \$3.98 per hour in her final week of work.

These rates were significantly below the legal minimum hourly rate, casual loading, and penalty rates specified under the Restaurant Industry Award 2010.

In both cases, the outstanding amounts were paid back.

The franchisee was penalised up to \$54,000 per contravention in each case, while Ms Lin and Ms Xia each face maximum penalties of up to \$10,800 per violation.

In order to curb similar contravention, an injunction restraining the company from underpaying retail and restaurant employees

in future is being sought.

Once granted, the company could face contempt of court proceedings for any further contravention proven in court.

According to the Fair Work Ombudsman’s Natalie James, the use of cash-back schemes requiring workers to pay back part of their wages is a serious form of exploitation.

“We know that workers from overseas backgrounds may be reluctant to speak up or may be unaware of their rights. We make no apologies for targeting businesses who seek to take advantage of these vulnerabilities,” she said.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has previously taken 10 other legal actions against 7-Eleven franchisee with more than \$1 million in penalties imposed on the chain to date.

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All this . . . and ripped off too!

Former councillor Tessa Sullivan not only felt sexually degraded by Robert Doyle. She also felt financially duped by him.

In her 35-page letter of resignation and complaint, she says she started to distrust Mr Doyle when she realised she contributed \$50,000 and some other team members had spent nothing.

“On or around Friday, 12 August 2016 at 10am I met Doyle and he told me that I would be running for council in approximately four days to a week on the Team Doyle ticket. I agreed,” she said.

“During the meeting, Doyle said to me that candidates usually make a donation to their own campaign and that the minimum amount was about \$50,000-\$70,000.”

“I was shocked, but Doyle reassured me he was putting in \$60,000 and indicated the other candidates were donating a similar amount.”

“I had some savings and money that my mother had given me towards the purchase of a first home. I donated \$50,000 in two increments of \$25,000 as I had to close accounts to access the money.”

“On or around mid to late October I called Doyle to ask why it was that I was one of the highest donors to the campaign?”

“I felt particularly duped when I saw other candidates had put in only \$500 or donated nothing at all.”



The land 4 Linlithgow Rd in Toorak is vacant.

“Doyle assured me that he had put in around \$60,000 and many other donors put in a lot more. This was when I started to distrust him.”

Team Doyle election campaign returns of December 1, 2016 show that Mr Doyle himself contributed just \$22,000. Mr Doyle later tried to revise this amount upwards by \$40,000, which is the subject of a Local Government Inspectorate investigation.

The Team Doyle return also reveals that candidates Arron Wood contributed \$10,000, Susan Riley gave \$6200 in cash and a further \$1500 worth of in-kind advertising, and both

Hope Wei and Beverley Pinder-Mortimer forked out \$2000 each.

Team Doyle members who did not contribute financially were Kevin Louey, Nicholas Reece and Sue Stanley.

CBD News can reveal that 2016 Team Doyle election donor Ting Li used an incorrect address to register her business with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC).

Ms Li’s Dainty Age One Pty Ltd gave the largest donation to the Doyle campaign, contributing \$80,000.

An ASIC company extract lists Ms Li’s residential address as 4 Linlithgow Rd Toorak, but there is no house at this address.

CBD News understands that the property was bought in about 2012 with the house remaining empty until it was demolished last year.

In October, *CBD News* incorrectly implied a connection with Ms Li’s donation and former councillor Tessa Sullivan, who lives nearby.

Rubiix Business Accountants principal Stuart Coulthard said the Corporations Act 2001 sections 117(2)(f), and 205B says the ASIC register application must contain the “address of each person who consents in writing to become a director or company secretary” within 28 days. As per section 205D, this address “must be their usual residential address”, Mr Coulthard said.

An ASIC spokesperson said that failure to update a change in personal details could result in a late-fee. For details not lodged with ASIC up to one month after the change has occurred, the fee is \$78 and for changes not lodged more than one month after the change, it is \$323. For every year these changes are not lodged, the company will be required to pay \$323.

Ms Li did not respond to efforts by *CBD News* to speak with her.

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hockingstuart

Doyle damned

By Sean Car

The City of Melbourne’s independent investigation into sexual harassment claims against former lord mayor Robert Doyle has returned four adverse findings.

A special council meeting held on March 13 heard the long-awaited outcomes stemming from the first report of top silk Dr Ian Freckelton’s investigation into allegations made by Cr Cathy Oke and former councillor Tessa Sullivan.

Council CEO Ben Rimmer said the investigation into allegations made by a third complainant had been suspended until Mr Doyle, who is currently suffering ill health, was able to respond.

However, the CEO has only made public a summary report of the first report, citing “the confidential nature”, “personal” and “health” information, as well as interests of all involved parties, as justification against full disclosure.

On December 15 last year, Ms Sullivan resigned from council after making serious allegations of sexual misconduct against Mr Doyle, which she documented in a 35-page dossier. This document also included allegations made by Cr Oke.

Having initially taken leave from council amid Mr Rimmer’s announcement of an investigation into the allegations, Mr Doyle resigned as lord mayor on February 5.

On March 13, the four adverse outcomes of Dr Freckelton’s first report were made public and found that:

- On May 2, 2017, Mr Doyle deliberately grabbed Ms Sullivan’s breast;
- On December 4, 2014, Mr Doyle inappropriately placed his hand on Cr Oke’s inner thigh below her groin area;
- On another occasion in late 2016 or early 2017 he embraced Cr Oke and attempted to kiss her on the mouth in his office; and
- Each of these matters occurred in the context of Mr Doyle having consumed substantial amounts of red wine.

Investigators were required to apply what is known as the “Briginshaw standard”, which in practice, meant they were required to be satisfied to a level that goes beyond mere

likelihood that something happened.

While Mr Rimmer’s summary noted that Ms Sullivan had raised a number of other matters about the conduct of Mr Doyle, investigators were not sufficiently satisfied that they met the Briginshaw standard.

Acting Lord Mayor Arron Wood said that all councillors had unanimously agreed to review the council’s code of conduct and supported management’s review of council’s alcohol and drug policy.

Cr Oke made an emotional speech to the meeting, where she called on her colleagues to cast politics aside and work together to achieve cultural change and a healthier workplace for all.

“Achieving cultural change in an environment where political debate is essential to achieving policy change is of course difficult. We need more women in local government for diversity of voice and approach, but change can’t only be on the shoulders of women to make it happen.”

“I hope I am not being too naïve in wanting my daughter to grow up in a post #metoo era where speaking out doesn’t cause so much pain. Where political games and machinations can still operate but with the view that people can expect to be safe and free from harassment when going about the halls of power,” Cr Oke said.

Cr Susan Riley said she felt ashamed that her fellow councillors had been forced to go through their experiences and called for a “united council” to make its remaining three years the “best term yet”.

Cr Jackie Watts said she was “frustrated” that council and the public was only receiving a summary of the investigation, but felt optimistic and confident that positive change would occur as a result.

Cr Rohan Leppert described the report’s findings as “sobering and serious”. He said he regretted that the process had forced the resignation of Tessa Sullivan and that he missed her presence at council.

Cr Nic Frances-Gilley commended the courage of both women for speaking up and helping guide the process, while condemning some mainstream media coverage for “ganging up on the vulnerable”.

Ahead of the Lord Mayoral by-election on May 11, Cr Philip Le Liu asked all candidates running to have a serious think about what they could bring to council. “Right now we need leadership,” he said.

What can a lord mayor do?

By Shane Scanlan

Being elected Melbourne’s Lord Mayor doesn’t necessarily mean the winner will have any capacity to change anything or get anything done.

The winning candidate will still need to command or negotiate support of five other councillors on every issue that comes before the council.

And there is a wide gap in capacity to achieve this between the current and emerging crop of potential candidates.

At the top end of the scale is Sally Capp, who could well be described as the status quo candidate. She appears most aligned with the remnant majority “Team Doyle” councillors. But it’s hard to see the “team” concept holding in a post-Doyle council.

At the other end of the scale is perennial candidate Gary Morgan, who is aligned only with Cr Jackie Watts.

Should Greens councillor Rohan Leppert be elected, he would have two other Greens for support (as Apsara Sabaratnam would become a councillor), but would have to negotiate issue by issue for the support of at least another three councillors. This is not necessarily a bad thing. The council badly needs a return to representative democracy, having most recently performed as a rubber stamp for the dominant Doyle agenda.

Should Ken Ong be elected, he too would need to negotiate support on the merits of each issue.

Incumbent or former Melbourne councillors enjoy the advantage of knowing what they are in for and how the system works (or doesn’t work).

Voters should be wary of candidates offering change, as change is probably not within their capacity. The best that candidates can offer are their ideals, aspirations and principles.

But having the support of fellow councillors is, perhaps, the easy part. As we have seen with the demise of Robert Doyle, it is the unelected officers who are really running the show at the City of Melbourne.

Councillors were sidelined by CEO

Ben Rimmer for the entire three-month “Freckelton” process. Just like others, they were getting their news from the daily press – with this news cycle being highly influenced by Mr Rimmer’s team of media minders.

Following Tessa Sullivan’s resignation on December 15, council media manager Mandy Frostick visited the home of the former councillor to offer media advice.

Councillors still know only as little as the general public in this matter.

Over his three terms in office, Robert Doyle elevated the lord mayoralty beyond what was envisaged for a popularly-elected lord mayor.

By bringing with him a team of five, Mr Doyle morphed the lord mayoralty into a presidential-type position and cemented his influence with strong support from conservative print and radio media interests.

So Melbourne’s new lord mayor will be starting from a position well below that enjoyed by the previous incumbent.

As mentioned, officer support is crucial. If not forthcoming, a new lord mayor’s alterative would be to find another chief executive. This would require the support of other councillors – probably quite achievable in the current climate. Mr Rimmer’s four-year contract expires on February 8.

The new lord mayor will also have to be fluent in “spin”.

When asked whether our claim that Ms Frostick visited Ms Sullivan following her resignation was true, she said: “Taking into account our occupational, health and safety obligations, appropriate support from City of Melbourne was provided to councillors, complainants and other individuals impacted by the investigation into allegations made against the former lord mayor.”

We interpret this as “yes”. But how would you know?

CBD crime wrap

CRIME STOPPERS
VIC
1800 333 000

By Medha Vernekar

Unprovoked assault

A male suffered serious facial injuries and another was left with minor injuries after an unprovoked encounter between two groups of men on the intersection of Bourke St and Hardware Lane on March 11.

Police believe that three men approached a second group of males at about 2.15am when a male from the second group attacked

one of the men who sustained a few minor injuries.

When a second man tried to intervene, one of the three men attacked him and fled the scene after he suffered serious facial injuries and was taken to the hospital.

No arrests have been made so far and the investigation is ongoing.

Sexual assault

Police are looking for a man who sexually assaulted a woman in Spencer St on December 20.

At around 10.20pm, a woman was approached by a man from behind who touched her inappropriately and fled.

The man (pictured right) appears to be of Caucasian, 170cm tall, around 30-40 years old and was wearing a khaki coloured hoodie.



With any information, please report online at www.crimestoppersvic.com.au or call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Market traders feel trapped without tenure

Some Queen Victoria Market traders feel trapped in their businesses, which they can't sell because of uncertainty about the future.

Their only option, they say, is to stay but their turbulent and often toxic relationship with market management gives them little confidence.

CBD News met with a number of traders who would like to like to leave, but there are no buyers in the current environment.

Luke Craczyk of The Eggporium in I Shed acknowledges that all traders have been given tenure until 2021, but he says this is not enough.

"We're stuck," he said. "We can't make any improvements and we can't leave. It's like having a job that you're not allowed to leave."

Mr Craczyk says he bought his business with four years remaining on an eighteen-year licence (6x6x6) and was assured the time that a similar licence would be forthcoming if he traded within the rules.

CBD News has seen an August 2017 email from QVM management which asks him to either sign the 2021 extension or leave.

"If you are not intending to sign it, we will take that as an indication that you wish to relinquish your licence and we will move ahead accordingly," the email says.

Mr Craczyk said this approach to negotiation was contrary to Australian Consumer and



Luke Craczyk feels uncertain about the market's future.

Competition Commission regulations.

He said contradictory messaging and a high turnover of management staff also didn't help.

"It might be alright if you thought that any one knew what they were talking about," he said.

Mr Craczyk said traders had always wanted from management better parking

arrangements and better marketing.

"These two things haven't been delivered," he said. "The rest of the stuff that they talk about is somewhat irrelevant to everybody."

Mr Craczyk said "a letter of comfort" guaranteeing tenure post-renewal would satisfy traders that they had a secure future.

He said some traders felt that management was deliberately running down the market and privately wanted the get rid of as many traders as possible.

This was particularly true, he said, following the release of a 2012 email from QVM chair Paul Guerra instructing staff not to sign new leases which could become a liability on the company "if and when the redevelopment goes ahead".

But new QVM chief executive Stan Liacos says the market desperately wanted to keep traders like Mr Craczyk.

