

CBD NEWS

cbdnews.com.au

Forever Free

Twitter @CBD_News_3000



High-vis is the new grey
Photo by Rhonda Dredge

With most of corporate Melbourne at home self-isolating, the city's outdoor workers, like construction foreman Paul Eades, now reflect the CBD's most highly-visible workers helping keep our economy afloat. *Continued on page 9.*

Council backs greater student help

The City of Melbourne has urged greater support for the 52,000 international students who live or study within the CBD amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

WORDS BY *David Schout*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

With many students now jobless and unable to fly home or access federal income support, the council recognised the "urgent" need for a national hardship fund.

And as student fees and living costs continue to mount, Lord Mayor Sally Capp said Town Hall needed to take a stand.

"At this time when we keep saying 'we're in this together', then we need to show that we really are, not just to those who are the most important or prevalent but to those who need care," she said.

"For every international student, for all their parents and families, we need to be saying very clearly that we feel a responsibility to them in our city ... you belong, you are deserving and we do care."

In asking for a response from higher levels of government, the council too has pledged financial assistance, although that amount (at the time of publishing) was yet to be determined.

Cr Capp said foreign students defined Melbourne's brand and identity, and especially paid tribute to those playing important roles in the fight against COVID-19 as researchers, student nurses, intern doctors and volunteers in hospitals.

The Lord Mayor called out the racist attack on two students at the Queen Victoria Market in April as "completely unacceptable" and something that "does not reflect the values that Melburnians stand for" (see full story on page 3).

More than 200,000 international students from 170 countries live in Melbourne, including 52,000 inter-

national students who live or study in the central city.

The sector generated nearly \$12 billion for Victoria in 2019 - by far the state's biggest export.

Shortly after the council called for greater student support at the April 7 council meeting, the Andrews Government announced international students would be eligible to register for the Working for Victoria program, which assists those who have lost work due to the pandemic.

Cr Nicholas Reece, a Principal Fellow at the University of Melbourne, underlined the importance of work to support studies.

"As we have rapidly learned, it (COVID-19) is hitting some groups - in particular international students - particularly hard. Many students who come to Australia to study take up work to support themselves and their studies, but with the collapse in the employment market at the moment, many international students are finding themselves without work, without income, and at the same time unable to access the social welfare safety net."

In April, Prime Minister Scott Morrison suggested students in this situation should "return home".

Cr Reece likened the comments, irrespective of their intention, to "a punch on a bruise" while Cr Cathy Oke - another University of Melbourne employee - said they had caused "concern and alarm" among colleagues at the University of Melbourne.

The Council of International Students Australia (CISA) said the comments were disheartening.

"Due to lockdown enforcement in many countries, lots of international *Continued on page 3.*

A short-stay "apocalypse"

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
PROPERTY

The city's rental market is flooded due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic causing the short-stay market to collapse, according to real estate agents and short-stay operators.

Belle Property's Carlton and Melbourne business development and leasing manager Suzie Inglis told *CBD News* the CBD market was "absolutely flooded mostly with furnished properties that would usually be on Airbnb and other short term stay platforms".

"Since all their bookings have been cancelled, owners have been turning back to the residential market to try and fill their properties with six- to 12-month leases," she said.

Ms Inglis said on April 21 there were over 2200 apartments online in the CBD alone.

"In our busiest period this number will usually never exceed 1200, so you can clearly see the huge and rapid

increase happening," she said.

"The 1000 extra properties are all furnished and have all come online in the past two to three weeks which is simply unheard of."

"This heavy competition teamed with the fact there are hardly any prospective tenants in the market anyway has forced owners to significantly drop prices in order to be competitive."

Tony Penna, a short-stay operator in Southbank, said he had 30 empty properties he was trying to move into the rental market.

"There's literally no revenue, every booking I had for the next three months is cancelled. I'm absolutely trying my best to put medium- to long-term tenants in them as fully furnished apartments," Mr Penna said.

"When you look online for two-bedroom apartments in Southbank there's around 800 already available."

"There's definitely a saturation of rental properties going onto the market, and many are fully furnished so *Continued on page 3.*

COUNCIL AFFAIRS, PAGE 02
A A message from the Lord Mayor



BUSINESS, PAGE 04
B Summit provides important boost



ADVERTORIAL, PAGE 05
C Supporting our city businesses



CBD LOCAL, PAGE 15
D Staying open



MELBOURNE CITY SALES

The Melbourne City Sales team maximises value and accelerates the success of our clients which is unmatched by any competitor in the Melbourne CBD market. Visit us at colliers.com.au/melbournecitysales for more information.



CONTACT
 Suite 108, 198 Harbour Esplanade
 Docklands 3008
 cbdnews.com.au
 Tel: 8689 7980

EDITOR
 Sean Car

PUBLISHER
 Hyperlocal News Pty Ltd
 ABN: 57 623 558 725

ADVERTISING
 Hyper-local print works for advertisers in our digital world because local people are interested in local news. To sell to the CBD community, contact Jack Hayes on 0401 031 236 or jack@hyperlocalnews.com.au

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

The deadline for the June edition is May 21.

SOCIAL MEDIA
 Follow us on Twitter
 @CBD_News_3000

Like us on Facebook
 cbdnewsmelbourne

Follow us on Instagram
 @cbdnews

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

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



A message from the Lord Mayor

WORDS BY *Lord Mayor Sally Capp*

As we adjust to a radically different way of life, Melbourne must remain a caring city that lends a helping hand during tough times. We know this is an extremely stressful situation for most people and looking after those most at risk has never been more important.

All levels of government are joining forces to combat COVID-19 and, amid the lockdown, the City of Melbourne is continuing to deliver essential services for the community. Waste and recycling, services to older people, family and children's services and support for the homeless are essential public health functions.

Meals and in-home services are being delivered to more than 600 older residents and residents with a disability, family violence and counselling services are being increased, child care centres remain open and maternal and child health support is being provided over the phone and via video conferencing. We continue to provide our community immunisation service, our daily support team is helping to find shelter for people sleeping rough, and cleaning services have been ramped up across the city.

The situation also calls for us to help each other through the traumatic economic shock of a sudden shut down. State and federal governments are offering billions of dollars in support for businesses and workers who have already lost their jobs. Local governments are also doing their bit for cafes, restaurants, artists and myriad other small enterprises that are the heart and soul of our neighbourhoods.

About 80 per cent of 16,500 businesses within the City of Melbourne are small businesses. They are family operations, sole traders and small firms that have taken a risk to turn their ideas into a livelihood and provide jobs for others. Real people are impacted, not just balance sheets.

As the level of government closest to the people, local councils have a direct and personal connection to many small business operators and their staff. How can we best support them and ensure they survive this ordeal? The speed and strength of our recovery will depend on the moral support and financial lifeline we provide through this period.

The City of Melbourne recently announced a \$5 million support package that includes waiving fees for certain licences, registrations and street trading permits for three months, allocating special grants for e-commerce and online activities, halving rent for tenants in Council-owned buildings, and establishing a rates hardship policy. Queen Victoria Market offers an essential food service and its 600



As the level of government closest to the people, local councils have a direct and personal connection to many small business operators and their staff. How can we best support them and ensure they survive this ordeal?



traders will receive 100 per cent rent relief for the next three months.

Melbourne is also a city of artists and performers, and they are among the hardest hit by the downturn. The City of Melbourne is providing \$2 million in grants to help them and smaller creative organisations plan and create their next work or showcase their performances online. They form the backbone of our city's cultural life and in more normal times their creative contributions uplift other businesses, attracting visitors from far and wide, especially at this time of year.

The City of Melbourne has established a Business Concierge service to provide one-on-one advice on accessing financial support, services and information. The support packages for businesses and our creative community have generated hundreds of enquiries and thousands of applications. There are so many people in need, but no easy way to keep everyone sustained.

We ask landlords to consider temporary rent discounts for local businesses, while those of us able to weather the storm should take the opportunity to spend online or by phone with local retailers and eateries. Organise home delivery from a favourite dinner spot or order a book from the local bookshop. They are small gestures, but will help the commercial heart of our communities to keep beating.

While our city is strangely silent, missing the million people who would normally be moving through the streets, safety and security remain top priorities. Many shopfronts are closed and thousands of residents are at home. The City of Melbourne's on-street compliance team is monitoring the streets daily, working closely with Victoria Police. Our cleaning services are taking the opportunity to sweep, scrub and disinfect the city. Coordination with our community service providers and state government has helped most of rough sleepers into temporary accommodation so they can receive care. No one should be left behind and it's inspiring to see how deeply Melburnians feel about this.

I for one am not surprised. The depth of our generosity for others was on display during the state's horrendous summer bushfire crisis. Little did we realise worse was to come. Melbourne, we are a caring community that puts people first and there will never be a better time to reinforce that notion ●

For more information:
melbourne.vic.gov.au

Connect with your local community

The **CBD Community Hub** is a free online space to connect with fellow CBD locals, stay in the know, post requests for help, share skills and local knowledge, ask for recommendations, discover local services, classes, retailers, events and more!

This Facebook group is owned by **CBD News**.

If you're a local resident or business you can join up here:

www.facebook.com/groups/melbournecbdcommunityhub/

f **CBD**
Community Hub





▲ Rubbish dumped outside a city apartment block.

A short-stay “apocalypse”

Continued from page 1.

you’d guess they’re likely from short stay.” Mr Penna said another possible sign of the collapse of the short stay market was a significant increase in hard waste around the city.

“There’s hard waste flooded with furniture that appears to be from short-stays all around Southbank,” he said.

“The test will be how many short-stay operators can sustain themselves for this period, and what the market will look like on the other side.

Rus Littleson, a representative of property owners and long-term resident advocacy group We Live Here, said COVID-19 was an “apocalypse for the whole short stay industry”.

“We have residents telling us that short-stay operators are collapsing throughout the city,” he said.

“Short-stay companies that have been around for more than a decade have not been immune - they’re crumbling under the pressure of paying above-market rents with near-zero income.”

“We Live Here is hearing that short-stay operators are invoking the small print in their rental agreements and bailing out, abandoning their apartment owners in the long-term rental market.” ●

Racial attack causes fury

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
CRIME

The search continues for a woman in relation to an assault on two international students in the CBD on April 15, with police having already pressed charges against another woman on April 19.

The incident, which was filmed on Elizabeth St and posted on Twitter, drew widespread condemnation from the likes of Lord Mayor Sally Capp, who said she was “appalled” by the attack.

“The violence displayed is completely unacceptable. It does not reflect the values that Melburnians stand for or the behaviour we expect in our city,” the Lord Mayor said.

“Melbourne is a caring and inclusive city that welcomes people from all over the world to live and study here. Our diversity is one of the great strengths of our community and violence, abuse or harassment will not be tolerated.”

“During the COVID-19 pandemic it is more important than ever to stick together and lend a hand to those who need it.”

Investigators have been told two women, students from the University of Melbourne, were walking along Elizabeth St near the Queen Victoria Market when they were allegedly verbally abused by two females and physically assaulted around 5.30pm.

During the assault, one of the victim’s Air Pods was dropped and stolen by a male who was in the vicinity, but not involved in the assault.

The victims received minor injuries and reported the incident to police.

A 21-year-old Melbourne woman has been charged with recklessly cause injury and commit indictable offence while on bail.

Investigators are still trying to identify the second female involved in the assault.

She is perceived as Caucasian in appearance, about 20 years-old with a skinny build and shoulder length blonde hair. She was wearing a pink jumper.



▲ The second woman police wish to speak to.

The male offender is perceived as Caucasian in appearance, with a solid build and approximately 175cm tall.

He was wearing a black puffer jacket and a black backpack.

Investigators have released an image of the woman they still wish to speak to about the incident ●

Council backs greater student help

Continued from page 1.

students are not able to (go home) at the moment, leaving them struggling every day,” it said in a statement.

“It is disappointing to see international students being disregarded. There is a lot beyond monetary matters that needs to be considered and addressed which should not be shrugged away.”

The City of Melbourne said it would continue to work with Study Melbourne, the lead agency in delivering online support for international students.

It also pledged to investigate setting up:

- free resume-checking;
- increased opportunities for students to connect online;
- expanding communications with international students; and
- delivering a special edition of the NexStar internship program.

Speaking at the City of Melbourne’s virtual business summit on April 16, vice-chancellor at the University of Melbourne Duncan Maskell outlined how severe the impact of COVID-19 had been on universities.

“We have a unique model in that we totally rely on student enrolment as our main revenue source,” he said. “Over the last few years, that has gone into international students in a big way. So, the current travel restrictions are hitting us very hard.”

“It is likely to have a long-term effect on us. In fact, the prediction is that, nationally, there will be a decline in reversal revenues of between 3.5-\$4 billion over the rest of the year. A significant amount of money.”

City of Melbourne CEO Justin Hanney said council would continue to work with the university sector to support international students.

“The city has set out a number of task forces to do with issues such as the welfare of the elderly, the most at risk,” he said.

“We know we have got an increase in international students using the food relief services and there are more things to work on there.” ●

Contact Crime Stoppers:
1800 333 000 or
crimestoppers.com.au

1 HOUR FREE PARKING

QUEEN VIC MARKET

we're open

For fresh and organic produce, takeaway food and everyday essentials.
Shop local and support small business at Queen Vic Market.

OPEN TUESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY

QVM.COM.AU

Virtual business summit provides important boost

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
BUSINESS

The City of Melbourne's online virtual business summit on April 16 has provided valuable support to many of the city's businesses struggling due to the coronavirus.

With many businesses in lockdown and foot traffic plummeting in the central city, the council staged the online summit to provide business owners and workers with direct access to a range of experts and advice that could help them during the crisis.

More than 600 people tuned into the live-streamed summit, an initiative spearheaded by Deputy Lord Mayor and finance and governance portfolio chair Arron Wood. Thousands more have since viewed the summit online.

"This morning is really about connecting you with some of the experts to hear latest information. But also, to hear, critically, from you as our business community," Cr Wood said.

"You might be a cafe owner who is asking what sort of support is available to you at this critical time. You might be a retail store or an important service and asking, 'how long might these restrictions last?' That's the million-dollar question. Rents, rates, fees, keeping staff employed – these are the sorts of questions we get to today."

"Today we have invited leaders from the business community, industry, health and government to really connect you to leading experts and hear from you as we work through this summit."

Assembling an impressive range of guest speakers and panel of experts, the two-and-a-half-hour summit began with addresses from the Lord Mayor Sally Capp, Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg and state government Upper House member Jane Garrett, who each provided updates on the support available from all levels of government.

The expert panel featured Victorian Chief Health Officer Prof. Brett Sutton, director of the Doherty Institute Prof. Sharon Lewin, Deloitte Australia's Dr Prudeep Phillip and Victorian



▲ Clockwise from top: Cr Arron Wood, Dr Prudeep Phillip, Paul Geurra, Prof. Sharon Lewin and Prof. Brett Sutton.

Chamber of Commerce CEO Paul Guerra.

Participants were able to write questions and submit comments through council's virtual platform, which were read out to respective experts by Cr Wood as the summit progressed.

Both Prof. Sutton and Prof. Lewin provided heartening insights into the work being done by the nation's medical community to combat the virus, with Australia now among some of the best countries in the world in terms of low case numbers.

"I want to emphasise that this is not a case of economy and health being in opposition," Prof. Sutton said. "They are not opposing forces."

"Where we are at in terms of our health status and in terms of having prevented a huge epidemic, is that we are in the very best position to bring back online some of the business and economic activity."

"Simply by virtue of the fact that we have driven transmission down I think it is a matter for our own congratulation, and I hope that by virtue of where we are at today, we can be in a position to step up to resume activity earlier

than a number of countries that will really need to be in lockdown because of the terrible situation they are in right now."

Prof. Sharon Lewin said, "We have only known about this virus since January 1. We've been able to generate an incredible response in Australia through a globalising resources innovation and we are now one of the leading countries in the world."

"[There are] a lot of brilliant minds being turned to this problem and I am very optimistic that there will be a number of solutions that will allow us to buy even more time if we take 12 to 18 months to get a vaccine."

The panel discussion was followed by an "industry deep-dive" into some of the industries worst-hit by COVID-19, including tourism, hospitality, retail and education, which heard from the likes of University of Melbourne vice-chancellor Duncan Maskell and Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) CEO Felicia Mariani.

City of Melbourne CEO Justin Hanney provided a summary statement detailing all the

support packages available from all levels of government, and encouraged local businesses to make the most of it.

"There is a really good summary of this information in the Victorian chamber and Paul Guerra mentioned victorianchamber.com.au and the VicGov website is important as well," he said.

"We have developed a concierge service and reallocated staff from libraries and staff who are good at communication and research and we have ramped up the business concierge service. All 20,000 small businesses that are in the City of Melbourne will receive a phone call over the coming weeks from the business concierge service."

The summit was closed with a message from Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harmann, who urged people to "stay connected" and to "reach for support if you need it".

The City of Melbourne has set up a dedicated business support web page (melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/Pages/economic-support-businesses-covid19), as well as a Business Concierge Hotline, which can be contacted on 9658 9658 ●

To view the summit visit:
melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/grow-business/business-events/Pages/virtual-business-support-summit.aspx



Sean Car

EDITOR

SEAN@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

A dose of art culture

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Rhonda Dredge*
ARTS & CULTURE

There are still opportunities to experience art in the CBD as local galleries continue to trade, but at a distance.

Gone are the days of exuberant openings and on-the-spot purchases.

Collectors are being more conservative, says Geoff Newton, director of Neon Parc.

As the city's most intimate gallery, Neon Parc – in McIlwraith Place off Bourke St – is open by appointment.

The current exhibition is online, but nothing really beats mounting the stairs and experiencing the garage of lively water colours by James Lynch in person.

The depictions of hammers, ladders and everyday things, might be only too familiar to those stuck at home.

As the barriers between home and professional life break down, gallerists are being forced to find new ways of reaching those who are addicted to their weekly dose of art culture.

Flinders Lane Gallery has re-launched an interactive online program to help clients visualise their living rooms with a range of works selected from their stock room.

"I've been trying to think of ways that I can brighten your life while you are also confined to your home," director Claire Harris told clients by email. "It's really exciting to see how artworks sit in different spaces."

The program has been used by the gallery for 12 years and it's quite nifty, but do innovative marketing ideas and a proactive online presence increase confidence or wellbeing when you are forced to work remotely?

Claire spent Easter working at her CBD home. "Domestic chores are not my friend," she said. "But fortunately, I have a modest home that doesn't require too much upkeep."

"The best thing that happened over Easter was hanging out with my son and creating some very bad music on Garage Band together then making sticky date pudding for my birthday cake and watching *Blade Runner* again."

It's a welcome change for gallerists to come out of their artistic shells to show that they, too, are human.

Murray White, whose eponymous gallery in Exhibition St has been such a prominent feature of the artistic landscape in the city, has been working from home for longer than most.

He was already working from his place in Richmond when the art world locked down and, therefore, is one of the lucky few not struggling with city rents and overheads.

The lease for his gallery came to an end last year and he's been negotiating for a new place while still trading from a CBD post office address.

"A month ago, today my inbox said it all," Murraray said. He received a host of cancellations for art fairs and events but he's keen to assure the buying public that the art world will return.

"The major art events are being postponed not cancelled," he said.

Murray is spending the downtime promoting an artists' book by Tony Clark and Lyndal Walker, which he launched at Neon Parc in December.

Ephemerality is All Very Well is a memento mori dedicated to memories of the late punk rocker Roland S Howard, a member of Nick Cave's band The Birthday Party.

It's a moving tribute, not in biographical form, but is strictly personal in the way good art might need to be in this COVID-19 era.

As CBD art personalities adjust to the collapse of the art market, some are skeptical about the claim that a proactive online presence might save the day.

"I think everyone's scrabbling for the same chunk of online landscape," Geoff Newton said.

"Everyone is having trouble producing the engaging, sexy content that collectors want to see."

Collectors are being more conservative, he said, and business is pretty tough.

"Sit tight," he advised art investors. "It's like the last financial crisis. Support your local, independent, private galleries." ●

▼ Geoff Newton at his Neon Parc Gallery.



Supporting our city businesses

COUNCIL ADVERTORIAL

Melbourne businesses are the lifeblood of the city, and the City of Melbourne is offering services to help support businesses affected by COVID-19.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp is encouraging businesses to take up the offers of support from the City of Melbourne.

“Our COVID-19 Business Concierge Hotline is a useful and practical resource for small businesses during this difficult time,” the Lord Mayor said.

“We’ve launched this dedicated phone line so small businesses can call in and find out important information about what support is available and how to access our services.” “It is staffed by a team of people here at the City of Melbourne who can speak with small business owners directly, offer mentoring and help people through the process to apply for support.”

Business owners can call the COVID-19 Business Concierge Hotline on 9658 9658 between 7.30am and 6pm Monday to Friday and between 10am and 4pm on weekends.

The Lord Mayor said there are more than 16,500 businesses in the City of Melbourne, with 80 per cent of these sole operators, family operations and small firms with just a few employees. “Real people are being severely impacted. So, we’re doing everything we can to help businesses stay open and keep Melburnians in jobs,” she said.

The City of Melbourne is offering a number of relief and support measures to help local businesses through the coming weeks and months. The support package includes waiving certain fees, reducing rent for tenants in Council-owned buildings and developing a rates hardship policy.

“The speed and strength of the city’s economic recovery will depend on how well we can sustain and save businesses through this period,” the Lord Mayor said. “We want to



Real people are being severely impacted. So, we’re doing everything we can to help businesses stay open and keep Melburnians in jobs.



understand the needs of businesses. We want to know how we can help. Listening to them is the best way we can effectively respond to this uncertainty together.”

“And when the health crisis is over, we will find a momentous way to celebrate, to welcome people back to our city, but most importantly to acknowledge and appreciate our city businesses and organisations, they are the heartbeat of our city and community, they make Melbourne impactful, interesting and iconic.” ●

For more information:
melbourne.vic.gov.au/business



▲ City businesses are encouraged to find out what relief and support is available from the City of Melbourne.

Welcome relief for Queen Vic Market

LOCAL NEWS

Having initially offered 25 and 50 per cent rent relief for food and non-food related traders, respectively, Queen Victoria Market (QVM) management was quick to respond with 100 per cent relief for all traders last month as the threat of COVID-19 spread.