He said management had offered most traders a longer licence renewal than what they had previously enjoyed.

"When the renewal projects are underway and we actually have more certainty of project completion dates ourselves, we do look forward to entering into many more new or extended leases and licences providing our many hundreds of traders with

more secure tenure than we have been able to provide before, particularly where they too are keen to co-invest in the fit out of the market," Mr Liacos said.

"We understand that this is what our trader community has been longing for. We are keen to deliver on that commitment once our desperately needed renewal works are well underway."

"Luke is a highly valued licensed trader and exactly the sort of business we think contributes to making Queen Victoria Market the special place that it is. He commands a pivotal location in Shed I and has a popular offering for customers."

"Back in August 2016, QVM management made a strong commitment to guarantee tenure to all traders operating at the market at that time through to the end of the renewal development period. We have formally offered all leaseholders and licensees security until December 2021. This degree of tenure is actually longer than what most licensees had had prior. It was a significant commitment."

"Our recently extended leases and licences do permit, if necessary, for traders to be relocated from their current trading locations while works are underway so they can continue to trade at the market right throughout renewal works."

Curious Minds

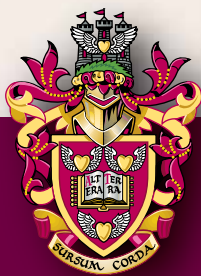
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Another retail icon goes

By Sunny Liu

Another iconic Melbourne institution has closed its doors in March, after operating in the CBD for 96 years.

Thomas' Music officially closed its shop at 31 Bourke St on March 16, much to the dismay of its loyal customers who travel from all over Australia and around the world for classical music at Thomas'.

Owner Elisabeth Vodicka said the unfortunate fate of Thomas' Music had received an "outpouring of grief" from the community.

"The reaction has been torrential. We've had more people come in in the last nine days than in the last three months. We have sold half a million dollars worth of stock in nine days," she said.

"Everyone who comes in expresses their unhappiness and frustration that we are going. Especially for the older customers who've been coming here for 50 years, they've got nowhere else to go now," Ms Vodicka said.

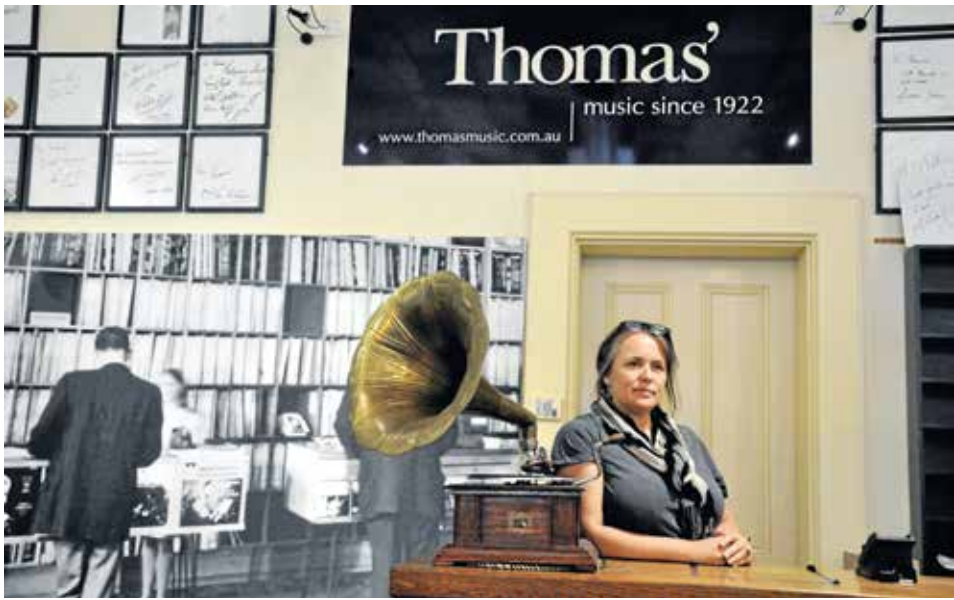
"We have a lot of client base, but there's just not enough new clients and demand for the huge amount of stock that we are carrying," she said.

"Thomas' has a very strong following, including lots of famous people," she said, pointing to the numerous autographs on the wall.

"There's been lots of interesting customers that we've had. But no more," Ms Vodicka said.

"It's just not a viable business anymore. We specialise in the hard-to-get things, such as records and cassettes. When you get to a point where you sell things that you can't actually get, it makes it a bit hard."

Ms Vodicka said the proliferation of digital



Thomas' Music owner Elisabeth Vodicka said the shop received overwhelming support from the community.

music platforms had "killed off" physical stores.

"Now, instead of buying music, you can go online and listen for free. So you don't need to come into a store and buy it. Digital has sabotaged the music industry," she said.

Thomas' Music is one of the last classical music stores in Australia, where the staff are equipped with professional knowledge about music genres and products.

Within the last few decades, Ms Vodicka has witnessed dramatic changes to the CBD's retail scene.

She was reminiscent of when several classical music stores co-existed in the heart of the city with high patronage.

Music store Disqueria closed several years ago and Myer used to have a classical music department.

"A lot of the niche stores are disappearing. Although Melbourne prides itself in those little niche retailers, we don't get a lot of support from the council or the government," Ms Vodicka said.

She said a lot of things had played a role in

the demise of independent retailing in the city and state government's land tax policy was a big factor.

"The amount of land tax we pay has doubled

ever since the new policy was put in place. It's just appalling. How can the CBD's retail industry survive when they do things like that?"

"Melbourne's going to be left with a whole lot of chain stores and cafes, restaurants, bars and nail salons. It's not going to be very interesting," Ms Vodicka said.

She also said the City of Melbourne had not provided adequate support for small businesses within the municipality.

"I think the council has forgotten who writes their cheques. It's not a very supportive environment for small businesses, which are the backbone of the economy," Ms Vodicka said.

The closure of Thomas' Music follows recent departures of Modak Motorcycles on Elizabeth St and Ding Dong Lounge on Market Lane, both had operated in the CBD for decades.

Thomas' Music will sell any remaining stock online via www.thomasmusic.net.au



Elisabeth Vodicka with staff Peter Bakowski and Christina Hinton.

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No more high-wall promotion signs

By Lina Le

The illuminated Fivex signs on top of the River View House at the corner of Elizabeth and Flinders streets may not be there for long.

The City of Melbourne on March 6 rejected an application for its continued display.

The signs displays the word “Fivex” and was installed two years ago by the building’s owner, Fivex Commercial Property.

A planning permit for the signs was first issued in 2003 for 15 years and will expire in May 2018.

In February, the council refused an extension. According to a report to the March 6 Future Melbourne Committee, the signs were deemed to have had an impact on views from the Yarra River corridor. Council’s current policy discourages the display of high-wall promotional signs around the area.

Representatives from Fivex and Mecone, the company’s planner, spoke to the committee, but the decision was upheld after a major debate.

Fivex contended the signs were for business identification and were not promotional as suggested by the council.



The high-wall Fivex signs installed more than a decade ago may be removed.



“No one at any point in time told us prior to the six times this application has been reviewed by the council previously that we could only keep it up for two years,” Leslie Berger, Fivex’s managing director, said.

Eight councillors voted for the decision whilst two councillors voted against it.

Cr Rohan Leppert shared his view that, even though the decision seemed punitive, it was important that the policies must be followed.

“That policy quite clearly discourages the signs of this height, of this nature, and of this brightness in this sensitive area,” he said.

Cr Philip Le Liu said in favour of the sign: “I like the fact that we have corporate signage because I think it’s the fact that it’s a badge of honour for Melbourne where we bring in international business.”

“I think it shows that we are an international city and people want to come here to do business.”

He said that refusing to grant the permit would be “unfair”.

Acknowledging that it was a complicated debate, Acting Lord Mayor Arron Wood supported the decision on the grounds of policy change.

Since the planning permit was first granted, the policy has changed to discourage such signs within the precinct.

“When you consider the look of Darling Harbour for example, Sydney, [there are] a lot of high-wall signs at night heavily illuminated. [It’s] some people’s cup of tea and I love it. But Melbourne is much more understated than Sydney is, and it is something that we pride ourselves on.”

Fivex Commercial Property has appealed the refusal and it will be heard at Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) in May.

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CBD is home to everyone

By Sunny Liu

Boutique development firm RESCOM's owners Bradley and Lisa Matthews lived in the city for two decades until recently.

The Matthews bought several storage warehouses next to the Queen Victoria Market in 1992 and later converted them into apartments and retail shops.

When they first moved to the CBD 20 years ago, no one understood their decision.

"People were asking us where we would get our milk and bread," Mr Matthews said.

"We were in one of the first residential developments in the CBD and we were featured in the newspapers when we moved here," he said.

Despite doubts from friends, the Matthews happily settled down in their rusty warehouse apartment and raised four children there.

Mr Matthews said the city had always had a close-knit community.

"We used to just send a message to the Queen Victoria Market vendors, who we all knew personally, to order some eggs and vegetables. That's the beauty of being a city and a neighbourhood," he said.

"We could walk out of our front door and we could go to the movies, restaurants, shops and trams."

The Matthews loved their lifestyle in the heart of the city, but two decades later, they decided to move out of the CBD in 2016.

"The city has outgrown us. We got a planning permit to build a penthouse, with an outdoor swimming pool, on top of the building. But when you look around, you only see building with more than 60 storeys and there wouldn't be any privacy," Mrs Matthews said.

"Before, the CBD was 'our home,' but now it's



Lisa and Bradley Matthews embrace developments in the CBD.

home to 40,000 other people," she said.

The couple welcomes both residential and commercial developments into Melbourne, but their warehouse-turned apartments next to one of the city's biggest tourism hotspots have become unsuitable as their permanent home.

They also said the city's infrastructure was not keeping up with the rapid development and influx of new residents.

"We love the hustle and bustle. But some of the infrastructure needs to be improved, especially the rubbish collection system," Mr Matthews said.

"Before the streets were clean with the rubbish bins being picked up every day. But now they need to be picked up twice or three times a day because there are so many people. So they are constantly overflowing," he said.

"So the infrastructure has not kept up with the development side."

Mrs Matthews said the strong residential developments in the CBD have also driven commercial developments.

"Melbourne has never seen anything like this. The influx of overseas developers building skyscrapers is incredible. And this will continue to increase in the future," she said.

"We totally embrace the changes. We think it's good for Melbourne, but at the moment it's just experiencing some growing pains," she said, referring to the infrastructure improvements and building standards.

As a boutique developer, RESCOM targets local owner-occupiers with its high-quality apartment designs. In contrast, international developers build run-of-the-mill high-rises for investors.

Mr Matthews said developments were essential for Melbourne's growth, despite the various building standards.

"Every level satisfies someone's needs in the market. All developments are good, but they will be of different standards. In the long term, developments will get better," he said.

"Melbourne will be leading other Victorian cities and regions to develop as well. It has already created a ripple effect in its inner circle and outer suburbs."

Tourism campaign shows CBD

By Lina Le

Federation Square and the National Gallery of Victoria are among the highlights featured in Victoria's latest promotional campaign video, which aims to attract Chinese tourists.

In the video, famous Chinese star, actor Li Xian, is seen stepping into the iconic Federation Square and looking amazed at the Ian Potter Centre.

The video also features the City Circle Tram, Hosier Lane and a beautiful river scene from Southbank.

The video continues to take viewers to the 12 Apostles and the Yarra Valley, showcasing natural landscapes and major tourism hotspots.

The Chinese tourism campaign, the first in six years, was launched in Shanghai on March 12.

It targets Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou, from which Chinese tourists can easily travel to Melbourne via direct flights.

In the 12 months to September 2017, there were almost 600,000 Chinese tourists, who spent \$2.7 billion visiting Victoria, making China the largest tourism market for the state.

The state government believes the campaign will attract more Chinese visitors.

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VOTE 1 

Melbourne City Council Lord Mayor by-election

Vote by post

Voting

Ballot packs will be mailed to voters enrolled in the Melbourne City Council Lord Mayor by-election from Monday 23 April 2018. Your completed ballot material must be in the mail or hand delivered to the Returning Officer by 6.00 pm on Friday 11 May 2018.



If you will be away

If you will be away when ballot packs are mailed, or your address has changed since Friday 16 March, your ballot pack can be redirected by writing to:

Returning Officer
Melbourne City Council Lord Mayor by-election
C/- Victorian Electoral Commission
Level 11, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Alternatively, you can fax your request to (03) 9620 1568 or scan and email it to redirections@vec.vic.gov.au.

Please include the address for redirection. Each voter requesting redirection must sign their request. Requests for redirection must be received by Thursday 5 April.

Large print and braille ballot papers

Large print or braille ballot papers are available for blind and low vision voters who register by 5.00 pm Wednesday 28 March.

To register, call (03) 8620 1122 during business hours.