As the largest concentration of independent small businesses in Australia, the QVM and its 700-plus day and night market traders have been significantly impacted by COVID-19, which comes in addition to the impact of bushfires on tourism and retail earlier this year.

Progressive travel restrictions have significantly impacted around half the market’s traders who sell specialty goods and are heavily reliant on tourism, while further government restrictions resulted in many planned market events being postponed or cancelled.

The restrictions have also led to most non-food traders being mandated to close, while hospitality traders are restricted to takeaway and delivery services.

Since mid-March, the market has suffered a further drop in visitation to its fresh produce and hospitality offerings, which remain open, largely attributed to the absence of workers and visitors to the CBD.

QVM CEO Stan Liacos said that management was focused on doing what it could to preserve the market and support traders through what were unprecedented times.

“Queen Victoria Market remains open and serving the community with fresh produce and other essentials, as it has done for 142 years,” Mr Liacos said.

“The 700-plus day and night market traders operating small businesses at the market have been hit hard by COVID-19 and QVM management has been working hard to support our traders during this challenging time to help their businesses survive and to ensure the future viability of the market.”



“The Market and our traders need the support of the local community now more than ever, so I urge people to support local, small, family-run businesses like those at the market.”



“The full rent relief that we have provided to all traders means that our food-related traders can continue to operate during this downturn and will ensure that we can bounce back to our former glory when the market can fully re-open.”

“The Market and our traders need the support of the local community now more than ever, so I urge people to support local, small, family-run businesses like those at the market. The great

thing about the market is that we are in a fresh, open air environment and we have introduced enhanced health and safety measures to protect customers, traders and staff.”

Some of the key actions taken by QVM management and the City of Melbourne in response to COVID-19 include:

- 100 per cent rent relief for all traders from April 1, for an initial three months, building on an initial Trader Support Package announced on March 20.
- Agreement reached with box hire operators to suspend storage fees for three months for general merchandise traders currently not trading in line with government restrictions.
- Regular updates to traders about advice from relevant authorities and government support for small businesses that may be relevant.
- One-hour free parking in the market car park introduced on all market days for customers who enter the car park after 9am, in addition to the existing free early bird shopping parking from 6am to 9am will also remain in place.
- New pre-order and pickup service from April 14 (read more on page 15).
- Continued focus on marketing and promotion to raise awareness that the market is open and a safe place to shop.

Mr Liacos said that management had also enhanced its “already extensive” cleaning practices by providing additional staff to conduct regular cleaning and sanitising of high traffic surfaces. It has also increased signage around the market, including restrooms and high traffic areas, while hand sanitiser units have been installed in many locations around the market.

Access has also been limited to specific entry/exit points to control the number of customers entering the Meat and Fish Hall and Dairy Hall to ensure government restrictions aren’t exceeded ●



Retail store theft

CRIME

Police are hoping to identify a woman following a theft from a retail store at a Melbourne shopping centre earlier this month.

Investigators have been told the woman entered the Lonsdale St store about 2pm on Saturday, March 14.

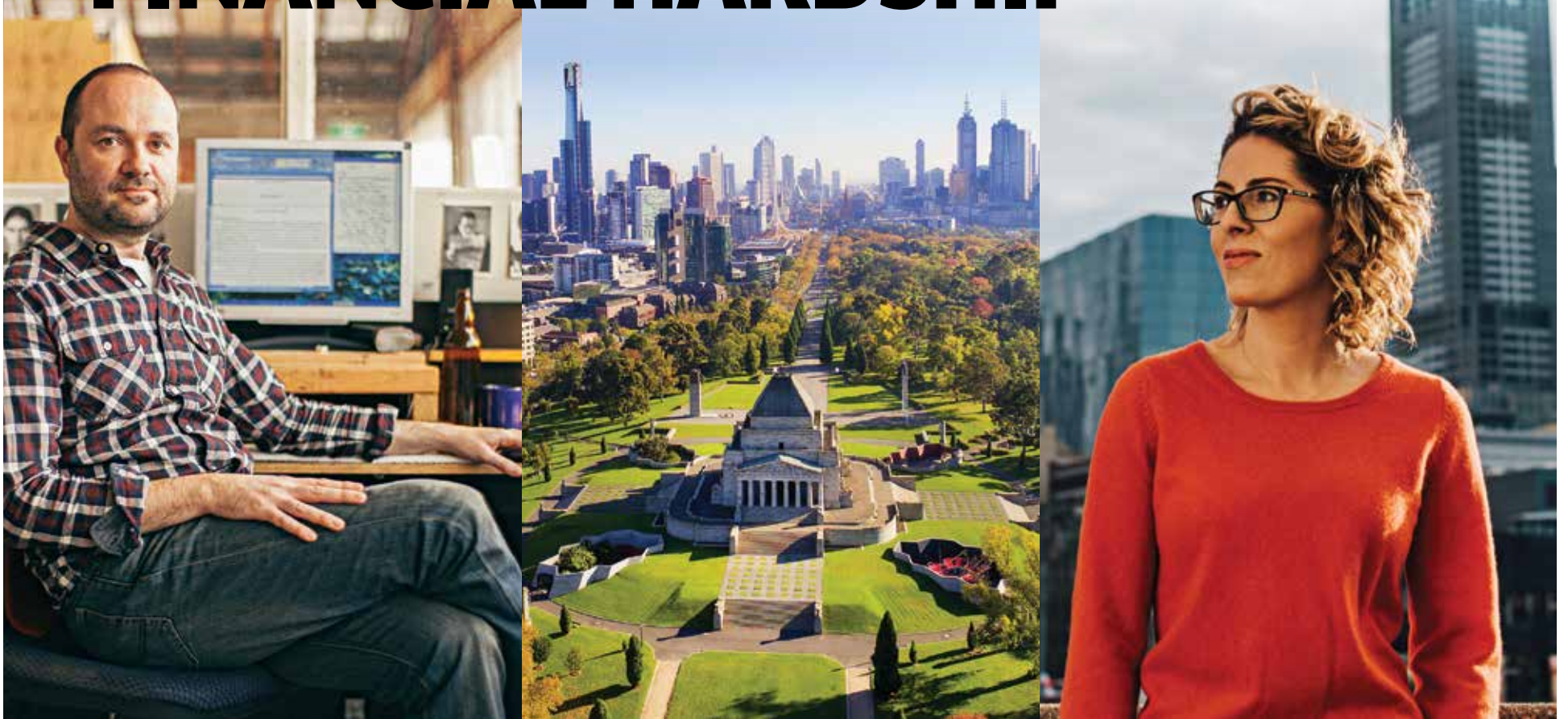
The woman selected a clothing item from a rack inside and quickly fled from the store without paying.

Investigators have released an image of a woman they believe will be able to assist with their enquiries.

She is perceived to be of Asian appearance, aged between 30-40 years, with a medium build and long black hair with a fringe ●

Contact Crime Stoppers:
1800 333 000 or
crimestoppers.com.au

HELP FOR BUSINESSES FACING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP



If your business is experiencing financial hardship, the City of Melbourne may be able to help.

City of Melbourne's COVID-19 Business Concierge Hotline is now available to help small businesses and organisations access support services and important business information.

The newly-expanded Business Concierge service is a dedicated team of people who can speak to small business owners directly, offer mentoring and help people through the process to apply for support.

To find out how we can assist you, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au or call our Business Concierge Hotline on 9658 9658 (press 1 for business).

melbourne.vic.gov.au



Council extends construction hours

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
BUILDING & PLANNING

The City of Melbourne has temporarily adjusted the management of construction activity in “certain cases” in the municipality in a bid to fast-track construction projects, save jobs and help limit the economic impact of coronavirus (COVID-19).

It comes after a construction worker from the Melbourne Square project on Kavanagh St contracted the virus last month, leading to the development’s temporary closure for precautionary cleaning. The site reopened days later, sparking widespread debate as to whether the industry was equipped to be dealing with government’s new safety measures around social distancing.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the council’s temporary measures would allow extensions of working hours on some building sites for commercial, large residential and mixed-use developments.

“The changes will allow the construction industry to work safely and remain viable during these challenging times but they will not allow construction activity around the clock,” the Lord Mayor said.

“We understand these changes may affect residents with a potential increase in noise, however we are attempting to strike a balance between the needs of residents and the need to keep people in jobs. We recognise these extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures.”

“The necessary health and safety measures, such as social distancing, are impacting the productivity of the construction industry. We’re responding by adjusting the hours available for construction work on a case-by-case basis.”

“We are doing our best to support industry and residents during these uncertain and stressful times.”

Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood said the temporary arrangements would be reviewed

on a monthly basis to ensure the needs of both the construction industry and local residents were met.

“We’re working to balance the need to save jobs in the construction sector by allowing different ways of working and still protecting public safety and amenity,” the Deputy Lord Mayor said.

“I want to stress that these changes are temporary.”

“More officers will be out monitoring building sites to ensure compliance with the regulations. We reserve the right to issue fines or revoke construction permits for sites that don’t follow the rules outlined in their construction permit.”

“In turn, we seek commitment from the industry to ensure that everything possible will be done to preserve residential amenity and protect workers.”

In response to COVID-19, federal and state governments have acknowledged the construction industry as an essential service and determined that it should remain in operation for the time being.

Construction sites are subject to increased health and safety precautions including limiting the number of workers on site, adhering to social distancing requirements, following personal hygiene guidelines and regular cleaning of equipment.

The city’s local law currently allows for construction activity to occur between the hours of 7am and 7pm on weekdays and between 8am and 3pm on Saturdays. Approval is required from council to work outside these standard hours.

The council said the temporary measures would not apply as a “blanket approval” and would be administered on a case-by-case basis under the existing local law via “out of hours” permits.

The City of Melbourne will consider the following extensions as a general guideline:

- Weekdays: 6am to 8pm (and up to 10pm



for some internal fit out works that aren’t externally audible e.g. plastering, painting, etc.)

- Saturdays: 7am to 5pm (and up to 10pm for some internal fit out works)
- Sundays: 10am until 4pm for limited activities related to crane works that are unable to be completed during standard hours ●

For building and planning related enquiries:
9626 9626 or melbourne.vic.gov.au/building-and-development

City of online literature

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The CBD and surrounds is defined in part by its public libraries, with Melbourne listed as a UNESCO City of Literature. There is something iconic, and unique, about the State Library of Victoria, the City Library, Boyd and the Library at the Dock.

As our readers know, those libraries were all shut in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. But the City of Melbourne has seen a major spike in demand for its online library services as Melburnians practice social distancing and stay indoors.

Thousands of free eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, online newspapers, films, videos and learning resources have been accessed in the past month.

The Lord Mayor Sally Capp said there had been a 23 per cent surge in eLibrary usage compared to this time last year, with eAudiobooks the most popular service.

“Now more than ever people are taking advantage of our incredibly large and free library resources, even when they can’t physically come into our libraries,” the Lord Mayor said.

“We’ve recorded our highest ever online loans for a single month with 19,182 loans; this includes 8837 eBook loans and 10,345 eAudio-book loans.”

“Our children’s librarians are also delivering online story time sessions through our YouTube channel.”

The Lord Mayor said the municipality’s libraries were some of the best resourced in the country.

In partnership with Beamafilm and Kanopy, City of Melbourne library members can access free TV shows, educational videos, art house films and documentaries. Members can also download free music through Freegal.