How to nominate as a candidate

To nominate as a candidate you must complete a nomination form and lodge it, together with the \$250 nomination fee, in person with the Returning Officer. Nomination forms can be lodged during business hours from Thursday 5 April until 12 noon on Tuesday 10 April at:

Level 4, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne

To help reduce waiting time while nominations are processed, visit vec.vic.gov.au and pre-complete your nomination form using the Candidate Helper.

The Candidate Helper will be available from Thursday 29 March. Print your pre-completed form and lodge it with the Returning Officer along with the \$250 nomination fee.

Call the Returning Officer from Wednesday 4 April on (03) 8619 1498 to make a nomination appointment.

Candidate information sessions

When: 7.00 pm Wednesday 28 March 2018

Where: VEC Head Office
Level 11, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne

When: 1.00 pm Wednesday 4 April 2018

Where: Melbourne City Council Lord Mayor by-election office
Level 4, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne

Candidate Information Kits containing nomination forms and other electoral information will be available at these sessions.

Bill Lang

Returning Officer

Nominations close 12 noon Tuesday 10 April

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

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• All other non-English languages 9209 0112



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Victorian Electoral Commission



Cladding costs to fall on owners

Strata lawyer Tom Bacon says the Victoria Government seems more determined than ever to burden apartment owners with the cost of removing non-compliant cladding.

Planning Minister Richard Wynne on March 10 issued new ministerial guidelines to building surveyors, which ban the most dangerous types of combustible cladding from being used on Victorian buildings.

Aluminium Cladding Panels with a polyethylene core of more than 30 per cent will be banned on all multi-storey buildings. Expanded polystyrene will also be banned.

Mr Wynne has directed the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) to issue a product safety alert, and building practitioners who ignore this directive will face disciplinary action from the VBA.

But the minister also said if buildings were found to be non-compliant at a current state-wide audit, the VBA and municipal building

surveyors will issue emergency orders.

“These orders are issued on building owners, which are the owners’ corporations,” Mr Bacon said.

“Because these orders are of an emergency nature, in extreme cases, the buildings could be declared uninhabitable until such time as the cladding is removed and replaced.”

“In other situations, the residents might be able to reside there, but only if interim safeguard measures are put in place and the cladding issues are fixed very, very quickly.”

“So it doesn’t leave OCs with much time to seek to join wrongdoers who might be responsible for why the cladding is there in the first place.”

“If the building is over a certain age, or if the

legal risks of bringing a claim are too high, then OCs might well have to simply fix the cladding themselves via special levies.”

Mr Bacon said the government seemed determined to protect building surveyors who had originally approved the installation of non-compliant cladding.

“The problem is that if certifiers and building surveyors are hung out to dry, they might simply close their companies and hand back their licences,” Mr Bacon said.

“The state government faces a shortage of qualified surveyors already, and if the industry collapses then the state government and councils will need to step back in and start certifying buildings themselves again, which would be very expensive and then

exposes them from a liability perspective.”

He said builders and developers were similarly also not in the firing line.

“The policy reason is that the government must keep ‘building conditions’ optimum for developers and builders so that they continue to build apartment blocks,” Mr Bacon said.

“It’s simple economics. The more apartments, the more stamp duty in the coffers, and it’s not worth upsetting builders and developers by placing the liability at their feet with the cladding issue, for fear that the builders and developers decide to ‘land bank’ and not develop their properties, or go to other states around Australia where it is easier for them to do business.”

Disappearance of an artist

By Rhonda Dredge

The corner of Bourke and Swanston is a popular place for street artists.

The city of Melbourne prides itself on its busking profile and the mall is the place to be.

Recently a poet set up a stand at the corner offering to write a poem on any topic. By law, she was required to have a busking permit.

A tourist soon stopped at the poet’s stand and put her artistic talent to the test.

Everyone looked on as the tourist assessed the poet’s composition then, a job well done, the poet left her crease to encourage a pavement artist who hadn’t been doing as well.



The two of them posed for a moment in front of the mall, he feeling despondent and not budging from his seat, she standing behind him, feeling the movement of the people and the glow of the buildings.

They could have been statues demonstrating that fact that there are two views of everything, depending on where you are standing at any particular time.

The next poem to come off the city’s production line was an obvious one. It was an ode to the camaraderie of the people forced to make their livings on the street.

Life can be tough for street artists. Tourists are usually receptive but there is fierce competition for lucrative spots. The City of Melbourne does a weekly ballot for places in the mall to provide some equity and requires that performers do auditions before granting permits. Not everyone is up to dealing with the authorities.

On February 1, the authorities turned against one particular performer. Kylie, an indigenous chalk artist who had been doing well, was surrounded by seven police officers

just before 4 pm.

Some say that the rivalry inherent in the cultural economy of the streets was her undoing. The police put her in handcuffs while they searched her backpack then she was bundled into a divvy van.

Bronwyn Walker watched the incident unfold. She believes that Kylie was dobbed in by a street trader for not having a busking permit.

“She’s been here since I’ve been on the street,” Ms Walker said. “She teaches people how to live on the street. She was minding her own business.”

It wasn’t a pretty sight to observe a descendent of the original landowners of this country being surrounded by a mob of policemen dressed to the nines with weapons and devices.

The sergeant in charge of the operation defended the police action. He said they were speaking to her about another matter and that they hadn’t charged her. “It’s not serious,” he said reassuringly.

Some of those who watched the incident felt for the police. “They have a difficult job,” said one observer, who did not want to give his name to *CBD News*. He said that synthetic drugs are readily available nearby.

Ms Walker was more empathetic. “They should have let her go,” she said. “She doesn’t hurt anyone. It’s not a good sign.”

Police have been out in force along Bourke St since the tragedy at the mall. Two days earlier a silver Mercedes was surrounded by four police cars and the driver handcuffed while the car was searched.

The high visibility of the police in the city offers some comfort to residents and the handcuffing of suspects sends out a tough message but are street artists really that dangerous?

Soon after Kylie was removed, pedestrians were stepping on her artwork.

Five days later, the faded pattern of hands and snakes on the footpath attested to her former presence but she hadn’t been in the vicinity since her disappearance.



Redevelopment for the Walk Arcade

A 10-storey integrated mixed-use development with retail stores, restaurants and two hotels is proposed for Bourke St Mall’s the Walk Arcade.

Two hotels are to be constructed from the existing 38-year-old Walk Arcade, including an upscale 181-room, 4.5-star hotel and a midscale 272-room hotel.

The basement, ground floor and first floor will be retail facilities for either one tenant or subdivided into smaller shops.

Situated at the central point of the Bourke St Mall and the CBD’s retail core, the Walk Arcade offers a premium location.

Welsh choir strikes a chord

By Sunny Liu

The Australian Welsh Male Choir has this year established a brand new CBD chapter at the Welsh Church on LaTrobe St.

Having been running in Frankston for 45 years, the Welsh choir is expanding its CBD presence to attract broader audience and membership.

Musical director Tom Buchanan said in just one month, the choir’s CBD chapter had already recruited 15 choristers and the choir hoped to double that number very quickly.

“Being based in the CBD opens doors to a much larger audience and makes it very accessible for participants to join the choir,” he said.

Being the oldest Welsh choir in Australia, the Australian Welsh Male Choir has toured the UK, Asia, New Zealand and all around Australia.

The only prerequisite for joining this well-established, community-based choir is the love for singing and, of course, being male. Knowledge of the Welsh language is not required.

“The idea is having not trained musicians, but community members to sing in the choir. Our choruses come from very diverse age, cultural and religious backgrounds – just not gender!” Mr Buchanan said.

“Singing is a very enjoyable thing to be part of. Our members would often say being part of the choir, part of a community that comes



The Australian Welsh Male Choir's musical director Tom Buchanan.

together to sing on a regular basis, is a life-changing experience,” Mr Buchanan said.

He said Welsh male choirs were very representative of Welsh traditions.

“The Welsh choir tradition grew out of the Welsh men singing at the mines and rugby clubs. And we are trying to sustain that tradition with the choir, our rehearsals and the monthly singing at pubs,” Mr Buchanan said.

He believes the choir helps promote and preserve the Welsh culture and language.

“The Welsh language was banned in Wales for 400 years and it was very much through the music that the language has survived. So I think that’s an important part of the Welsh choirs now to keep that singing tradition going,” he said.

“If you travel through Wales, you will see that every village has a male choir. So it’s a very common part of the expression of the Welsh culture.”

There are currently 60 members at the Frankston chapter and Mr Buchanan said the choir hoped to grow the city chapter to the same size, making the Australian Welsh Male Choir the largest in the country.

The Australian Welsh Male Choir has rehearsals at the Welsh Church at 320 LaTrobe St every Wednesday from 7-9pm.

For more information about the choir or to join the choir, visit awmc.org.au or contact secretary@awmc.org.au

B3000+ Awards launched

By Emma Doherty

In celebration of local businesses, the 2018 Business 3000+ Awards were launched on February 22.

The City of Melbourne’s Cr Susan Riley launched the event at the premises of BlueRock before introducing this year’s keynote speaker and awards ambassador Dr Elaine Saunders.

Dr Saunders, who is the managing director of Blamey Saunders Hears, spoke of her passion for innovation, specifically of its impact in her field of audiology.

Fellow speakers and sponsors also addressed the opportunity and potential for business development that can flow from winning a B3000+ award.

BlueRock managing director Bruce McFarlane welcomed guests and spoke of the importance of entering business awards and the positive effects it has on his business.

Co-CEO of StarRez, Adele Knipe, spoke about the growth of their business since being awarded the B3000+ Award in 2014.

The work of businesses and individuals can be recognised under the following categories: the 2018 Business of the Year Award (supported by BlueRock), the Alan



From left: BlueRock COO Dean Godfrey, Cr Susan Riley and managing director (law) Bruce McFarlane.

Knipe Innovation Award (supported by StarRez), New Business Award (supported by VCSO), International Award (sponsored Chin Communications), Social Enterprise Award (supported by the RACV Club), Sustainability Award (supported by Moral Fairground) and Female Entrepreneur Award (supported by the State Government of Victoria).

Nominations close April 27 and award winners will be announced at the 2018 Business 3000+ awards ceremony on Thursday, May 31.

Bungling bookstore burglar

Melbourne Crime Investigation Unit detectives are appealing for public assistance following a burglary at a Melbourne book store on March 15.

The burglary took place when an unknown person forced open the main doors to the shopping complex on Collins St just after midnight.

Security footage shows the burglar struggling in the glass sliding door as it closes on his leg and back pack.

Once inside the complex the burglary falls over on the escalator before climbing on a ledge to access stores on the lower level.

He then enters the book store and smashes through a security door to gain entry into a rear office.

Once inside the office, unable to open an office safe, he lifts it in his arms and leaves the shop.

Contact Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000**.

Land tax hike harms small businesses

By Sunny Liu

The recent state government hike on land tax for property owners has forced many small businesses out of the CBD, according to business owners and experts.

In November last year, the Victorian Government announced it would conduct valuations on land annually instead of every second year.

This change means property owners with commercial and residential land valued at or more than \$250,000 will face more frequent land tax and council rate hikes as each year the land value increases.

Local CBD business owners described the policy change as “appalling”, which has played a major factor in some of the recent closures of iconic CBD retail shops.

Owner of the recently-closed Bourke St classical music store Thomas’ Music, Elisabeth Vodicka, said the steep increase in land tax had made the business unviable.

“The amount of land tax we pay has doubled ever since the new policy was put in place. It’s just appalling. How can the CBD’s retail industry survive when they do things like that?” she said.

David Beanham, owner of Modak Motorcycles on Elizabeth St, which had operated in the CBD for 88 years before it closed in February, said the land tax hike was the “final nail in the coffin” for his business.

“The policy introduced by the state government has more than doubled the amount of land tax we pay. Running a business is an economic proposition and we can’t be here forever without being profitable,” he said.



The CBRE and Minter Ellison panel discusses the impact of land tax hike.

Both business owners expressed their frustration towards the lack of understanding of small business by the Victorian Government.

“It’s not a very supportive environment for small businesses at all,” Ms Vodicka said.

“Melbourne’s going to be left with a whole lot of chain stores and cafes, restaurants, bars and nail salons. It’s not going to be very interesting,” she said.

Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas said the changes would make land valuations in Victoria “fairer and more consistent”.

CBRE and law firm Minter Ellison co-hosted a seminar on the impact of the state government’s land tax hike on CBD property owners on March 1.

On the panel were CBRE’s land tax specialist Dane Carruthers, building and depreciation specialist Neale Scott, director of middle markets and city sales Josh Rutman, retail leasing specialist Zelman Ainsworth and Minter Ellison’s Ben Dodgshun.

The panel discussed the government’s recent changes to the land tax legislation, how property owners could effectively challenge land tax assessments and maximise

depreciation benefits.

Mr Carruthers from CBRE said the hike on land tax could result in commercial rental increase.

“When property owners pay more land tax, they get that subsidised from the rent. So the tenants will end up paying more rent,” he said.

The land tax expert said this would mean that many small independent businesses would not be able to afford the rent in the CBD and instead more international and chain operators would snap up properties.