Film streaming through City of Melbourne library services jumped 54 per cent last month.

The Lord Mayor Sally Capp said there had been a 23 per cent surge in eLibrary usage compared to this time last year, with eAudiobooks the most popular service.



Beamafilm has doubled its average streams per month, while Kanopy usage has spiked with 3666 films streamed in March, the highest ever usage in one month.

Chair of the Knowledge City portfolio Coucillor Dr Jackie Watts said that, even before the pandemic, the City of Melbourne’s libraries were experiencing a resurgence.

“We are all adjusting our lives to cope with COVID-19 and many of us may be looking for new activities. I encourage everyone to take a good look at the City of Melbourne’s website to explore the impressive range of services and resources our libraries have to offer – for free.”

Library book chutes across the City of Melbourne’s libraries are currently closed for the health and safety of staff and the community. Those who need to return an item have been encouraged to do so when libraries reopen. Fines for this period will be waived ●



Whittles

Owners Corporation Management Services






Established in 1968 Whittles is the largest Australian owned strata management company and widely recognised for its experienced staff and the provision of professional strata management services nationally. With specialist expertise in prestigious high-rise buildings, marinas, commercial and residential, Whittles is proud to be part of Melbourne CBD.

whittles.com.au

For superior owners corporation management services,
contact the Docklands dedicated team

Whittles, Level 1, 838 Collins Street, Docklands VIC 3008
T 03 8632 3300 E info.docklands@whittles.com.au

Increase in homeless despite government measures

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *John Tadigiri*

HOMELESSNESS

Despite an unprecedented expansion of Australia's welfare system, there has been an influx of those in need of homelessness support, according to the Salvation Army's CBD chapter.

Major Brendan Nottle told *CBD News* the increase in demand was greater even than what the Salvation Army had expected.

"The influx played out almost exactly as we expected it, but I think the demand has actually outweighed what we expected there," he said.

"We knew there would be an increase but not to this extent. Before the crisis we serviced around 25 to 30 people a day in emergency relief support with food parcels. Now it's 90 to 95 a day."

"Life was pretty certain for a lot of people and when this crisis hit I think their lives became uncertain in a lot of ways – will they have a job in the short term and long term, will the company they work for still be standing, how are they going to pay for medication, food and rent."

"A lot of this started before the JobKeeper payment was announced but there are still lots of people we're seeing who aren't sure if they're eligible."

In March the Salvation Army overhauled operations in the CBD to deal with an impending catastrophe for the homeless. Australia has so far dodged many of those catastrophic health care projections, but Major Nottle has warned to keep up diligence.

"I think we should pay kudos to governments both state and federal for the action they've



taken, but the reality is we haven't entered the flu season and the people the Salvation Army works with are high risk," Major Nottle said.

"Diligence is really critical now. It's easy to say the numbers are really small compared to what we thought, and I'm not a medical professional but I'm not convinced we're through it yet."

The Salvation Army centre on Bourke St had significantly restructured and expanded its café services and was deemed an essential service but soon received direction from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) that operations would have to be even more significantly altered.

The night café was forced to shut just when it was supporting around 150 to 180 people a night who had nowhere to go. Major Nottle said people were sleeping on the floor.

"We've worked with that cohort, and with people sleeping around the city, and we've got 203 people off the streets and into short-term accommodation," Major Nottle said.

"It's a really good short-term measure but it's certainly not a solution to homelessness, and many of them are in hotels that don't supply meals, cooking or heating facilities."

Major Nottle said a solution had been found utilising the kitchen at Parliament House and donations of tonnes of food produce from places like Crown which were forced to shut for the lockdown.

"The kitchen at Parliament House is pumping out around 4000 meals a day to a range of charities and we're distributing a lot into hotels where people are staying for emergency accommodation."

On April 10, the state government announced

“

Before the crisis we serviced around 25 to 30 people a day in emergency relief support with food parcels. Now it's 90 to 95 a day.

”

it would repurpose aged-care sites to provide self-isolation facilities for the homeless.

Minister for Housing Richard Wynne announced \$8.8 million for four pop-up facilities that will provide healthcare and supported accommodation for more than 200 rough sleepers over the next six months.

The accommodation will be located at four sites in inner Melbourne and will be operated by Anglicare Victoria, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Launch Housing, Sacred Heart Mission and VincentCare Victoria.

"People without secure accommodation are at greater risk of contracting coronavirus because they can't self-isolate or quarantine – this will help keep them safe and slow the spread of the virus," Minister Wynne said.

The state government also announced \$3 million for women experiencing or at risk of family violence on April 17 ●

Councils granted extra time for budgets

COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The state government has extended the deadline for council budgets and annual reporting due to the impacts of COVID-19.

Local Government Minister Adem Somyurek announced an extended deadline for 2020/21 council budgets on April 9 until August 31 and for annual reports to November 30.

Councils are usually required to adopt their budgets by June 30 and to submit an annual report by September 30 each year.

While councils are still required to give public notice and hear public submissions before adopting budgets or submitting an annual report, the extensions are open to all councils should they wish to use them.

Minister for Local Government Adem Somyurek said the government was working with councils and the Municipal Association of Victoria to consider the implications of coronavirus on their operations including the welfare of staff, compliance with the Act, elections and their meetings.

"Councils have a vital role to play in supporting and protecting local communities during these unprecedented times," he said.

"This small change responds to requests from councils and will ensure they have time to consider how they will change their budgets to support their residents and businesses."

The City of Melbourne is yet to announce whether it will delay its budget amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The news follows the announcement of a new *Local Government Act 2020*, which passed state parliament in March.

Major reforms for local councils include mandatory training for candidates intending to stand at the October local government elections, as well as measures to improve "community engagement, public transparency, strategic planning, financial management and service performance."

"We have delivered the most significant reforms to the local government sector in more than 30 years," Mr Somyurek said. "The new laws will make councils more accountable, democratic and held them deliver the services their communities need."

Under the new Act, the Minister for Local Government will also have the power to dismiss individual councillors doing the wrong thing, without having to sack the entire council as is currently the case. The new reforms also put an end to overseas voting.

LGPro, the peak body representing local government professionals in Victoria, praised the reforms as the

With so much upheaval in the central city, the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is also expected to experience significant challenges in compiling electoral rolls, which could see the date of the elections pushed back.



"catalyst for modernising, reforming and re-energising the entire sector, while at the same time stamping out corruption and poor behaviour."

It is yet to be confirmed whether the state government plans to launch a separate review into the City of Melbourne Act 2001.

It is also yet to be confirmed how COVID-19 could affect local government elections in October, however current restrictions on public gatherings are expected to impact the ways in which candidates can engage with voters.

With so much upheaval in the central city, the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is also expected to experience significant challenges in compiling electoral rolls, which could see the date of the elections pushed back.

The VEC said elections were still scheduled for October and any changes to the legislated date would be a matter for Parliament.

"The VEC's roll production program for the 2020 local government elections, including support for roll production with the City of Melbourne elections, is continuing as planned," a VEC spokesperson said.

"Under the new *Local Government Act 2020*, all councils are required to have the same method of election (that is, all attendance or all postal). That decision will be made by the Minister for Local Government."

New legislation announced by the state government on April 21 also amends the *Local Government Act 2020* to allow virtual meetings for local councils ●

A new way of thinking

WORDS BY *Isabelle Harris*

LOCAL NEWS

The choir sings online to an audience it cannot see and ministers preach to parishioners they cannot hear.

While the COVID-19 pandemic means churches can no longer meet in person, many are finding their ways to gather, such as the Welsh Church.

They went virtual ahead of time on March 18 and after a few hiccups, including an uninvited "Zoom-bombing" online invasion of a bible study class, they are sailing ahead.

Reverend Sara Bishop of the church said that there were immense opportunities during the pandemic.

"We have discovered our online services are reaching more people," she said. As more people attend the various services and classes the church offers, the church intends to continue online options after coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

St Michael's Uniting Church is also making use of technology to reach its congregation, with videos posted on YouTube for the Easter holidays and sermons posted to Soundcloud.

Rev Dr Margaret Mayman of St Michael's said that it was simply another form of connection.

But in the age of such anxiety and stress, how does a church take care of its people?

The Welsh Church has set up an online lunch for young people and Facebook Live services, while St Michael's has all sermons online for ease of access.

Father Ben Hoh, a community leader at St Francis' Catholic Church, said they were doing their best to reach out to their parishioners even though it has been hard to fully engage them online.

"All [of our congregation] can ring and have a chat if they need to," he said, adding that "priestly duties" of blessings and prayers were going



▲ Rev Dr Margaret Mayman.

ahead with precautions.

St Francis' church groups such as choirs, prayer and bible study groups have also been practicing via video conferencing services.

"On a day-to-day basis, it [spirituality] is still important," he said.

However, Rev Bishop said those technologies could be emotionally draining even though they were useful.

"There's a great deal of care, so it's very emotionally exhausting," she said.

Father Hoh agreed, saying that while they would continue to extend spiritual care, they also had to ensure they were not overburdened.

"We can't just exhaust ourselves," he said.

Rev Mayman said that the church had been "learning as they go."

"There's a lot of mutual support" she said. "Both for the congregation and the ministers themselves."

For the foreseeable future, church activities and supports will continue online for all congregation members, forcing all to adapt in the face of the pandemic ●



▲ Amanda Sorenson celebrating her outdoor work.



▲ Paul Eades: proud of his place in the city.

Fit, healthy and coping

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Rhonda Dredge
ECONOMY

Outdoor workers are now highly visible in the CBD and many are upbeat about the value of their jobs in the face of the COVID-19 crisis.

An estimated 6000 outdoor workers include those in construction, sanitation, recycling, waste disposal, tree maintenance, by-laws and horticulture.

In mid-April there were 5447 CFMEU members working at 44 construction sites in the CBD, 100 City of Melbourne sanitation officers, about 20 by-laws officers and 150 Citywide waste disposal and maintenance staff.

It was business as usual for many of these workers who enjoy the physical and mental benefits of working outdoors and were expressing pride in their contribution to the wellbeing of the city.

Construction foreman Paul Eades, at the Paragon apartments construction site on La Trobe St, was on the corner organising a delivery between rain showers.

“We’re helping keep the economy afloat,” he told *CBD News*. “We’re keeping construction workers active and employed and they, in turn, support local businesses.”

“There’s all sorts of guys here – cleaners, carpenters, plumbers, electricians. Everyone’s doing their bit. Construction guys go out and spend money and keep the micro-economy going.”

He said that jobs were now more complex. “These are different times. We have to be flexible.” Workers are not moving between sites, he said, but “it’s safer at work than in a supermarket.”

The CFMEU is open in Elizabeth St to sort out issues for workers and enforce safety regulations, which include cleaning, split shifts and distancing. Their motto is: Fear stops you.



▲ Ian Grant (left) meets with colleagues in Flagstaff Gardens.

“We’re helping keep the economy afloat. We’re keeping construction workers active and employed and they, in turn, support local businesses.”

Courage keeps you going.

Outdoor workers don’t usually get to express their views but now they are more willing “given the extraordinary times,” said horticulturalist, Amanda Sorenson, who was picking out the dead heads in the summer blooms on Swanston St.

“If you want plants when you get back you need to think 12 months in advance. They need constant attention,” she said.

The weather was getting a bit chilly and she was thinking about the next planting for the city’s popular floral displays.

“I’m active all the time,” she told *CBD News*. “There’s more opportunity for mindfulness in this sort of work. I live quite remotely and have a full lifestyle. I don’t do social media. I don’t live on Facebook.”

Citywide workers have also been active during the lockdown with some cleaning vehicles seen dashing along footpaths in the middle of the day.

“Access has improved due to reduced pedestrian and traffic movement,” said Matt Williams, Melbourne Citywide manager.

He said that recycling, rubbish removal and tree maintenance services were being maintained. “We have noticed an increase in domestic waste due to people remaining at home,” he said.

By-laws officers are also out and about, booking vehicles in red zones but allowing meetings of essential services to be held in parks providing social distancing is maintained.

On April 9, workers from the Westside Place construction site, at the corner of Lonsdale and Spencer streets, laid out glass samples on the grass of the Flagstaff Gardens for the new Dorset Hotel.

Architect Ian Grant, of CBD-based company Cottee Parker, got a break from his home office to sign off on the glass.

He said that Westside Place was at stage two and that, so far, the time frame and deliverables were on track, despite the reduction in the number of workers on lifts from 20 to four.

“Once this is over everything will go back to normal,” he said. “This virus won’t change the way we live. We’ll just be a bit more mindful of distance.” ●



Rhonda Dredge
JOURNALIST
RHONDA@CBDNEWS.COM.AU

Mass arrests for commercial burglaries

CRIME

Fifty-four people have been arrested in an operation targeting commercial burglaries in the CBD and surrounds.

Operation Nights Watch initially ran from April 1 to 8, with uniform and plain clothes officers actively patrolling in and around commercial businesses and industrial areas to disrupt criminal activity and opportunistic crime. The operation will continue in the CBD and Yarra.

Twenty-six warrants were executed for offences including burglary, theft and drug-related offences, including:

- On April 7, a 40-year-old Blackburn man was arrested while allegedly committing a burglary inside a commercial premises in Little Bourke St. Police seized stolen property. The man was bailed to appear at Melbourne Magistrates’ Court on June 26.
- On April 5, a 17-year-old male was arrested after entering a service station on Lygon St

in Carlton allegedly armed with a replica firearm and knife, and in possession of drugs. He was remanded to appear at a Children’s Court at a later date.

- On April 2, police were on patrol when they attempted to intercept a stolen car on Short St in Altona at about 11pm. The vehicle failed to pull over and was followed to an address on Victoria St in Brunswick at about 12.30am where three men were arrested. Two men have been charged with theft and theft of motor vehicle, and driving related offences. They were bailed to appear at court at a later date.

Officers checked more than 1300 people over the seven nights, intercepting 395 vehicles and impounding one vehicle.

Traffic-related offences resulted in 162 infringement notices being issued.

While committing offences, 110 offenders were also found to be in breach of the directions by the Chief Health Officer and were issued a \$1652 penalty notice.

Acting Superintendent Kelvin Gale said police across Victoria had been actively patrolling in-and-around commercial businesses and industrial areas to prevent and deter crime, including theft and property damage during the coronavirus pandemic.

“We know a lot of commercial premises – shops, bars, factories and other businesses – across Victoria are currently closed or running with reduced operating hours during this challenging time for the community,” A/Supt Gale said.

“Offenders often consider commercial burglaries a victimless crime and see stealing from businesses as not personally affecting anyone.”

“We know this is not the case with many business owners and operators suffering significantly when theft occurs, having adverse implications economically but also emotionally. This is even more particularly true during these financially challenging times.”

Victoria Police always encourages businesses

to have measures in place to reduce the risk of crime.

There are a number of crime prevention strategies that businesses can adopt to prevent damage to property, and prevent theft:

- CCTV is commonly acknowledged as a useful tool to prevent crime while also holding perpetrators accountable. The release of CCTV footage to the public also assists police in identifying offenders and witnesses and can be used as evidence in court.
- While premises are unattended, remove valuable items where possible from the building.
- Consider installing a safe that is securely fitted to a solid object. Safe keys and combinations should be stored securely and separately.
- To minimise damage to cash registers, leave your tills empty and open. This will avoid an offender damaging the cash register to find out there is nothing inside ●

Advertisement

CITY OF MELBOURNE FACILITIES AND SERVICES WHAT'S STILL OPEN, AND WHAT'S ON HOLD

At the City of Melbourne we are here to help. The safety of our communities, customers and staff is our top priority as we work to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

A taskforce has been established at Town Hall to implement the advice and actions from the Victorian Government and the National Cabinet for COVID-19 across our operations.

We've acted promptly on government advice to close certain facilities and services, and will continue to deliver essential services, while following the latest health and safety guidelines.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said many of Council's services perform an essential public health function so it is important they continue.

'Melbourne must remain a caring city that lends a helping hand during tough times. We know that this is a stressful time – so ensuring we continue to deliver for the community and look after those most at risk has never been more important,' the Lord Mayor said.

'Our organisation has done a significant amount of planning to ensure crucial services to the community are not severely impacted by this pandemic.

'We will do everything possible to continue to deliver essential services such as waste and recycling, services to older people, children's services, homelessness services and animal management.'

A number of Council's non-essential services have been closed temporarily to help reduce the spread of the virus in the community.

'Our libraries, recreation and cultural centres are important community meeting places so this is not a decision we take lightly,' the Lord Mayor said.

IMPORTANT

The following information about suspended services and closed facilities is correct at time of print, but things are changing quickly.

For an up-to-date list of frequently asked questions, including closures and adjustments to services, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/coronavirus



Our libraries offer many online services



Aged care services are continuing



Rubbish collection will continue as normal

WHICH CITY OF MELBOURNE FACILITIES AND SERVICES REMAIN OPEN?

Planning, building, waste and recycling and animal management will continue to operate as normal.

Aged care support services, meals and community groups

In-home services including domestic assistance, home maintenance, meals, personal care, respite, and individual social support are continuing.

Our teams are asking COVID-19 screening questions to ensure the health and safety of our clients, community and staff.

Childcare facilities

All Council's childcare facilities will continue to operate as usual at this time. Childcare is considered an essential community service. Advice from the Victorian Government is that all essential services remain operational for now.

The City of Melbourne will continue to heed the advice of the Chief Health Officer and the Department of Health and Human Services as the situation evolves.

Queen Victoria Market

Queen Victoria Market remains open for fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and fish, deli items, dairy, bread, eggs and other key essentials.

The market is open on Tuesdays and Thursday to Sunday.

Those who can shop safely at the market, directly from stallholders, should continue to do so whilst adhering to safe social distancing and practicing good hygiene.

For those who are unable to shop in-person, the market has launched a new pre-order and pickup service allowing people to shop from the comfort of their homes and cars.

Orders can be collected from 8am on market days (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday) from the pickup zone on Queen Street, opposite D Shed.

For more information, visit qvm.com.au



Queen Victoria Market remains open

WHICH CITY OF MELBOURNE FACILITIES HAVE CLOSED FOR NOW?

Melbourne Town Hall and other Council buildings will be closed to the general public until further notice.

Arts and cultural venues

Meat Market, Signal, ArtPlay and Arts House are closed until further notice.

Libraries

City Library in Flinders Lane, Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre in Carlton, Library at The Dock in Docklands, East Melbourne, North Melbourne and Southbank libraries are closed until further notice.

You can continue to access library collections online, using your library membership number. This includes thousands of free e-books, audiobooks, e-magazines and learning resources.

If you don't have a library membership you can sign up at melbourne.vic.gov.au/libraries

You will not be fined for books due back during the closure, and reservations will be held until our libraries re-open.

Maternal and child health

All our maternal and child health centres are closed to the public. We will replace face-to-face home visits and centre appointments with telephone or electronic consultations.

If you have an existing appointment, maternal and child health staff will contact you to offer and consultation via phone, FaceTime or Skype. Please phone 9340 1444 or email mchbookings@melbourne.vic.gov.au if you have any questions.

Neighbourhood houses

All neighbourhood centres and neighbourhood houses are temporarily closed to the public, though some programs and services usually run at neighbourhood houses will run remotely.

Connect with your local neighbourhood house by phone, email or social media for more information.

Parks, gardens, basketball courts, playgrounds and equipment

All playgrounds, basketball courts and skate parks are closed for now. Our 480 hectares of parks and gardens are still open for essential daily exercise, but all outdoor fitness equipment is closed.

Please remember to maintain 1.5 metres distance from other people when exercising and avoid gathering in groups.

Pools and recreation centres

Melbourne City Baths, Kensington Recreation Centre, Carlton Baths, North Melbourne Recreation Centre and The Venny are now closed until further notice.

Your membership will automatically be placed on free suspension during this time that we are closed, so you won't be charged.

Visitor services

All City of Melbourne visitor centres are closed, and the visitor services offered by our red coat ambassadors have been suspended, until further notice.



More information and the latest updates on City of Melbourne services can be found at melbourne.vic.gov.au/coronavirus



Childcare facilities are operating as normal at this time



Caring for one of our oldest residents

WORDS BY *Isabelle Harris*
ENVIRONMENT

Amid all the current stresses of COVID-19, arborist Dan Kollenburg is continuing to care for Australia's oldest olive tree, which is forming part of a new development at Wesley Place in the CBD.

Mr Kollenburg studied arboriculture at Burnley College, which is part of the University of Melbourne, and has previously worked with the City Melbourne (among other councils) on a vast array of conservation, risk assessment and data projects.

Since developer Charter Hall began development of its Wesley Place project on Lonsdale St in 2016, the arborist has been checking in on a 180-year-old olive tree at the site fortnightly to ensure that its health is not impacted by construction work and its growth is monitored.

He said the project's engineers and designers

had ensured his recommendations were implemented as part of the development, with the tree to be central to a new green space for CBD residents and workers to enjoy adjacent to Charter Hall's new commercial office buildings and Wesley Church.

While noting that working in a confined space made addressing the tree's specific needs more difficult, he said the results of his specialist care were showing, with the tree's increased health status having led to significant fruit development over the past few seasons.

"With older trees, you have to tread more lightly around them," he said.

He told *CBD News* that part of his responsibility in protecting the tree included ensuring that there was overall very little excavation within the tree protection zone during construction, while using hydro-excavation techniques to investigate root growth. He said he had also provided important recommendations around the thickness of paving around the tree.

When leaves looked a little yellow in 2017

(usually a sign of nutrient stress), he installed an irrigation system, mulch and protection fencing around the tree, which boosted its health status.

If branches need to be pruned, he said he organised specialist tree climbers to come in.

Regional development director at Charter Hall Simon Stockfeld said the olive tree and the surrounding greenery were major influences of the space's redesign.

"The heritage-listed olive tree itself has been a vital part of our work to restore the legacies of those who have been before us, but also leave a new legacy for future generations to reflect on," he said.

The tree was previously surrounded by bitumen in a carpark close to the Wesley Church on Lonsdale St.

While the olive tree is of special importance to the project, Mr Kollenburg said the same treatment should be given to every significant tree.

"I think our heritage trees should be given the same protections as heritage buildings," he said ●

"The heritage-listed olive tree itself has been a vital part of our work to restore the legacies of those who have been before us, but also leave a new legacy for future generations to reflect on."