Laneways go green

By Medha Vernekar

As part of the “Green Your Laneway” pilot program, four of CBD’s laneways have undergone changes to include greener spaces.

The \$1.8 million pilot program has transformed laneways such as the Coromandel Place, Guildford Lane, Meyers Place and Katherine Place with a green makeover by installing vertical gardens, climbing plants, trees, planter boxes and street art.

Some of these changes have rendered three of the four laneways to be partially closed to vehicles or have been made one-way for convenient access to pedestrians.

More than 800 public nominations and expert advice from a team of professionals including engineers, place-makers, landscape architects and sustainability professionals were used.



Comedy festival features local talent

Melbourne-based comedians Geraldine Quinn, Nick Capper and Raewyn Pockernig are performing at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival (MICF) in April.

This year’s MICF, the third largest comedy festival in the world, will showcase diverse comic talent both locally and internationally.

Ms Pockernig is having her first-ever MICF gig, *Mispronounced*, this year.

“I don’t expect to have a sell-out show straight away. It’s more about building up my confidence as a new comic,” she said.

“The comedy festival provides me with a great platform but at the same time it’s also easy to get lost in the crowd because there are so many talents each year,” Ms Pockernig said.

“So the comics really need to put in work before the festival to get the word out.”

Award-winning songwriter-turned comedian Geraldine Quinn is in her 13th year at MICF 2018.

She said MICF gave equal opportunity to both established and emerging comics.

“The festival doesn’t feel generational at all. There are artists from all ages and backgrounds,” Ms Quinn said.

This year she is bringing her new show *Queen Bitch* to the Malthouse Theatre where she will be performing in a cabaret style.

“My genre of comedy, mixed with music, is very fringe. After these many years, I can turn around and see these people, who I used to see on television and who are now my peers. It just feels amazing,” she said.



Comedians Geraldine Quinn, Nick Capper and Raewyn Pockernig.

Mr Capper is delivering his fifth gig at MICF, called *Quantum Bad Boy* and is also hosting female comedian night *Upfront* at Town Hall on April 18.

He said Melbourne’s artistic environment facilitated the emergence and growth of new comics and artists.

“Melbourne is very nurturing of arts. People here are very supportive of

comedies and other art forms. But they also have high standards and expectations, which force you to advance,” he said.

“Every year, comedians come from all over the world for MICF. So it’s a wonderful opportunity to meet international comedians and mingle with and learn from them,” Mr Capper said.

He said even though the content of each night’s show was the same, it could be

every challenging for the comedian to keep very single performance lively.

“The material has to be good enough to liven up every night. You are in competition with big international stars so you always have to move forward,” he said.

The festival runs from March 28 to April 22. More information can be found at comedyfestival.com.au

New planning controls to activate streets

By Sunny Liu

Developers will not be allowed to build ground-level car park in the CBD and Southbank under the new C308 urban design policy package.

Amendment C308 will replace the existing Design and Development Schedule 1 (DDO1) with a new Schedule 1, with the aim of activating buildings’ street frontages in the Hoddle Grid and Southbank.

Under the amendment, developers will be required to build only underground car parking and use less than 40 per cent of a building’s ground floor for building services.

Car parks in new Southbank buildings must be “sleeved” with active uses and configured to be adaptable to future uses

Also, the required 80 per cent of active retail street frontages on a building’s ground level will be expanded for more activation.

Amendment C308 is to compliment C270, which specifies minimum setbacks from streets, building separation, overshadowing

and wind requirements.

At the February 20 Future Melbourne Committee meeting, councillors endorsed the C308 amendment and sought authorisation from the Planning Minister to prepare and exhibition the amendment.

The City of Melbourne’s planning portfolio chair Nicholas Reece said C308 would significant improve buildings’ design quality.

“In my view, C308 and the design guide that accompanies it is the one of the most important things that the City of Melbourne will do in this term. And it’s all about lifting the design standards,” Cr Reece said.

“The new set of planning controls will adopt a far more rigorous focus on the street and surrounds. We want to drive a new focus on how buildings in the city work at the eye level,” he said.

“The days of new developments being no more than spread-sheets in the sky are over. We want to make sure every building gives more back to the city than it takes and this begins with design excellence and quality build,” Cr Reece said.



Exhibition showcases Melbourne’s development

By David Amaya

An exhibition at City Gallery shows the impact of Melbourne’s vertical growth on public life on the street.

Until April 28, the public can enjoy free entrance to *Between the Street and the Sky: a Provocation for Melbourne*, an exhibition that displays photos, 3D laser-printed models and videos to illustrate the

development of the city.

The exhibition aims to analyse the impact of the Postcode 3000 strategy, introduced in the 1990s to establish a residential population in the CBD.

According to the exhibition curator Professor Rob Adams, “we need to think more carefully about the relationship between high rise developments and how they affect people’s experiences at street level.”

This free exhibition runs at Town Hall’s City Gallery until April 28.

Scooti rideshare to hit CBD streets

By Emma Doherty

A two-wheeled ridesharing service has been launched as an alternative way of getting around the CBD.

Scooti is Australia’s first scooter-only ridesharing app, offering passengers a faster, greener and more cost-effective service.

The idea for a rideshare service on scooters came as a solution to Melbourne’s long-term congestion problem.

Scooti COO Brett Balsters said: “Putting

more rideshare services for cars on the road is not a solution to congestion. There needs to be a better way to get around town.”

“We’ve seen this model overseas where scooters are the preferred method of transport,” he said referring to rideshare services such as Scooterino in Italy, Gojek in Indonesia and Grab in Singapore, which have been shown to curb congestion.

According to RACV reports, it is estimated that the cost of congestion will rise to \$53.3 billion in 2031.

Not only does the service aim to relieve city roads, Mr Balsters says it “hopes to gives riders a sense of adventure”.

With plans to launch the app in Sydney

over the next year or two, Mr Balsters said Melbourne was going to be the perfect launch pad. He said the city had a better culture of being able to “accept and embrace things quicker”.

With the biggest question on passengers’ minds being safety, Mr Balsters was quick to reassure that safety was a top priority.

So much so, it has implemented a rigorous process for screening and hiring riders.

“Right from the form on our website, or an enquiry over the phone, they (riders) must meet with us and our team. We then vet that person to also ensure they can communicate clearly. Further to that, we need to check that they have their full licence and that they have insurance (comprehensive) on

their vehicle. We also run background and criminal checks,” Mr Balsters said.

Drivers also undergo specialised training and assessment to ensure they can operate a vehicle safely.

“The next steps, unlike other rideshare, minimise the risk and ensure the safety of drivers and passengers. We need to make sure we have processes and training in place,” he said.

Assuming a successful and safe launch in Melbourne, Scooti is looking to establish its service in Sydney and Brisbane, as well as New Zealand and South East Asia.

Launched on March 20, the app will be available for download soon.



How would your building rate?

The City of Melbourne is partnering with the National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) to rate 20 apartment buildings in water and energy use efficiency.

Residents in the CBD can now nominate their building for assessment through their owners’ corporation for this pilot program.

The council will pay for the assessment and will subsidise the \$1160 fee to \$580.

NABERS will help residents and owners’ corporations to identify areas of potential savings in their common area water and energy bills and improve the building’s

sustainability rating.

The selected 20 buildings will be assessed by the end of May.

To participate, 12 months of utility bills for each account, written agreement and strata plans are required.

Also, carparking plans, floorplans, technical drawings, strata management statements and detailed expenses statements are desirable.

The owners’ corporation will need to pay the submission fee and make the building available for inspection.

Submissions close by Thursday, March 29. For more information, contact apartments@melbourne.vic.gov.au or **9658 8557**.

Bon Scott’s legacy lives on

A Bon Scott sculpture was unveiled in the CBD’s famous AC/DC Lane on March 6.

The permanent three-metre-tall sculpture of the Aussie rock legend, made of metal, concrete and plaster, emerges from a laneway brick wall.

Nearby rock music venue Cherry Bar’s owner James Young started the project in collaboration with local artist Mike Makatron with support from the state government’s Rockin’ The Laneways initiative.

“This sculpture will inspire artists, musicians and international tourism. There are fans of Bon Scott already planning to come from places as far as Germany and Spain just to come to AC/DC Lane in Melbourne to see Bon Scott honoured in this way,” Mr Young said.

“From today, we know that Sydney has the Sydney Opera House, but Melbourne will have Bon Scott.”

Bon Scott’s son Dave Stevens and former girlfriend Mary Renshaw also attended the unveiling.



James Young, Mary Renshaw and Dave Stevens.

“Melbourne is very representative of Australia’s rock music culture. So it’s really fitting that the sculpture is installed in AC/DC Lane,” Mr Stevens said.

Measles alert issued for CBD locations

By Medha Vernekar

The Health and Human Services Department has issued alerts after several suspected contractions at CBD locations.

These locations include Flinders Backpackers, Elizabeth St, Flinders Railway Station and Bourke St.

Several exposed to the virus also visited rural sites such as Philip Island and areas between Geelong and Warrnambool.

Deputy chief health officer, Dr Brett Sutton, spoke about a woman who is infected with the virus after visiting the CBD.

“An infected woman, in her 20s, visited a number of tourist locations and popular sites across Melbourne,” Dr Sutton said. “She is now being treated in hospital.”

Measles is a highly infectious viral disease which is known to cause serious illnesses particularly in young children and adults. Some of the complications that can develop with this virus include pneumonia and other serious conditions that require hospitalisation.

Measles has an incubation period of up to 18 days so those at a risk of contracting the virus and those that have visited the CBD locations might not show symptoms until March 21.

Dr Sutton urges people who show symptoms of the virus over the next two weeks to immediately contact their doctors or hospital emergency departments.

“Anyone developing symptoms is advised to ring ahead to their general practitioner or hospital first and tell them that they may have measles so that appropriate steps can be taken to avoid contact with other patients,” Dr Sutton added.

Some of the early symptoms of measles include common cold symptoms such as runny nose, red eyes and coughing, followed by the characteristic measles rash and fever.

Although the disease is now less prevalent in Australia due to the widespread vaccination it is still vital that children remain immunised due to the risk of infection brought in by travellers.

The vaccine for measles is currently recommended on the Natural Immunisation Program for toddlers at 12 months and again at 18 months. Anyone not immunised against measles, has the risk of contracting the virus.

CBD brings the perfect lifestyle

By Sunny Liu

Having lived in the CBD for the past two years, recent RMIT University graduate Cindy Wang said her lifestyle had changed dramatically since making the city change.

Ms Wang came from China to study a Masters of Media and Communications at RMIT University in 2016 and was surprised at how inconvenient it was to commute from the outer western suburbs to the city each day.

“It used to take me almost two hours just to commute to the city. And living in the suburbs also means I had to head straight home after my classes to get home before dark,” she said.

She described her lifestyle before coming to Melbourne as “the stay-at-home-and-read type”, but that had changed ever since she moved into the CBD.

“After moving to the city, I became much more active in both my social life and physical exercises,” she said.

“There are always festivities and things to do in the city. I joined the gym and keep a regular fitness schedule.”

Ms Wang said she thought the CBD residential lifestyle was the perfect fit for young professionals and students.

“I think the CBD is a great place for singles to live in. They have more chances to socialise, more employment opportunities and more room for self-improvement,” she said.

“The CBD is also very multicultural and young in its culture, so it’s a wonderful



choice for people in their 20s to live here.”

After moving to the CBD, Ms Wang signed up to become a student ambassador for the state government initiative Study Melbourne.

She was also actively involved in RMIT’s student TV station, Australian Federation of International Students and AMES Australia.

She said the convenience of being a CBD

resident meant she had more time and energy to commit to her voluntary work.

“I had plenty of time to attend to my voluntary commitment because I live in the CBD,” she said.

As an international graduate, Ms Wang said she believed volunteering provided a platform for foreign students to get to know the local community better.

“Volunteering for the university, Study Melbourne and non-profit organisations is a great way for international students to fit into the local society. The community needs international students’ contribution and it also helps break down stereotypes about overseas students once the locals know more about the student community,” she said.

Another big plus of living in the heart of the city is safety.

Ms Wang said she felt much safer living in the CBD than when she lived in the western suburbs.

“Commuting on the train and walking home from the train station in the suburb at night could be quite dangerous. But here in the city I feel safe going out at night as there are always people around. Most of the residents here are very friendly and they also care about your safety,” she said.

Ms Wang said the geographic location of the Melbourne CBD means people would always need to come into the city.

“Melbourne is not like Beijing, where there are several city centres. Wherever you go in Melbourne, you would always need to go through the CBD,” she said.

“I feel very comfortable living in the CBD. It has improved my social life, my health, my lifestyle and employability,” she said.

Critic

Pining for a lover

Last year someone at Dymocks bookstore in Collins St left a stray novel amongst those on the 2017 Stella Prize shortlist for women’s writing and the CBD News picked it up mistakenly out of the pile of hopefuls.

An Uncertain Grace by Krissy Kneen had just been released and must have missed the deadline for the prize, hence its exclusion.