Virtual support through isolation

WORDS BY *Tamara Clark*
LOCAL NEWS

Amid the COVID-19 lockdown, Melbourne's culture continues to flourish. The streets are empty but Melbournians are still learning, creating and recreating from the comfort of their own homes.

What better time to tour a gallery than when it is entirely empty? All National Gallery of Victoria's (NGV's) exhibitions have been translated into virtual experiences with free and self-guided tours awaiting online.

The Australian National Portrait Gallery has followed suit and moved all displays online featuring a wide variety of exhibitions. Or, if history is more your thing, take a virtual tour of the history display at Melbourne Exhibition Centre or the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria's online museum.

Maybe it is time to experiment with a new kind of freedom; one found in the world of gaming. Little Lonsdale Street's Games Laboratory is continuing to unite gamers, but in a different way. Instead of the traditional and in-person competitions, the centre is now hosting online gaming events. No matter what you play, or if you have never played before, the Lab is a place for everyone, from Dungeons and Dragons fanatics to classical board games buffs.

For those going a little stir crazy, Move Yoga (Melbourne) is hosting online classes so individuals can mediate their way through isolation. Move is streaming 30 live classes each week. Or, if music helps you relax, The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) is performing free, virtual concerts through its website.

The Royal Botanic Gardens is posting wellbeing activities, exercises for children, gardening advice, flora updates and work at the gardens via its Facebook page, while the Melbourne Zoo is streaming live videos of snow leopard cubs online. However, the outdoor leopard camera is not working and the zoo apologised for leaving big cats in charge of a small camera!

Tickets to the Melbourne International Comedy Festival have been refunded and The Comedy Care Package is now being streamed for free through ABC iView. The two-hour special is a compilation of Melbourne's best past stand-up performances.

Over 19,000 books are available through the State Library's free eBook collection. Membership is required to access the collection but the good news is, it's free. Becoming a library member comes with other perks including a monthly newsletter, being the first to know about library events, news and exclusive offers, access to over five million collection items, free access to thousands of online databases and e-resources, access to meeting rooms and creative technology studios, personalised options when you use the catalogue and the ability to order digital copies and extracts of Library collection items.

Why not create the ultimate self-isolation date with ACMI's *Virtual Cinémathèque* every Tuesday? The films were chosen by the Melbourne Cinémathèque Committee and ACMI's film department and annotations will be available to complement screenings so, get the corn popping!

Or, you could try your hand in the kitchen. Vue de Monde is streaming online master classes with executive chef Hugh Allen. To cook along at home, Vue to You offers delivery of baking kits up to 10 kilometres from the CBD restaurant ●

For more visit:
whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au

CBD's tallest tower completed

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
BUILDING

Malaysian property developer UEM Sunrise Berhad officially completed its \$800 million flagship Australian project Aurora Melbourne Central on Latrobe St last month.

The mixed-use tower and tallest building in the CBD at 86 storeys (289 metres) is already home to almost 2000 new residents and offers office suites, 2540 sqm of new retail space and 252 serviced apartments sold to Scape Australia.

UEM Sunrise managing director and CEO, Anwar Syahrin Abdul Ajib, said the company was delighted with the finished result of its flagship Australian project.

"UEM Sunrise is very proud to have delivered such a high-quality, landmark building in the heart of Melbourne that successfully offers thousands of residents, workers and visitors unparalleled convenience and connectivity," he said.

"It will be rewarding to see the Aurora and CBD community make use of this world-class building and take full advantage of its direct connection to neighbouring amenities."

Aurora Melbourne Central was designed by architect Elenberg Fraser and constructed by Probuild.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said, "Aurora Melbourne Central has unique design features and adds a distinctive element to Melbourne's skyline. The ever changing skyline is a demonstration of the confidence businesses and investors have in our economy." ●

Aurora Melbourne
Developed by *UEM Sunrise Berhad*
Designed by *Elenberg Fraser*
Constructed by *ProBuild*

289
metres tall
86 storeys

959
residential apartments
252 serviced apartments

3460 sqm
commercial office and retail space



SALVOS

METRO TUNNEL



Supporting our most vulnerable

The Salvation Army Melbourne has been operating a café, 22 hours a day, seven days a week, from its Bourke St premises.

We were seeing over 500 people through the café each day. Many were homeless, others were at risk of homelessness, and many were dealing with complex mental health issues. There was a myriad of different stories and drivers for why they each presented to our café. But the one common denominator that underpinned all of their stories was loneliness. Social isolation from family and friends drove many of those that attended our café to claim that we, at the Salvos, were their only family. They literally had no one else to share their life with.

When the story of COVID-19 and its spread of death and destruction started to filter out of Wuhan, we became deeply concerned. Every day at the Salvos at Bourke St we were seeing 60 to 80 elderly Chinese at our café. Our initial fear was that this group was the impending target of COVID-19. Health experts assured us that the cohort that we saw were safe because they did not travel or move in close proximity to those who did travel. Their reassurances were quickly shattered when the virus arrived on our shores and the majority of the 500 people who attended our café were seen to be highly susceptible to contracting COVID-19.

The complicating factor that overlaid the deadly spread of this virus was that the health experts and politicians were claiming that the only way to allay the spread was through social distancing and social isolation.

How on earth do you explain to some of the loneliest people you have met that the only way to save their life is for them to do the very thing that has sapped life from so many of them for most of their living memory? I still recall feeling sick at having to tell these people to isolate.

Denise*, a regular at our café and many similar centres, sat in her wheelchair, sobbing, saying, "Brendan, if I stay inside four walls on my own, I will completely lose it. You don't understand, I just need to see people. Please don't take that from me."

Our café had to close its doors so that we could enforce social isolation requirements. However, we continue to serve meals through the window of our café. It's actually not about the food for most people. It's about that one thing that many of us take for granted - social connection.

We now have workers ringing hundreds of people every day. Checking on their physical and mental health, and yes, their social health. That phone call is often the only human contact that many of these people have.



We now have workers ringing hundreds of people every day. Checking on their physical and mental health, and yes, their social health. That phone call is often the only human contact that many of these people have.



Our team has also taken to the streets during the day. Over the past three weeks, they have helped 203 people move off the streets and into emergency accommodation in hotels around Melbourne. Some would think that the mission was accomplished, but many in regards, it has only just begun. There is one hotel where 162 homeless people are currently being accommodated. The only kitchen facilities available to them are three microwaves. Our team is now delivering meals to all of these people, and yes, engaging in meaningful conversation with all of them. We hear stories of people in the general community complaining about a lack of internet connection, hence limiting their ability to stream movies. Others are livid that there is a lack of toilet paper or pasta. Next time you hear these stories, please think of those who literally have no-one to share their concerns, fears and uncertainty with.

*Name has been changed ●



Major Brendan Nottle
 COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE
 SALVATION ARMY MELBOURNE -
 PROJECT 614
BRENDAN.NOTTLE@
SALVATIONARMY.ORG.AU
SALVATIONARMY.ORG.AU/
MELBOURNE614/



Metro Tunnel workers stay vigilant

Construction is continuing on the Metro Tunnel Project, with many significant milestones being achieved.

While we continue to build the twin tunnels and five new stations, strict protocols are in place to protect the health and safety of construction workers and the community during the coronavirus crisis.

This includes modifying construction activities to follow social distancing requirements (pictured), where workers maintain a safe distance of 1.5 metres from each other.

Our sites also have enhanced industrial cleaning and additional hygiene measures to ensure we continue to deliver the project safely.

Rail Projects Victoria (RPV) CEO Evan Tattersall said, "Rail Projects Victoria and its contractors have comprehensive health and safety policies in place to protect the health and safety of all team members, including physical distancing and other measures where appropriate for specific construction tasks to be undertaken safely."

At Flinders Quarter in the CBD, next to the Young & Jackson Hotel on Swanston St, a third road header was recently launched 20 metres underground at Town Hall Station as tunnelling ramps up across the three sites.

The road headers – operating from Flinders Quarter, City Square and Federation Square – are excavating underground passenger connections and the station's main central cavern deep under Swanston St, with acoustic enclosures and sheds in place over the work sites to minimise noise and dust.

Also at Flinders Quarter, another milestone was recently achieved with the completion of perimeter piling. Taking just under 12 months, a total of 182 piles were constructed underground to provide the necessary ground support before major excavation begins at this site as part of station entrance construction.

When the Metro Tunnel is operational, Flinders Quarter will also have an underground pedestrian connection to Flinders Street Station, making it easy for people to transfer between City Loop and Metro Tunnel services.

Behind the scenes at State Library Station

State Library Station's new central train platform is taking shape 30 metres below the northern end of Swanston St.

Two-metre-high permanent concrete structures have been installed within the station's central cavern to support the future train platform.

Meanwhile, 50 10-tonne steel columns (pictured) have also been installed to support the cavern before excavation of the two rail tunnels later this year.

Both State Library and Town Hall stations in the CBD are being built using state-of-the-art excavation machines, known as road headers.

These machines are fitted with mounted cutting heads that will mine the stations' triconic caverns – a central cavern with overlapping rail tunnels either side ●

For more information:
metrotunnel.vic.gov.au



CRITIC

A product of the virus

Virus is a word on everyone's lips, even those of three-year-olds and literary scholars, and ideas about viruses spread incredibly rapidly across the globe.

First comes the fear and prejudice, then the science, then the treatment, then the experience is interpreted.

We are still moving into the science stage of the COVID-19 outbreak.

One of the best science commentaries was published last month in the latest *London Review of Books* which explains how COVID-19 works through its ribonucleic acid (RNA).

The RNA in COVID-19 is a chain of nucleotides that is so long it is close to collapsing. It, therefore, needs some clever tricks to survive. These tricks are called a pseudoknot and slippery sequence.

The pseudoknot folds into a convoluted knot-like structure that poses a temporary roadblock for the protein synthesis machinery of the host cell by allowing the viral genome to be read in two different ways simultaneously.

From a literary point of view, it will take a lot of time to turn this information into knowledge, hence the prediction that the first COVID-19 novel will be three years off as writers assimilate the implications at both a figurative and literal sense.

Last month, Penguin released a novel that is not a COVID-19 narrative but it does deal with contemporary responses to another deadly virus – HIV, which became an epidemic in 1980.

Forty years later, there is still no cure for HIV but you can keep yourself and your partner safe during sex by using a physical barrier, such as a condom or by taking PrEP, an anti-HIV drug, (if you are HIV-negative); and by taking antiretroviral drugs (if you are HIV-positive) to reduce your viral load to an "undetectable" level.



▲ *The Adversary*, Ronnie Scott, Penguin, 2020

The complications of this scenario work through a novel by RMIT lecturer in creative writing, Ronnie Scott, as it deals with the relationships between those who are HIV-positive and those who can't be bothered taking PrEP.

The Adversary focuses on the fears that still exist among a small group of friends and the way the stigma of the HIV virus infects their relationships.

The protagonist practices a form of self-isolation, not going out, reluctant to party, suspicious of others yet hooking up with them over online dating sites to chat.

He lives in Brunswick and even travelling to Richmond is beyond the pale. A potential boyfriend is nicknamed Richmond Man, as he is a strange, rather backward species not up to the pater of the in-group.

There's a form of coded language in the pick-up scene related to PrEP. The protagonist is lazy and prefers to keep his distance until his desire gets the better of him at the climax of the narrative.

This is a graceful novel, never obvious, always negotiated and understated when it comes to action so the reader is left imagining.

At its heart is the intimate account of a young, impressionable lit student wedded emotionally to his older, more articulate housemate Dan.

Dan is an amusing character, caring and jokey but ultimately trying to distance himself from the clingy hero who desperately seeks his advice on everything.

First person narratives can be clunky but this one is dialogic rather than descriptive, in that it is narrated with the god-like figure of Dan constantly in mind. What will Dan think? What will the reader think?

Is Dan a manipulative bastard or a product of the virus/human relationship? ●



Rhonda Dredge

JOURNALIST

RHONDA@CBDNEWS.COM.AU



Lunch break

Open for take away
12pm-3pm

Shanghai Street
Xiaolongbao & Dumplings
Corrs Lane

STREET ART

▼ *Painting by Adrian Doyle Sacrifice and the dream, mixed media paint on canvas.*



Isolated artist

So, what is isolation like for an artist?

It has been boring with no parties and openings and all the social events that fill the creative Melbourne calendar cancelled.

This has been hard for artists, for as socially awkward as artists are, they are social creatures, and thrive on all the wine that openings have to offer. But with the drinks packed away and the awkward conversation put on hold, what is an artist to do?

An artist's life can be isolating at the best of times, between our weird personalities, our odd hours and our obsessive interest in our own art, we often find ourselves isolated and locked in the studio for hours.

When street art spilled through Melbourne in the early 2000s it changed the way artists interacted. It created a community of like-minded creatives working together for the cause of urban art.

Street art changed the idea of the isolated artist, locked away for hours in some warehouse occasionally seeing each other in the stairwell.

Street artists came together creating a large community that nurtured, collaborated and mentored. Street artists were initially very open, collaborative and sharing.

Over the years this changed. As street art became such a huge community, it became harder to know everyone and the intimacy of the scene changed.

One of the things about isolation and this virus is how it will affect artists in the future.

Images of cities empty, pop-up hospitals, people in PPE suits, masks and lines of bodies will influence artists by changing the icons and imagery that we are used too. This will have a profound effect on the art that is produced

in the future. I have an exhibition coming up later in the year and its will be called *Suburban Isolation*.

“

It will only be in retrospect that we will truly understand the impact that the unprecedented times have on artists and the art that they create.

”

Have an awesome month.

Doyle

theblenderstudios.com ●



Adrian Doyle

ADRIAN DOYLE IS THE BLENDER STUDIOS

LEARN MORE ON
THEBLENDERSTUDIOS.COM

Staying open

The small community of business people at the top of Bourke St is keeping itself going by staying open and giving each other encouragement through the hard times.

Carmel Dwyer has kept normal hours at her newsagent even though takings are down 80-85 per cent.

A neighbour drives her in from West Brunswick so she doesn't have to catch the tram.

And Simon Hartley, across the road on Crossley St, has turned Becco, his café, into a produce store specialising in Italian pasta, flour and brilliant red tomatoes.

Other nearby businesses such as Pellegrini's have tried staying open with take-away and there's a coffee window that is sometimes open opposite Becco.

"The neighbours hope to open next week to do pizza," Carmel said, giving The Mess Hall a plug as well. Usually they have tables and chairs outside where she likes to socialise.

Most face-to-face contact, albeit at a distance, now happens over Carmel's Lotto counter where customers come, looking for a change of luck and a bit of cheek.

"What the hell do you want?" she asked a customer, one of the building boys. "I won't be here for long," he replied. "I never win anything."

Carmel has sold 12 first-division Tattslotto tickets and she's proud of that achievement. She hopes to sell one during the lockdown. Two bottles of champagne are on the shelf behind her, gifts from past winners.

"When the shelf's full, we'll shut the shop and party," she said. "Here it's like a family. I've got beautiful neighbours and customers. Quite a few people are friends. It's very social in this area."

The papers are still being delivered to her shop as usual. "The oldies need them. They



▲ Carmel Dwyer at her counter in Mitty's Authorised Newsagency.



▲ Simon Hartley at his produce store in Crossley St.



Most face-to-face contact, albeit at a distance, now happens over Carmel's Lotto counter where customers come, looking for a change of luck and a bit of cheek.



don't use the internet." Everyone is welcome, even a mud lark who chirps on her doorstep and collects a biscuit.

Tony, who usually sits on the pavement across Bourke St doing the crossword, is still in his old place but he's had to adapt to the changed conditions. He's standing, instead of sitting.

Carmel has been through tough times in the 40 years she has been at the newsagent but this is the toughest.

"I've never been here and seen the city so empty. It's something none of us have experienced. I decided to stay open."

She thinks there were a few more people about last week and office workers are occasionally popping in but she thinks people are still extremely nervous.

"I will admit that I've got quite a lot of hand sanitiser. I'm not going shopping in any of the big stores."

Instead, she's directing customers to Becco where Simon's income has now been reduced by 90 per cent.

"We used to have a produce store here so it was easy to turn it back into one," he said. "This is the dry store for the café."

Instead of buying produce for the café, he is selling directly to customers and draws from the café's supplies when he runs out.

"It's something to do and you can come to work," he said ●



Rhonda Dredge
JOURNALIST
RHONDA@CBDNEWS.COM.AU

QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET

Market launches pickup service

Queen Victoria Market (QVM) has established a pre-order and pickup service to give shoppers access to fresh produce while maintaining social distancing.

As many businesses adjust to the unique situation amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the market - a CBD institution - is also adapting, allowing market-goers to pick up weekly essentials without leaving their car.

The system allows shoppers to place an order with their favoured traders (either online, over the phone or by email), agree on a convenient time, then retrieve their goods from the new designated pickup zone on Queen St (opposite D Shed).

At the time of publishing, over 40 stalls had already made themselves available to the pre-order/pickup service.

These traders included:

- Fruit and vegetable;
- Meat, poultry and seafood;
- Deli and bread; and
- Specialty goods.

QVM CEO Stan Liacos said the move was necessary in the difficult business climate.

"The new pre-order and pickup service sees Queen Vic Market traders adapt and come together to ensure Melbourne shoppers continue to have access to the best food in Victoria and everyday essentials," he said.

While the market itself remains open to customers, Mr Liacos said it was important to provide alternative arrangements for those who could not continue to shop as normal.

"The Queen Victoria Market has been serving the community since 1878 and we continue to be open and here for Melburnians. Those who can shop safely at the market, directly from stallholders, should continue to do so while adhering to safe social distancing and practicing good hygiene. But the new pre-order and pickup service allows those who are unable to shop in-person to do so from the comfort of their homes and cars and support local, small, family businesses like those at the market," Mr Liacos said.

The pickup service is available from 8am-2pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday (the market is closed on Mondays and Wednesdays), and from 8am-3pm on weekends.

Until the end of June, the market and City of Melbourne have combined to offer 100 per cent rent relief for traders.

The arrangement had initially included 50 per cent relief for non-food related traders and 25 per cent for produce and food-related traders but was quickly upped to reflect the tough economic situation that all small businesses currently face ●

For further info and a full list of traders offering a pick-up service, visit:
qvm.com.au/pickup

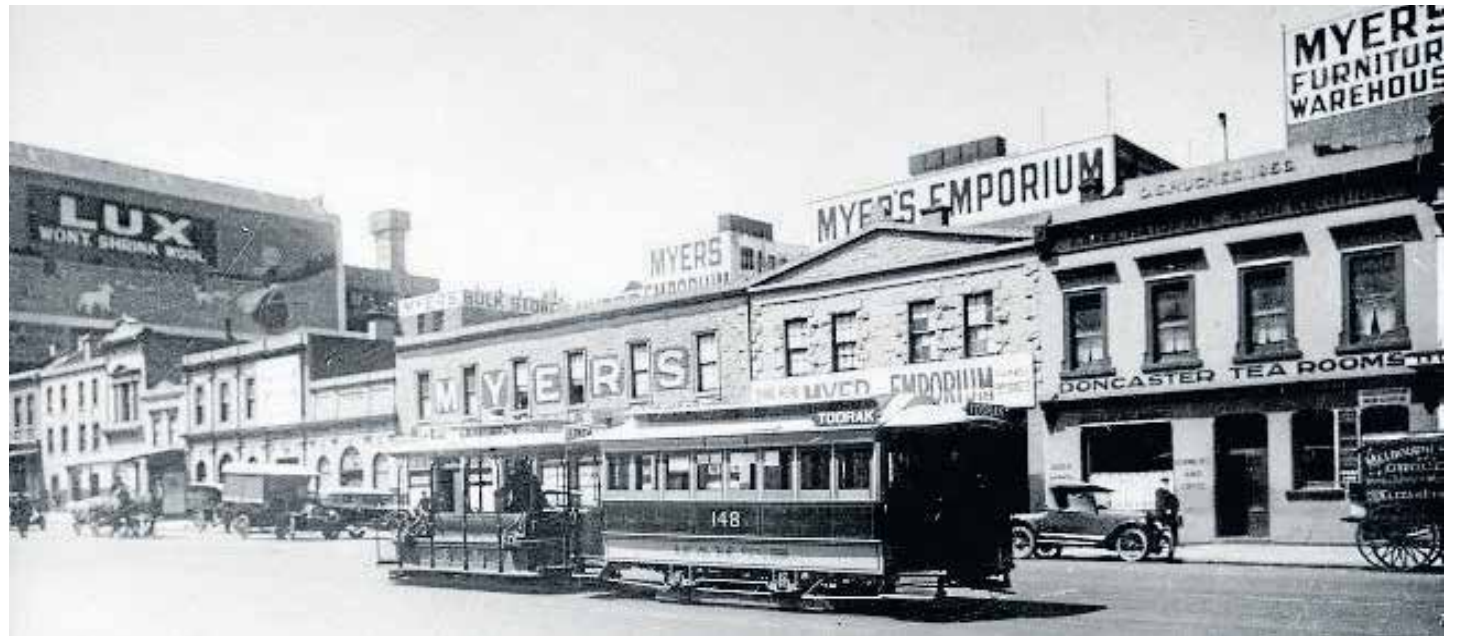


HISTORY

Making way for thoroughly modern Melbourne

This photograph, taken in about 1924, represents a time capsule of Melbourne as it was just after World War One.

► Toorak cable tram on Lonsdale St c1924. RHSV NEG-1021.



The city was on the cusp of a building revival as a society recovering from the devastating effects of war looked towards its future with confidence and hope for better times ahead.

During this period public transport was transformed with the introduction of electric services on trams and trains, but the last vestiges of the old cable tram system were still in evidence, as you can see here. In February 1924, a new section of cable tram line was opened in Lonsdale St. It had been almost 40 years since cable trams had replaced horse-drawn carriages. That had been a “wow” moment for Melburnians who could hardly believe they were travelling in a vehicle that did not require a horse or an engine.

Now electric trams were taking over, but it was to be a long period of replacement. The Toorak cable tram closed in October 1926, but it was not until October 1940 that the last cable tram ran in Melbourne and the last tracks were removed years later in February 1962. Here you see a Toorak cable tram with its open sided car (the dummy) on the left and closed carriage on the right.