We gave it a review anyway and now the novel is on the 2018 list. We’re congratulating ourselves for picking a winner.

The driving intelligence in the book is a woman who makes up stories to deal with those who are sexually exploited. Most of the exploiters are men but not all of them.

Since the novel came out last year, gender politics has shifted and it has become increasingly obvious that not everyone is suited to the creative approach to gender depicted in the book. Certain heroic types might prefer to remain cool and aloof than submit to the ideas in this work, hence the contentious nature of the novel and its fitting place on the 2018 shortlist.

Kneen is a thoughtful writer. You can imagine her sitting at her laptop delving deeply and imaginatively into issues of equity. If she wins the award, however, she will be thrust into the limelight, maybe even onto a billboard.

It used to be uncool for creatives to be overtly ambitious but ever since the advent of the Stella Prize in 2013 women have been strutting their storytelling prowess.

Laboratories have now been set up around town dedicated to the gruelling art of writing. Novelists are hard at work, tapping away on their laptops in a race for the big prize. Plot lines are being invented, characters tested on the public.

In one of Kneen’s stories, a 130-year-old narrator inhabits the body of a young prostitute to find love. In another, a robot boy is used to cure paedophiles. Originality is the key to her characters, in contrast to well-meaning books like last year’s winner which comforted rather than challenged.

Kneen writes sexually explicit stories that view gender as a continuum, more influenced by identity than biology, that can be manipulated by a range of medical procedures and technologies. Transition from one gender to another, in her hands, is an increasingly popular and compelling way of finding a community of like-minded people.



Text Publishing is known for its provocative titles. The William St publishing house has released several French novels that deal with predatory males who make light of their appetites by the use of clever arguments. They have pushed *An Uncertain Grace* and the novel has been well-received.

Some readers might wish that female writers weren’t quite so serious about their desires, hoping instead for enlargement of the funny bone than more drastic measures aimed at knocking “dick” lit off its self-appointed pedestal.

Kneen, to her credit, manages to find humour in the highly-politicised arena of sexual difference by reversing the typical seduction scenario. The 130-year-old

woman who is the intelligence behind this speculative novel is still chasing sexual pleasure even after she has died and is prepared to pay for it.

In the past this character might have been struck off as a silly old bag but creative writing as a university discipline is on the rise and there is plenty of funding in the sector. Most creative writers these days are well-educated, many with PhDs. There are 36 writing programs at universities in Australia and research is prominent.

There is no denying that the winner of the 2018 Stella prize, to be announced in April, will be greeted by a group of admirers. She will become an ambassador for women’s writing. She will perform at the Spiegeltent and be interviewed at the Wheeler Centre. She will do a lot of PR.

Her brain might be kept alive after her death because of its storytelling skills and will still be earning her money, enabling her to transfer funds to the prostitute from her bank account using a chip if she is still pining for a lover in years to come.

Rhonda Dredge has a PhD in Creative Writing

Rhonda Dredge
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Pets’ peeves of vertical living

2018 is an Earth Dog Year in Chinese astrology and we are all advised to pay special attention to our health – but if you actually have a four legged friend, how might their 2018 health be in your vertical village?

Pet keeping in strata communities continues to grow, reflecting the cultural importance of pet ownership in Australia. Led by a generation of baby boomers who have become empty-nesters, apparently almost 90 per cent claim their animals to be more family than pet. Also the “cats, not kids” brigade have seen pet parks become increasingly popular safe zones in which both owners and pets mingle.

However, how we treat our furry family in our vertical villages varies. In Queensland and NSW, for instance, pet ownership is subject to a wide range of bylaws, whereas in Victoria and the ACT, pets are allowed by default unless they become a “nuisance”.

Individual building protocols and pet facilities also vary widely.

Some apartment towers require pets be carried across common space (lest they mark the marble flooring). Others request residents register their pets with building management, citing the need to convey relevant bulletins (and also, possibly, to ensure that owners approve of their four-legged tenants). Some villages also have an induction package which alerts pet owners to their responsibilities to neighbours and asks them to give thought to how they will remove their pet in the event of an emergency.

Current trends are towards greater support for pets in apartments as we “age in place” and become more reliant upon our pets for company. In fact, many policy makers are including pets in their future views

of high rise living as they are believed to positively impact on their human’s wellbeing by reducing loneliness and (possibly) alleviating some symptoms of depression and dementia.

Added to this, pets are claimed to strengthen our sense of community, a point agreed by Lisa Wood, associate professor at University of Western Sydney. Her cross-national study (involving Perth, Australia, and three US cities) has lent weight to the claim that pets help build social capital (i.e. trust and connections between people, including those we don’t know personally).

Also in support of pets is John Bradshaw, visiting fellow in anthrozoology, University of Bristol, who claims that pet-keeping is one of the few available outlets in today’s urbanised society that help us to reconnect with the world of nature.

It appears then that pets are good for their owners – but what about vice versa?

Are we, and in particular our high-rise lifestyle, good for our pets?

According to RMIT researchers Yolande Strengers, Cecily Maller and Larissa Nicholls, there are some concerns for high-rise pets, starting with the temperatures within our apartments. As noted in a previous *SkyPad Living* column, a University of Melbourne study found that heat stress inside apartments is a major issue for residents – and this includes our pets as they, too, are susceptible to overheating.

Some real thought is needed to ensure that pets have a suitable environment, especially

when owners are away. For some, this means leaving on the air conditioning, which can contribute significantly to energy bills.

And this is just one pet health concern. Dr Jo Righetti from Pet Problems Solved has identified several more challenges including your pet’s mental health – what are they going to do all day when their human is away?

But marketing, like nature, abhors a vacuum – and so, in this time of “premiumisation of pets”, there are a wave of pet-friendly services and innovations that I have come across.

For instance, previously owners might have left on the radio for their pet (along with the air-conditioning!). However, now there is DOGTV, a live stream channel that “provides the right company for dogs when left home alone”. Apparently, DOGTV helps stimulate, entertain, relax and habituate dogs with TV shows that introduce them to various movements, sounds, objects, experiences and behaviour patterns, all from a dog’s perspective.

But too much TV could make too much Fido.

So, rather than simply leaving toys around, there is digital day care with Camp PetChatz which makes “chatting with your pet easy!” Apparently it is as “easy” as pressing the chat button and your dog or cat will see your smiling face on the full-colour LED display.

But wait – of course there’s more! By clicking the treat button, you can give your pet a healthy reward – and naturally

you can record and share all these precious moments!

And just to give you choice, there is also Petcube Bites – an all-in-one Wi-Fi pet camera with built-in treat dispenser that lets you train and reward your pet remotely. See, talk, treat, and train from your phone!

But if you are more old-school, there is a local offering called Dogshare which introduces dog-owners to other dog-lovers in their neighbourhood. Dogshare, which is free to join, aims to connect time-poor dog owners with fellow dog lovers – and, to my mind, there seems potential to add a vertical village twist to this service by developing a building-based group and including this information in the building’s induction program.

But if the demands of vertical pet ownership seem all too great, there are an array of virtual pets – but before you head down this simulated path, you might like to view *Strange Beasts*, a short film from London filmmaker Magali Barbé.

If you would like links to the material mentioned, please visit and like SkyPad Living on Facebook.



Janette Corcoran
Apartment living expert
<https://www.facebook.com/SkyPadLiving/>



Music

Callisto Woman near Ganymede

Many years ago, a woman is walking through undulating countryside with a grey horse, like Chautauqua.

The horse hears her singing: “All I want, is to one day know myself” and, meanwhile, the Cassini spacecraft, near Saturn directs one of its scientific cameras to take in the edge of the rings of Saturn, with Earth and Mars in the field of vision ...

Phantom, the first single from the brand new Sarah Basko album *Depth of Field* is focused and is all Chrissie Amphlett of Divinyls. Singing firm over a luscious field of flanging synths, an understated arpeggio, continents of keys underpinning the rich, strong Blasko voice, almost smoky, maybe whiskey.

I feel my destiny
Without a sound
Constant force of energy
Floating around
Laid your hands upon me
When I was a child
Pulled me under water
Planted in the ground

McLean Stephenson is the director of the film clip to *Phantom* and he has created a moody, atmospheric work, focused on a low-lit Blasko visage.

In a previous episode, *Amazing Things* from the second Sarah Blasko album *What The Sea Wants, The Sea Will Have* (2006) has a sparser production approach that is akin to The Cowboy Junkies and their magnum opus *The Trinity Sessions*. Producers Sarah Blasko, Robert Cranny and Midnight Oil’s Jim Moginie achieve this semblance of a very live band playing in a church feel.

Maybe that was the aim and scope of that project, but now she is walking through halls that give entrance to lush, magnificent discos in *Phantom*.

A Shot is the second single from *Depth of Field* and it has not been a walk in the park for the narrator. There’s a great sense of maturity in the song writing. This song shapes up as a Marianne Faithfull song from her *Broken English* album.

Blasko can run a mile here, through the finish line. *Never Let Me Go* is a great song, that goes through brilliant gear changes, starting out sounding like a Kraftwerk song, then, when Blasko sings in a falsetto voice, it is terrain such as Bono singing *Lemon*, or maybe that difficult woman Renee Geyer.

Then she brings out an ace, what sounds like baritone saxes kick in, and we are in the *Low Rock* realm of that great Chicago band Morphine and that is a very good thing.

I don’t have the time
To walk around in circles
To wonder if I’m right
Or am I doing something wrong

Later, when the strings kick in and Blasko sings the refrain, it is The Supremes and The Shirelles. This is the type of song that Rowland S. Howard would have devoured.

A true signpost for Blasko is her stellar version of David Bowie’s song *Life On Mars?* from his 1971 album *Hunky Dory*. She did a performance of this song on a Triple J radio show at the start of 2016 and it is entrancing.

Blasko invests herself in totality in this material, playing her Prophet 08 with another keyboardist at the Sydney studio of that radio station. Not a dry eye in the house at the end of that performance. That is how good she is. At this stage, as a singer, she is hitting her straps, on point, on the mark.

It’s hard to do such great material over consecutive albums. Blasko shakes it up, rolls the dice and gets the job done. Stepping up with great material. Brilliant, like Redkirk Warrior with Regan Bayliss winning the Newmarket Handicap at Flemington over

six furlongs in consecutive years in a photo finish over Brave Smash ridden by Craig Williams.

She is not just foxing and she has scope to go further. These songs put Blasko in the box seat to put on a great show for when she next tours. A genuine A-grader. Grader Spader. Congrats to Fang It! and 3PBs for their great gig for International Women’s Day that included Hospital Pass, Adalita, Camp Cope and Laser Tits.

Gigs/ Shows

Sunday Arvos in April - Sunday Arvo Cherry Blues Sessions, Cherry Bar, ACDC Lane Gomez (UK) - April 2, 170 Russell St Fang It! - Thursday arvo 3PBS

Break and Enter – 4pm Thursdays 3RRR Beautiful The Musical - Her Majesty’s Theatre, till April 24 Rose Callaghan - Forum Theatre, during Comedy Festival



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We Live Here

Embedded kickbacks

We Live Here has had a request from the ABC for information about embedded electricity networks.

The broadcaster is investigating an issue arising from electricity companies in strata complexes with embedded networks having difficulties trying to change electricity providers or take over the network.

If your OC, or if you know of any OC that has had trouble changing their electricity contracts, or find that the contracts have been rolled over without realising, or have chosen to pay for the infrastructure to allow the OC to take over the embedded network – please let us know.

OCs might find that the contracts are worded carefully to avoid the word “commission” and importantly, the margin skimmed by the manager is not disclosed. Under the terms of some contracts, managers can claim “commercial confidentiality” to avoid disclosing just how much they make from the electricity account of each occupier.

In a building of 400 apartments, a 10 per cent kickback on electricity could swell your property manager’s account by as much as \$500,000 per year, coming out the pockets of owners who often don’t even know about the commission.

The reforms to electricity distribution, due to take effect in 2020, will make it possible for embedded networks to be challenged. This is a long overdue reform. Until then, you may be paying 10 per cent or possibly 20 per cent above the best available rate to cover the commission being paid to your property manager. Have a look at your supply and megawatt rates and compare them.

Owners pay for proxy farmers stitching up lucrative contracts

Owners at two Southbank apartment buildings have recently been left battered and bruised after nasty fights with their property management companies. The owners were out-manipulated and out-voted.

Armed with a swag of proxies gathered from overseas owners, Network Pacific ousted a committee of owners who had questioned the contract performance of subsidiaries in the group.

The ABC’s 7.30 picked up on the ugly stoush, which ended up in VCAT.

It started with the committee of owners cataloguing more than 400 problems with the management of the building – improperly maintained fire extinguishers, poor cleaning and failure to repair damage. There were also serious concerns about how the funds were being spent, given that the contractors were under the effective financial control of the property management group.

The property manager called a special meeting, circulating information to owners that was described on 7.30 as false or

defamatory.

Two real estate companies with links to Network Pacific gathered a large number of non-resident proxies and the proxy-holders voted the whistle-blowers off the committee. The property manager-linked contractors were subsequently reappointed for three more years.

The disaffected owners took the matter to VCAT which, unsurprisingly, found no issue with the proxy farming.

Meanwhile, another Southbank building is having similar issues with a property management company.

At a recent AGM hundreds of proxies from non-resident owners were used to oust the critics of their operations. Only four members of the new committee are independent owners, the other eight have connections to the company or its associated companies. Two of the proxy holders – a director and an employee – held more than 85 per cent of the proxies between them. This is an instance of proxy farming at its worst, and could soon become illegal.

One of the options considered by the Department of Consumer Affairs in its recent review of the Owners Corporation Act, with the findings due to be released soon, is to limit the total number of proxies held by one person to no more than 5 per cent!

Across town at a Docklands apartment, a developer’s associate voted to give himself a highly profitable lease on his lot to be used by the owners’ corporation. The 20-year lease was about 20 per cent above the market rate with no option for the OC to terminate.

All three situations have arisen from lucrative management contracts being granted hours before the off-the-plan units are settled, and no doubt are just the tip of the iceberg.

We Live Here calls on the state government to:

- Limit developer-appointed contracts to 12 months to allow new owners coming in to have some say in how the contracts are awarded;
- Require that all these management contracts should be disclosed in the section 32 to allow investors to be aware of the costs;
- Make it mandatory for all relationships between the developer and contractors to be disclosed;
- Proscribe any person with an interest, shareholding, directorship or association with a property management company from sitting on an owners corporation committee; and
- Compel all contractors to disclose commissions paid to developers or building managers.



www.welivehere.net
emails to campaign@welivehere.net

Letters to the Editor

A soulless city?

I continue to enjoy reading each month *CBD News*.

I thought a couple of the stories this month (whether intentionally or unintentionally) highlighted an emerging problem I see in Melbourne, the demise of small unique businesses and institutions that make the essence of this city as a great destination to live, work and play.

CBD News this month reported on the closure of Modak Motorcycles, and the relocation of the Order of Buffaloes out of the city. The ABC News also reported on the weekend of the closure of Thomas Music in Bourke St.

It’s important we keep our heritage buildings, but are we perhaps being too focussed on bricks and mortar, and forgetting about the institutions within them, when we think about heritage?

As David Beanham of Modak Motorcycles pointed out, unless a shop sells food, it is unlikely to survive. Are we heading for a soulless city of endless food outlets and little else? Can City Hall be doing more to foster diversity in the city?

Peter Barrett



Congrats

Cr Rohan Leppert and the Melbourne City Council should be congratulated on continuing to argue for a cap on poker machines in the CBD.

Melbourne’s CBD is the only place in Victoria that has no limit.

This policy belongs to a time when hardly anyone lived in the CBD. Now there are 44,000 residents. They are entitled to the same protection from gambling harm as everyone else.

Congratulations also to council for asking poker machine venues to apply for a lesser number of poker machines than they currently operate.

With some CBD venues taking over \$10 million a year, its time to treat gambling like smoking and alcohol, and act to reduce the harm.

Kelvin Thompson



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Keeping fit in the CBD

You live in Melbourne’s CBD? The pre-conception is that your environment, with all the hustle and bustle and compact living could not possibly be healthy, compared to your suburban or country cousins. Is this so?

Ten years ago, when I came to Melbourne from the Noosa Hinterland, a lovely semi-rural lifestyle, people said I was crazy to want to live in the city.

However, the first thing I noticed was the walking.

In rural life, if you want to go anywhere, you get in the car. It is the only form of transport. The distances to every day facilities are just too far. The same happens in the suburbs.

But in the city, with everything you need so close by, you walk. Lots of walking is good for you. City people are naturally quite fit as (most) walk everywhere.

Then there is the running. I thought that in the “business district” one would not be seen running around the streets in sports gear.

Oh dear. How wrong I was.

Everywhere, especially in the early mornings, people are out running and walking, heading for our wonderful parks on the fringes of the CBD.

“The Tan” that extends 3.8km around the Botanic Gardens is full of eager people doing their morning exercise. Such a beautiful location!

If you want to do some yoga or Tai Chi just step into the gardens to soak up nature and breathe the oxygen generated by the luscious vegetation.



If you need some guidance, the City of Melbourne hosts free fitness classes out of doors at Federation Square.

From time to time, fitness stores conduct running classes in preparation for the many fun runs that occur in the city throughout the year – Run Melbourne, Run for the Kids, the Mother’s Day Classic, Spring into Shape to name a few.

All of these activities keep the city’s residents fit and well and most importantly, they are free.

What the city offers is the opportunity for people to live healthy lives without having to spend a lot of money.

City people live in high-rises where there

are always fire escape stairs to challenge the adventurous.

One of our intrepid Residents 3000 members trained for the Kokoda Trail by walking up and down the stairs of her 18-floor building.

An easy fitness habit is to take the stairs as often as possible. The stairs may take five minutes, but you may wait five minutes for the lift anyway! One method is really good for your health and the other is not.

Then there is the Capital City Trail, which is a shared use path for cyclists and pedestrians circling the Melbourne city centre.

It is 29 km in length, and mostly consists

of sections of other trails, such as the Merri Creek Trail, Main Yarra Trail, Moonee Ponds Creek Trail and Inner Circle Rail Trail.

I know that two of our members regularly take the trail every Sunday morning for a relaxing ride and to enjoy the scenery. I suspect, knowing Melbourne, there are opportunities for a stop or two for coffee and cake!

But of course many CBD dwellers prefer lapping up their fitness in the water.

The answer may be the Melbourne City Baths that was first opened in 1860. It has the CBD’s largest 30 metre indoor pool, spa and sauna and is open all year round.

There is an extensive range of services – from gym, group fitness classes, cycle studio and squash courts to reformer Pilates beds, stretching areas and more.

Thus, the city can provide you with a healthy existence if you want it. It is all around and you do not have to be wealthy to take advantage of the many opportunities to keep yourself fit.



Susan Saunders
vice president
Ph: 0412 566 606
email: sue@residents3000.com.au



History

Palace of Winged Words

A 19th century three-storey redbrick building in Wills St in the CBD hardly rates a glance from most passers-by who are unaware that this building was once Melbourne’s first purpose-built telephone exchange.

Although now surmounted by a multi-storey apartment block, externally the lower three storeys still retain many of their original features.

1877 saw the installation of the first telephones in Victoria. Initially, each telephone was connected directly to another but soon the connection was made instead to a central exchange, via which any two subscribers could communicate.

In 1880, Australia’s first telephone exchange opened in Melbourne with 23 subscribers. The Melbourne Telephone Exchange Company Ltd managed by H. Byron Moore, began operations in the old Stock Exchange Building in Collins St.

In 1881 *The Australasian Sketcher* named that first exchange “The Palace of Winged Words”.

The company became the Victorian Telephone Exchange Company, and in 1884



Interior of Wills St Exchange in 1886

moved to the much larger, purpose-built building in Wills St.

In 1887 the *Town and Country Journal* described the exchange and its operations. At that time the building had two storeys.

“One of the features of the front of the building is the wide and high balcony through which overhead wires are brought into the operating room,” it said.

The outline of this balcony is still visible today. The ground floor housed offices, while the first floor was occupied by the operating room, described as “not only a spacious apartment, it is splendidly ventilated and well lighted; and a capacious stove is provided for the cold weather.”

The 24 female operators worked in two shifts and performed their tasks while standing at the switchboard. However, chairs were “provided for the leisure moments of the fair and nimble-fingered battalion of operators.”



Wills St Exchange today

The *Town and Country Journal* went on to describe the scene in the operating room thus: “Place yourself in the middle of the room and gaze upon the delicate hands in magic confusion playing as it were upon metal switches, plugs and switching cords.”

“There is no shouting or even excitement

... There is a soft sighing murmur in the room ... that little pouting delicate mouth is wrestling with the pangs, groans and tempers of 100 subscribers, that number being attended by one lady operator ...”

In 1887 the Victorian Government bought the Victorian Telephone Exchange Company and took over the Wills St Exchange. At the time there were 887 subscribers. Within a year this number had risen to 1462.

At some stage a third storey was added to the building to accommodate connections to Melbourne’s suburban exchanges.

The Wills St Exchange finally closed in 1910 when it could no longer accommodate the ever expanding number of subscribers. It is regrettable that this building, classified by the National Trust, bears little outward mark to indicate its significance in Melbourne’s communications history.

For nearly 30 years most of the telephone conversations in the CBD passed through this building – it was indeed a “Palace of Winged Words”. Today, the cafe on the ground floor, Operator 25, pays homage to the past with its witty take on telephone exchanges.



David Thompson
David is the senior researcher of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria

Empire of Melbourne

I have spent some of this month
fixing up and re-doing the lanes
at the north of the CBD.

We have been painting Lovelands and the Blender Lane. The lanes had begun to look messy and some of the art had been slashed by tags.

So we painted over the damaged artwork and added some much needed life back into the lanes.

The stencil wall at the back of the lane has nearly been covered. It was the last stencil wall dating back from 2001. Don't worry, there was a couple of layers of anti-graffiti coating placed over the beautiful and important stencil wall before The Blender Studios moved out. So, one day many years from now, it can be cleaned and restored to its former glory.

Another project that I have been curating this month is a new Marvel Wall in Little LaTrobe St for about a month now.

It's a great project and will slowly be built up with different images based on superhero images and painted by some of Australia's best urban artists. At the moment there is a Phibs and Adnate piece that has just been completed and, over the next few months, they will be joined by other artists like Lister, Sirum and Heesco. It will be a great wall when it's finished it will be an important addition to the CBD street art collection (now that Hosier Lane is basically finished).

Whilst I was dropping off paint and ladders I tried to enter via a newly-built lane at the back of the Empire development in the CBD on Elizabeth St and between A'Beckett St and Little LaTrobe. The laneway begins in A'Beckett and joins to Little LaTrobe via Literature Lane.

It is a handy way to avoid the construction in Little LaTrobe.

Anyway, there was a car parked in the middle of the laneway, so I parked behind it and started unloading and this lady having her smoke told me that I couldn't park there. I said that I was just trying to get my car through to drop off stuff for the mural and that if there wasn't a car parked there then I wouldn't have to be in the lane.

I questioned someone who works for the company in charge of Empire. She informed



me that the lane built behind the Empire was private and belonged to Empire. She said the car was always going to be parked there and that it was a private lane not to be driven through.

This got me thinking. I bet the Empire building project only got permission to create such a large and boring building because it was building a lane at the back of the development. The Empire project backs on to Literature Lane, which was basically destroyed because of the construction project.

So, I now spend some of my days trying to fix laneways and adding art to the Melbourne culture. Whilst the Empire and building projects like it just exploit Melbourne for all that its worth. People want to move to Melbourne because it's an awesome and creative place with hidden laneways and amazing urban and fine art. So they milk the money off the culture of Melbourne, whilst giving nothing back.

I would like to know who is in charge of all these private lanes and why they are private. Please send me an email if you know, the people who keep lining their pockets at Melbourne's expense need to be accountable.

If you think that these monolithic urban sculptures that help define the landscape of Melbourne are built for aesthetics or beauty you are wrong. Most buildings that have gone up in the boom are ugly and mundane and at best a celebration of mediocrity. They

have been built for profit and nothing more.

Why are the people in charge letting this happen? When Melbourne is shit and everyone remembers the good old days, do you think that the people that built the Empire and buildings like it will care if Melbourne is cool or not. No, (like the people who allowed this to happen) they will be sitting on their yacht laughing with all their money after selling the culture of Melbourne.

Hey if you want to send me something
send it to **dovle@dovlesart.com**

And follow me on Instagram: **doylesart**

Anyway you have an awesome month and don't forget to go check out the new Bon Scott sculpture in AC-DC lane by Makatron... Peace out punkz.



Adrian Doyle
Street Artist
Blender Studios founder and
director

The logo for the Business 3000+ Awards. The word "BUSINESS" is in a large, grey, sans-serif font. To its right, the number "3000" is in a blue, sans-serif font, with a red plus sign "+" to its upper right. Below the "3000" is the word "Awards" in a red, cursive script font.

*Thanks to BlueRock for sponsoring the 2018
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Metro Tunnel

24-hour construction starting in CBD

In April, the Metro Tunnel project is progressing to start the 24-hour construction activities in the CBD.

We appreciate your support while we undertake these vital works in the city and urge caution around our sites.

Please help us support local businesses affected by Metro Tunnel construction by continuing to visit them while works take place.

Visit metrotunnel.vic.gov.au for more information about works in your area.

State Library Station

The completion of the second acoustic shed in the city at A'Beckett St and the start of 24-hour construction activities there mark another important milestone for the State Library Station precinct.

Round-the-clock construction is continuing at Franklin St with the excavation of an 11-storey shaft progressing well.

Shaft excavation at both A'Beckett St and Franklin St sites is expected to be completed by mid-year.

Service relocations are continuing at Franklin St, between Swanston and Stewart streets. Ongoing traffic changes in this area to allow day and night works will remain in place until the expected completion of these relocations in April.

Site investigations, including groundwater monitoring, are also progressing along Victoria St. This work involves day and night works and is scheduled to continue until April with traffic management in place to direct vehicles and pedestrians.

The demolition of six buildings along Swanston and LaTrobe streets, including the nine-storey former residential tower at LaTrobe Street, has been completed.

Town Hall Station

The demolition of buildings to enable the construction of the new Town Hall Station is progressing.

Work to remove Port Phillip Arcade has begun and is expected to continue until late March.

As part of this, the King Neptune sculpture by Charles Bush on the Flinders Street side of the arcade will be placed in storage. It will be reinstated as part of the new Town Hall Station precinct.

Flinders Lane and Scott Alley businesses remain open throughout the demolition works and can be accessed using either Degraeves Street or Swanston Street.

Three buildings between the Nicholas Building and Young and Jackson have been demolished, with work continuing on two remaining buildings.

With the completion of demolition works at City Square, activities including site preparation and site investigations will continue before piling is starts in the middle of this year.

An acoustic shed will then be installed before the start of 24-hour construction activities to build Town Hall Station, including excavation of an 11-storey access shaft and tunnelling.



Work is progressing on the State Library Station with 24-hour construction activities.

Pets's Corner



Double trouble in harness

By Kathryn Lewis

Kathy Sun and her partner Brendan Lee have been regulars at Flagstaff Gardens for a couple of years since they got Bubble, their Japanese Spitz.

Today they had two energetic pups on their hands as they were also looking after their friend's Poodle / Cocker Spaniel cross, Oreo.

The two dogs were leashed, but that did not prevent them from getting up to all sorts of mischief.

Camera-shy Oreo constantly darted in all directions, attempting to pull Ms Sun along with her, despite her size.

It seemed Bubble was happy to share parents with her adopted sister, as the two pups played together amiably. Apparently

that is not always the case.

"They fight everyday, but I do not think it is a real fight. I think they are friends; they always make up," Ms Sun said, laughing at Oreo tangled in her legs.

Ms Sun and Mr Lee are both locals to the CBD studying chemical engineering at the University of Melbourne.

Ms Sun said the couple often relaxed in the shade at the park with their pooch, particularly in summer.

"We always come here. We live so close, and it's always lovely," Ms Sun said.



TRAM SERVICE CHANGES

ST KILDA ROAD



The Metro Tunnel will get our train network moving. Untangling the City Loop will benefit train lines across the network by making travel easier for you, with more frequent trains carrying more people to destinations across Melbourne.

Some of Melbourne's busiest train lines – Sunbury, Cranbourne and Pakenham – will run exclusively through the new Metro Tunnel, freeing up space in the City Loop for other lines to run more frequent and reliable services.

Tram service changes

Buses will replace trams on sections of St Kilda Road, from the **1 April to 17 April**, as part of Metro Tunnel works.

The road and tram tracks will be re-routed around the construction site that's being established to build the new underground Anzac Station.

Expect delays and plan ahead

To see how you might be affected, visit metrotunnel.vic.gov.au

Planning

A new identity for the Walk Arcade

The long mooted redevelopment of the Walk Arcade looks to finally be progressing following the submission of an application to DELWP on February 9 for “alterations, additions (including partial demolition) to existing buildings for the purposes of retail premises, residential hotel and gym”.

Located in the heart of the city in the Bourke St Mall and extending through to Little Collins St plans for the major overhaul of the well-known shopping mall looks set to include a new hotel, replacing the existing red-brick warehouse which extends to Little Collins St with a focus on activating Union Lane with glazed shopfronts.

The design supersedes plans prepared over five years ago with the only elements of that particular design coming to fruition being the entry canopies to Bourke St which were installed as part of the first stage of works.

Further north, the University of Melbourne has announced the appointment of a team of architects and designers for its \$229 million New Student Precinct on the Parkville Campus.

Led by Lyons Architecture, the successful team was chosen from a shortlist of five design groups and comprises Koning Eizenberg Architects, Aspect Studios, Breathe Architecture, NMBW Architecture Studio, Greenaway Architects, Glas Urban and Architects EAT.

The New Student Precinct will be located



on the corner of Grattan and Swanston streets, and is bound by Monash Rd to the north and the Melbourne School of Engineering Precinct to the west. Encompassing nine buildings, the precinct will bring together the university's student unions, academic services and the Institute for Indigenous Development, Murrup Barak, for the first time – significantly reshaping and revitalising the landscape and built environment of the site.

Much of the development will be through the adaptive re-use of existing buildings, including extensive refurbishments and facade treatments

Works started on site in January with completion scheduled for 2021–2022. Sticking with the theme of tertiary education institutes, Victoria University has submitted plans to Heritage Victoria for a proposal to restore and refurbish the former Land Titles Office (LTO) and Strong Room, with a new vertical campus tower at 247–283 Queen St.

John Wardle Architects are responsible for the design of the 17-level tower, which would rise from behind the restored LTO building to a height of 87.5m.

The proposal will feature a total net lettable area of 23,263 sqm with 27 per cent of space dedicated to formal teaching and learning.

This program will be supported by an osteo and dermal clinic, entrepreneurial hub, VU College and social spaces, with a new pedestrian link at ground level between the LTO Building and the proposed tower also on the cards.

And finally, Urban Melbourne last month highlighted the sheer volume of commercial projects underway in the central city, including:

- Wesley Place;
- 271 Spring St;
- Olderfleet;
- Collins Arch;
- 80 Collins St;
- 839 Collins St;
- 405 Bourke St;
- 311 Spencer St;

See the full list and details at urban.melbourne/development/2018/03/07/2018-year-commercial-melbourne-market



Laurence Dragomir
Laurence is an Urban Melbourne director with expertise in the CBD urbanmelbourne.info

Business

Relationships support technology experience

Having been based in the CBD for 23 years, Digiworld offers unparalleled service and maintains a close relationship with its clients.

For CBD business, having an IT sales and service company like Digiworld just around the corner is a terrific bonus, especially for those businesses that have limited access to IT resources.

Digiworld has been providing large and small CBD businesses with technological support, IT procurement and management services since 1995.

When the current owners took over Digiworld from former business partner in 2014, they did not lose any customers because the trustworthy brand image and client relationship was well maintained.

Director David Robertson said that, with in-depth industry knowledge and experience, Digiworld looked after local businesses that did not have in-house IT

support and offered them with worry-free IT service.

“We have a real depth of knowledge and technology expertise that other small operations wouldn’t have. So they are providing services related to technology, but half the time they have to rely on Google to find out how it actually works, whereas we have a background of building networks and putting things together. So we get cross-leverage benefit of really strong technology expertise,” Mr Robertson said.

“So we’ve got that security background, the networking background and virtualisation background. And we’ve looked after office IT for many years, so it’s our strength,” he said.

Mr Robertson said it was important to find a team of IT experts with a wealth of knowledge in the hardware and software to avoid any unnecessary losses.

“A lot of the ‘one-man bands’ teach themselves on the fly and learn at other people’s expenses. Even if they’ve been doing it for a while, it’s very hard for one person to keep up with everything that’s changing in this world,” he said.



David Langthaler and David Robertson.

“When a small business buys a couple of new laptops, or a printer, they want more than the physical goods. They want an easy, convenient and fast business solution, and that means they want it to integrate into their work environment and business needs immediately,” the Digiworld team said.

“Our busy customers ask us to unbox their laptop, to set it up, to configure it to existing networks, or to create new ones. And before long we are also setting up email, Office 365 and their wireless connection.”

“We’re happy to do it, and we do it well. This is how we build relationships with our

customers and it’s what distinguishes our business from the computer retailers or online stores. It’s also what makes our job so much more interesting than simply selling stuff,” the team said.

Digiworld also leads industry standard with its infallible service.

“We’ve built up a massive service ethic that we just nail it every time. We haven’t lost any customers over these years and we are constantly expanding our customer base. That sort of ethic is a differentiator that sets us apart from other businesses,” Mr Robertson said.

Technical support consultant David Langthaler said Digiworld’s reliability had helped maintain and strengthen its relationship with customers.

“They know they can call us anytime and we would just solve the issues for them. If anything goes wrong, one of our team members can just walk up there and provide solutions for our clients. So the proximity in the CBD also works for us,” he said.

You can find Digiworld at the ground floor of 459 Collins St’s south tower and call them on **9663 6699** to discuss your IT solution.



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Lina Le 撰稿

墨尔本市中心一家7-11(7-Eleven)连锁店在2015年11月至2016年10月期间对三名国际学生雇员少付了\$6674工资而受到起诉。

公平工作仲裁专员已经对夏菁琪(Xia Jing Qi, 音译)有限公司进行了法律诉讼。2017年3月以前, 该公司在威廉(William)街开设过一家7-11连锁零售店, 该店的前任经理林爱玲(Ai Ling ‘Irene’ Lin, 音译)当时还持有学生签证。

三名雇员都是来自中国的学生, 年龄在21至24岁之间。

资料显示, 连锁店总部为了确保员工获得合法的最低工资, 安装了高科技的工资系统。之后这三名学生员工被要求必须每周向店内的保险箱或林女士的银行账户返回款项。于是这些员工的小时工资从\$8.53到\$26.52不等了。

夏菁琪也违反了工作场所的法律, 向公平工作仲裁专员提供了与7-11连锁店有关的虚假或误导性的记录。

夏菁琪有限公司(Xia Jing Qi)及其唯一董事夏菁琪还面临第二项指控, 涉嫌在墨尔本中央购物中心的味千拉面店的另一名外籍员工少支付\$9616工资。

据称, 该员工在2016年5月至10月期间收到每小时\$11.50的工资, 在最后一周的工作时间内, 只收到每小时\$3.98的工资。

这些小时工资大大低于“2010餐饮业工资规定”的法定最低小时工资, 临时工补贴和加班补贴率。

以上两起案例, 所欠工资均已偿还。

该连锁店被处以每次违规罚款高达\$54000, 而林女士和夏女士将面临每人每次违规罚款高达\$10800。

为了遏制类似的违规行为, 正在寻求一项禁止该公司在零售和餐馆店对员工欠薪的禁令。

市长选举是一场博彩

Shane Scanlan 撰稿

本月墨尔本投票选举新市长, 但获胜者并不一定是最受欢迎的。没有像罗伯特·道尔(Robert Doyle)这样一个在竞选中占主导地位人物(2016年他的主要得票率为45%)参选的情况下, 这次竞选范围太广了, 而且获胜者很可能是候选人排名的组织者。

最终获胜者甚至有可能只获得最少的主要选票。目前就有一位墨尔本市政议员, 在2016年只获得了1534票。

墨尔本市政的投票选举不同于其他任何市政, 其特殊的选举制度已经随维州工党和联合政府的愿望而演变, 以防止其州首都市政议会落入地方和狭隘的利益集团手中。

这样公平吗? 民主吗? 是腐败吗? 但这绝对是独一无二的。最低的投票参与率

首先, 墨尔本的选民参与率最低。2016年, 只收到55%的合格选民选票。墨尔本的选民资格比其他任何地方都更为广泛, 这就可以用来解释其极差的投票率。

2016年该市的估计居住人口为148000人, 但其中只有54791人在州选举名册上注册。

另外有77939名选民在墨尔本市政的选民册上, 加起来合计

133801名合格选民(在增加1607名和删减536名之前)。

数字显示, 有数万名未注册的居民。毫无疑问, 有很多注册的选民甚至不知道他们需要投票。

可是还有其他因素可以解释两年前投票参与率低的问题。邮政

当今有多少人会信任澳大利亚邮政能把正确加贴邮资的邮件送达目的地?

墨尔本市政选举纯粹是通过邮递投票进行的。选票必须经过邮政系统的两次邮递, 一次是从维多利亚州选举委员会(VEC)邮递到选民, 第二次是让选民将选票寄回VEC。

这个系统是开放的而且也常常被滥用。在选票邮件抵达的当天, 信箱中的选票邮件被盗窃的事情比比皆是。数百人(如果不是数千人)丢弃了那些以前居住在该地址的选民邮件。

而且VEC没有与实际登记的选民相匹配的签名, 因此无法验证所收到的选票是否真实。

除了所有这些潜在的系统滥用之外, 对那些不在的物主选票通常会发给他们的房地产代理, 然而也没有对这些选票的去处进行审计。

不公平的选票分布

(Gerrymander)

墨尔本市政选举独特, 商家

给与两张选票, 而居民仅给一票。支持这种异常的选票分布比率是根据市政运作费用来自于商业税的比例。

批评人士说这是不公平的。但是这种方式削减了两方面。每个住宅最多可以有两名租客在市政注册选举, 而且他们甚至不必是澳大利亚公民。唯一的先决条件是他们在申请截止前(3月16日)已经在该地址居住了一个月, 而且无需居住证明。假象和傀儡

和其他维多利亚州的市政选举一样, 候选人通常会招募一些人按他们的方式进行候选人排名。

和过去一样, 选民可以期望在候选人中进行挑选, 这些候选人的唯一角色是吸引或阻止可能流向对手的选票。

绿党是在地方政府选举中唯一正式认可候选人的主要政党。工党和自由党的利益是非官方的, 但又是混在一起的。

各党派和候选人的动机不同。对于工党来说, 首先要阻止绿党在市政内部的影响力。上次选举, 作为对绿党野心的遏止, 罗伯特·道尔得到了工党的支持。

成功的候选人将是候选人排名协议中的最佳排名者。对于选民和候选人来说, 这只是一场博彩。

市政CEO掩盖大律师调查

Shane Scanlan 撰稿

对前任市长罗伯特·道尔(Robert Doyle)指控的全面程度可能永远不会公开, 因为市政行政首席执行官本·里默尔(Ben Rimmer)试图抹杀他去年12月开始的百万澳元调查。

毫不奇怪, 罗伯特·道尔先生2月份辞职后, 维多利亚州最隐秘的市政议会领导人现在正竭尽全力保留其所剩的声誉。

3月13日, 里默尔先生向市政议员和公众发布了来自皇家大律师调查员伊恩·弗莱克腾(Ian Freckelton)所谓的“第一报告”, 这份100页的报告他只发布了805个字。

他的时间策略, 舞台管理和下午4点特别市政会议的会议内容以及由此产生的人生戏剧和伤感, 转移人们的注意力, 来掩盖他抹杀调查过程的意图。。

当时市政会议室里“灯光、相机、动作”正好赶上夜间新闻公告。当天的新闻里充满了道歉、眼泪、拥抱和议员们让墨尔

本市变得更美好的承诺。

会议前他只给了议员们短短几个小时(新闻界只给了一小时)来消化他精心制作的3345字报告, 不出所料当时的戏剧情景就成了舞台中心了。

里默尔先生是一位非常精明的官员, 正像古罗马人一样, 通过提供“面包和马戏”来控制他们的人数。

那天晚上不太引人注目的是里默尔先生选择性地发布了一些相对无关紧要的内容。

他的材料对公众已知的小部分人指控没有任何新增内容。而这份“第一报告”故意局限于凯西·欧克Cathy Oke议员和前议员泰莎·沙利文(Tessa Sullivan)有关的事宜(尽管不一致地提到公众也已知的墨尔本健康事件, 里默尔先生称之为还有“进一步指控”)。

提到“进一步指控”, 意指只有三名女士对道尔先生提出了投诉。可事情不是这样。本报了解到, 自沙利文议员于12月15日呈上35页的投诉信后辞职, 许多

投诉人已经联系了弗莱克腾博士。

如许多其他方面一样, 里默尔先生的报告对投诉人的数量没有提及。

他说“第一报告并没有考虑到与道尔先生行为有关的其他人(本报强调)提出的其它事项”。

他继续说道:“这些与道尔作为市长角色有关的事情, 可能(本报强调)成为进一步报告的主题。”

有没有进一步报告的决定性因素在于是否有人注意到或关心迄今为止的细节缺乏, 这是否太愤世嫉俗了?

里默尔先生说, 他的3月13日的9页报告是摘自第一报告的“执行摘要”。

这与他2月6日发布的通知大相径庭, 通知称会有一份“临时报告”, 然后是“最终报告”。当时他表示, “临时报告草案”已于1月30日提供给了道尔先生。

WHAT'S ON
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FEB | MAR | **APR** | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN

MARCH 2 – JULY 15, MELBOURNE MUSEUM

YOU CAN'T DO THAT

A celebration of fashion designers who challenged the norms in society. Melbourne Museum and Virgin Australia Melbourne Fashion Festival present this exhibition.

6PM-8PM TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY UNTIL DECEMBER 12, CITY LIBRARY

WRITING FOR BEGINNERS

Find new friends and your writing voice at the free workshop designed to give writers a space to network, receive feedback and learn in a supportive environment.

FREE 9658 9500

INNER MELBOURNE LIFE ACTIVITIES CLUB

Meeting on selected dates and various locations, IMLAC takes in the city's parks, its culture, fabulous eating options as well as festivals, galleries and concerts.

www.life.org.au/imlac
or call Dianne 0425 140 981

7.20AM FOR A 7.40AM START, TUESDAYS

ROTARY CENTRAL SUNRISE

Interested in what we do? Join us for breakfast! We meet at the RACV City Club 501 Bourke St, Melbourne.

rotaryclubcentralmelbourne.org.au

10.30AM-2PM WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY & SUNDAY, 326 LONSDALE ST

MEET UP WITH FRIENDS

Instant coffee or tea with a biscuit for \$1.00. Meet up with friends or enjoy meeting others at St Francis Pastoral Centre (entry next to the book shop in the church yard). **9663 2495**

MONDAYS 8.30PM, 41 BOURKE STREET

COMEDY AT SPLEEN

Mixing some of the big names in comedy with the best up and coming acts, this will be sure to make you forget the Monday blues. Gold coin donation. **0439 660 836**

4TH MONDAY OF EACH MONTH. LUNCH-TIME, ST PETER'S EAST MELBOURNE

AUSTRAL SALON OF MUSIC

Listen to music from talented young musicians. Make new friends.

www.australsalon.org
0449 727 910

MON – SAT 10AM-4PM, 141 QUEEN ST

STROLLING IN THE MIDST OF JOYFUL BLOSSOMS

Artist Alice Shen presents her paintings at the Fo Guang Yuan Melbourne Art Gallery. These paintings express the artist's joy at her surroundings. **FREE. 9642 2388**

EVERY THURSDAY FROM 1PM, ST MICHAEL'S, 120 COLLINS ST

ST MICHAEL'S RECITAL

Experience spectacular music as the St Michael's grand organ comes to life for a free 30-minute recital every Thursday. No booking required. **9654 5120**

1-2.30PM, EVERY WEDNESDAY, CITY LIBRARY

ESL READING GROUP

Join this free and fun weekly reading program, read along with others and practice pronunciation, improve English comprehension and vocabulary and meet new people. Both native and ESL speakers are welcome.

7.30PM WEDNESDAYS, 16 CORRS LANE

CRAB LAB

Comedy in the city at the House of Maxion with well-known performers from radio and TV plus some new talent. **FREE.**

0422 686 933

6PM, 1ST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH THE KELVIN CLUB, 14 MELBOURNE PL

RESIDENTS 3000 FORUM

A community group to inform, connect and support CBD residents. Regular social events with speaker. Details posted on **residents3000.com.au**

4-6PM, EVERY SUNDAY, CAMPARI HOUSE, 23-25 HARDWARE LANE

TRIVIA ON THE ROOF

A retractable roof and drink specials will help warm up your brain for Sunday afternoon trivia. Bookings not required. **9600 1574** or **info@camparihouse.com.au**

EVERY WEDNESDAY, FROM 6PM. MELBOURNE CENTRAL LION HOTEL

LANGUAGE SWAP

Speak another language but no one to practise with? Come along to the free language exchange and meet like-minded people who love language.

Book on **www.NewToMelbourne.org**

6PM-7PM, WEDNESDAYS UNTIL JUNE 26, ALEXANDRA GARDENS

COMMUNITY WORKOUT

Bring your sports gear and turn up for some after-work stress relief. Bring a water bottle and don't forget to prepare for Melbourne's weather! **www.melbournehealthylife-style.com/contact-us/**

10.30AM – 11PM TUESDAYS UNTIL DECEMBER 11, 253 FLINDERS LANE

STOMPERS AT CITY LIBRARY

For toddlers aged 18 months – 3 years, this event is sure to be a fun favourite. Songs, stories and rhymes will help develop love of reading. **FREE. 9658 9500**

12-6PM, MARCH 28, IAEC MIGRATION, 9/ 267 COLLINS ST

PARTNER VISA SESSION

An info session about what is the right visa to lodge and how long your partner can stay with you in Australia. Ensure you lodge complete application to avoid visa rejection. **9670 1140** or **Melbourne@iaec.com.au**

10AM, EVERY 3RD TUESDAY, POMODORO SARDO REATAURANT, 111 LONSDALE ST

EASTENDERS COFFEE CLUB

Come along and join the company of friends and neighbours. Meet new people and be informed.

eastendersinc@gmail.com

10.30-11.15AM, EVERY 3RD SATURDAY, CITY LIBRARY

ONCE UPON A TUNE

An interactive musical adventure that features live music by Beethoven, Brahms and Brumby. Suitable for children aged from 5-12 years. **FREE.**

EVERY SUNDAY FROM 2.30PM, THE HUB, 506 ELIZABETH ST

FILM CLUB

The film club has some of the best film noir classics including 1962 French Classic and two time Cannes winner "Sundays and Cybelle". **FREE**, coffee provided.

Contact John on 0459 398 358

✚ PRAYER TIMES

<p>St Michael's 120 Collins St, Melbourne, 3000 Ph: 9654 5120 Church times: Sunday Service at 10.00am</p> <p>Chabad of Melbourne Suite 301, 343 Lt Collins St Ph: 9525-9929 Chabad of Melbourne CBD hosts regular lunchtime lecture series on various topics.</p> <p>City on a Hill Sundays at 9am, 10.30am and 6pm. Hoyts Cinemas, Melbourne Central</p>	<p>Collins Street Baptist Church 174 Collins St Ph: 9650 1180 Sundays services: 10.30am</p> <p>CrossCulture Church of Christ 333 Swanston St, Melbourne (Corner of Swanston & Little Lonsdale St) Ph: 9623 9199 Sunday services (English) - 9am, 11:15am & 6pm Sunday service (Mandarin) - 10:45am www.crossculture.net.au</p> <p>Hillsong City Youth Krimper Cafe, 20 Guildford Lane, Melbourne - Every Friday 7pm-9pm</p>	<p>Holy Cross Orthodox Mission 261/265 Spring St www.australianorthodox.org</p> <p>Scots' Church 156, Collins St Ph: 9650 9903 Sundays 10:30 am (Indonesian), 11:00 am (Traditional) and 5:00 pm (Contemporary)</p> <p>St Francis' Church 326 Lonsdale St 9663 2495 Sunday: 7am, 8am, 9:30am, 11am (St Francis' Choir) and 12.30, 1.30, 4.30, 6.00 pm Filipino Community Mass: Second Sunday of the month at 2.30pm Indonesian Community Mass: Third Sunday of the month at 2.30pm</p>	<p>St Paul's Cathedral Cnr Flinders and Swanston Streets Ph: 9653 4333 Sundays: 8.00am, 9.00am, 10.30am, 6.00pm</p> <p>St. Augustine's Catholic Church 631 Bourke St. Melb Ph: 9614 1722 Sundays Mass: 10.30am & 8.00pm Mon – Fri Mass: 1.05pm Mon – Fri Confessions: 12.30pm</p> <p>Wesley Church 148 Lonsdale St 9.15 am Gospel Hall Cantonese/Mandarin Service 11.00 am Morning Worship Service 7.00 pm Evening Worship Service</p>
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Highest green award for QVM renewal

By Kathryn Lewis

The City of Melbourne is the first Australian local government to be awarded a six star green star - Communities rating for the \$250 million Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal program.

The Green Building Council of Australia awarded the rating based on best practice benchmarks for liveability, environmental sustainability, design excellence, prosperity, governance and innovation.

The program will revolutionise the market with large-scale waste and organic recycling facilities on site, solar and battery storage, rainwater collection to reduce water consumption and more public open spaces with water sensitive landscaping.

Acting Lord Mayor Arron Wood said the independent business case showed

the market could not survive without significant investment.

“In today’s modern market place, it is clear that we need to upgrade the operating modes, amenities and waste management systems to ensure Queen Victoria Market remains viable into the future,” Cr Wood said.

The program includes a transformation of the current customer car park to the largest public space since Birrarung Marr to accommodate the rising population.

“The number of residents in City North is estimated to grow to 22,000 by 2040, creating opportunities and challenges while increasing the importance of open space,” the Acting Lord Mayor said.

The council will be working with the Queen Victoria Market to deliver the commitments over the next five years.

CEO of Green Building Council of Australia, Romilly Madew, said the council’s approach “struck the right balance between preserving a heritage icon and rejuvenating an important centre of trade.”



Photo by the City of Melbourne from the Moomba Parade on March 12.

Moomba woos again

By Lina Le

Moomba again thrilled Melbourne crowds over the Labour Day long weekend from March 9-12 at Birrarung Marr and Alexandra Gardens.

Running for the 64th consecutive year, the annual festival runs a three-day jam-packed program that boasts free events for families, including games, water sports, carnival rides and food trucks, with highlights such as the colourful Moomba Parade and the wacky Birdman Rally.

It was estimated that over one million people have visited Moomba Festival this year, making it one of Melbourne’s busiest festivals, showcasing local arts, entertainment, music and sports.

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