This is probably one of the last photographs to capture the streetscape before radical modernising took place in the mid-1920s, largely on account of a huge expansion and building program by the Myer Emporium. At that stage the company was still led by businessman and philanthropist Sidney Myer and under his leadership the company bought up properties between Bourke and Lonsdale streets to realise its vision of a massive retail outlet like no other – a series of interconnected buildings that dominated that city block and whose window displays, especially its Christmas windows, captured the imaginations of Melburnians and lured them inside to spend, spend, spend.

A newspaper advertisement for Myer published in the *Argus* newspaper in February 1924 shows the importance of that business in the 1920s when a number of buildings from the goldrush era were being demolished to make way for Myer's new, imposing multi-storeyed buildings that eventually covered several city blocks. The company was quick to exploit the presence of the additional tram route and proclaimed that “special provision has been made

for two New Entrances to Myer's!” as though the changes had taken place especially with their business in mind.

This is the block between Elizabeth St and Swanston St and the image looks south, as indicated by the sign on the wall behind the tram – “Thru here to the Myer Emporium P.O. Place and Bourke Street.” The large building on the left fronts Swanston St and the advertising slogan “Lux won't shrink wool” on its rear wall dominates this part of the image. This popular ad for Lux soap from the early 1900s featuring a Little Bo Peep-like figure and some of her sheep, reminds us that this was an Australia that rode on the sheep's back.

You probably noticed the fire hydrant in the foreground of the image, a common sight on Melbourne's streets until the 1970s. What you probably didn't notice was the building just to the right of the tram. It's the Doncaster Tearooms, 323-325 Lonsdale St, and it was built in 1856 by seed and grain merchant D.S. Hughes.

The Tearooms (and the Greek Club that rented the upstairs space) came to an abrupt

and rather spectacular end early one morning in May 1925, thanks to the Myer excavation work taking place on the adjoining block. It was 5.30am and proprietor John Schaffner had begun his morning routine, preparing for the 200 or so customers who would arrive over the next two hours to have breakfast, when one side of the building collapsed and fell into the excavation hole next door. A dramatic end to a building that had stood there for 70 years and an unexpected further change to the streetscape.

This image, taken some time between February 1924 and May 1925, represents a wave of city demolitions in which the old gave way to the new and many of the buildings of the goldrush era disappeared as society looked towards a new age of modernity and prosperity ●



Dr. Cheryl Griffin
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

RESIDENTS 3000

In the time of COVID-19

If the restrictions go on for a long time, will our way of living change?

Life disrupted with staying at home, social distancing, constant hand washing, no public gatherings and probably an unconscious worry “am I to be the next poor victim?” However, the population in general has become acutely aware of the need for healthy habits. Will that result in less instances of the common cold this year? More people are likely to have ‘flu injections. One would surmise that there may be less downtime or even deaths from the ‘flu.

Have you noticed that the CBD air is so much fresher and cleaner since the reduction in traffic? If you live in high rise, you can now see forever it seems. Of course, Melbourne weather in April is usually just wonderful. The weather doesn't know about the virus.

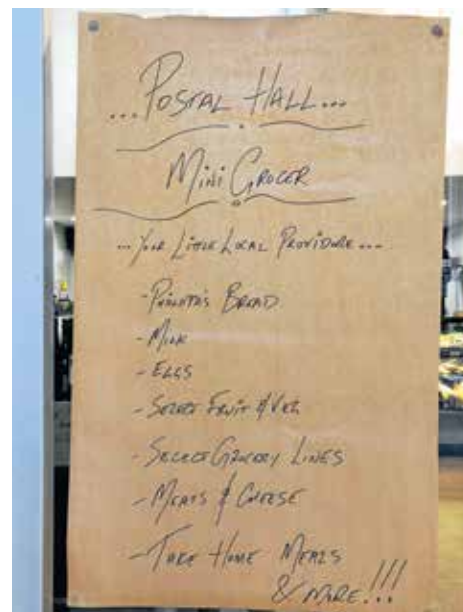
Many people are working from home. It is much more comfortable to work from home if your profession allows for it. With online collaboration – video and screen share, home working can be most productive. Take away the commute and there is a lot more time for family and the kids. Possibly, more time for work too. Could the aftermath of COVID-19 be that our way of working changes? It may be possible to do away with the concept of 9-5 and integrate work with general life, centred around home and family?

In your world, have you noticed that you are communicating with friends and family much more through social media than before? Maybe, that will become an increasing trend too.



Children are staying at home. Some parents have said that they are getting to know their children a lot better as they are having to spend more time with them. Children are communicating with their friends online. They play collaboratively online. The ones I know, do not seem to be fazed by the lack of interaction in real life.

However, it may be quite hard on parents to do home schooling especially when their jobs require them to be away from home. Teaching is a specialist skill and many parents will be ill-equipped to cope. Maybe online teaching like Australia's famous “School of the Air” will work? That will take some time to organise and is not ideal. Our children's education is really important, and this is a dilemma that at the time of writing, does not have a satisfactory solution.



All is not lost, however. Human beings have an enormous capacity to adapt. For example, our local coffee shop, Postal Hall, has become a mini-grocer overnight, with not only essentials such as eggs, milk, bread and cheese, but some gourmet items and delicious take-away meals. Special fish and chips on Friday night, to take back to your cosy apartment together with the famous Melbourne coffee or other beverages.

Australia Post are noting extra deliveries to their convenient parcel lockers. More buy-online is happening. Maybe these new ways of working will become the norm? Physical stores will continue to re-do how they present their wares in the time of COVID-19.

Right now, we have an “infodemic” of COVID-19 news and thoughts to the exclusion of all else. For some time, CBD residents will need to learn to live with the problem.



Think social distancing measures becoming even more widespread. We are going to need more and faster testing for the virus. Smart phone alerts that identify hotspots to avoid. Sanitisers mounted on telegraph poles and in shops for general use.

This virus does not yet realise, that we humans are much more resilient and inventive than it thinks. We will win this war! ●



Sue Saunders
VICE PRESIDENT OF RESIDENTS 3000 MELBOURNE



OC support in a time of COVID-19 - a tale of two cities ...

Wuhan, London and New York – these are among the cities hardest hit by COVID-19 – and all feature high-rise living.

Living in close proximity in this time of social-distancing would not seem ideal.

Our regular exposure to high-touch areas (such as lift buttons), our use of shared facilities (such as mail rooms) and our need to navigate around several hundred neighbours (who are now working from home) have led some to describe our vertical villages as being akin to “cruise ships on land”.

And the responsibility for steering these “high-rise cruise ships” has fallen to building management, directed by their volunteer owners’ corporations (OCs).

As is frequently stated, this is uncharted territory.

And as chair of a large OC, I personally have struggled to navigate the array of issues that we are encountering, which include:

- Interpreting public health orders: what is a “reasonable excuse” and whose responsibility is it to enforce?
- Changing decision-making procedures: ensuring video meetings (including notifications, access and security) are legally conducted;
- Promoting safety and cleanliness: determining criteria for closure of recreational facilities (pools, gyms, libraries) and exceptions to these;
- Deliveries: negotiating access channels;
- Disclosure: determining legal requirements for confirmed and suspected COVID-19 infections in terms of health and privacy;
- Strata levies and finances: designing procedures to support owners in financial

difficulties without compromising building operations;

- Short-term letting: investigating options in the face of “self-isolation lets”;
- Renovations and common property work: determining contractual obligations and protocols to mitigate risks;
- Waste management: crafting procedures for increased waste volumes and dealing with waste from infected and/or self-isolated units;
- Resident experience: use of by-laws to manage smoking and noise; and
- Community wellbeing: identification and curation of support services.

In view of the foregoing, and given that high-rise living is a significant and fast-growing part of all Australian capital cities, should OCs expect some tailored support in this time of COVID-19?

Agreeing that we should is Amanda Farmer, a specialist strata lawyer and Fellow and Council Member of the Australian College of Strata Lawyers. Amanda believes our sector has a great need for clear guidelines, warning that:

“Otherwise, there will be a lack of compliance and the virus could really spread, given such large groups of people living so closely together.”

And true to her beliefs, Ms Farmer is doing her part, conducting regular podcasts on topics related to strata living and COVID-19.

Unfortunately for us, these are from a NSW perspective.

And this is just one area where our NSW OC counterparts have support.

Take the issue of short stays

From April 10, 2020 in NSW, a change to strata laws helps OCs manage short-stays as they are now able to adopt by-laws that limit their operation in strata schemes. There are restrictions, but compare that to the state of play in Victoria where changes to our *Owners’ Corporations Act 2006* (introduced in February 2019), in effect, simply provided a complaints mechanism for “unruly parties”.

So, what other support is on offer for our NSW counterparts?

From the City of Sydney (CoS) comes services such as a dedicated unit focused upon apartment living which offer programs such as Smart Green Apartments and Strata Skills 101 Workshops. Through these programs, CoS is well connected to their OC community, which allowed them to quickly formulate and disseminate COVID-19 information sheets and, most recently, host a webinar, entitled: “Safe and harmonious apartment living during COVID-19”. This webinar covered – from a NSW perspective – many of the issues with which mine and other Victorian OCs have been struggling. And the session even included a (NSW) Template By-Law for Waste Disposal (prepared by Amanda Farmer in partnership with CoS).

So, how does City of Melbourne (CoM) compare?

CoM has no unit focused upon high-rise living and to date, I have not received any tailored information regarding the issues I previously listed.

To give them their due, CoM has been tremendously active in supporting the business

sector. They have designed an extensive economic support package for businesses affected by COVID-19 which includes grants, rent relief, fee waiving and reduction in some registration processes.

And they have just hosted a virtual business support summit – just like CoS did for their strata community.

Two points bear noting:

Around 83 per cent of residents within the City of Melbourne live in apartments;

These vertical communities are acknowledged as encountering a distinct set of challenges.

So, here’s the thing.

High-rise living is the dominant way of living in the City of Melbourne.

OCs are volunteers who are responsible for managing these complexes.

We need – and deserve – attention ●



Janette Corcoran

JANETTE CORCORAN IS ANAPARTMENT LIVING EXPERT.

LEARN MORE ON FACEBOOK.COM/SKYPADLIVING/

WE LIVE HERE

Microorganism dismantles Airbnb - will it ever recover?

A big story to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic has been its impact on the Airbnb juggernaut.

Airbnb has been valued at more than \$US30 billion and this year it was preparing to be listed as a public company. Now the impact of the coronavirus has delayed its plans.

Since the news of the rapidly spreading infectious and deadly disease caused by COVID-19, a shocked and grieving world has watched many industries approach collapse. Tourism-related operations have, understandably, been the worst hit – the accommodation industry among the foremost economic casualties.

The freeze on tourism and movement in general imposed by affected countries trying to control the spread of the virus has seen Airbnb bookings in COVID-19 hotspots crash. Since January, Beijing has seen a drop of 96 per cent, Seoul, South Korea 46 per cent, and Rome 41 per cent.

In many countries Airbnb’s website has now been shut down, and vacant houses have been used to accommodate stranded travellers caught up in the world-wide lockdowns.

Already suspicious neighbours are up in arms over the potential that short-term renters may spread the deadly virus.

In Australia, Airbnb properties are flooding back onto the long-term rental market, as short-term visitors dry up due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The Airbnb hosts who have become reliant on income-generating properties to pay their bills are being bled dry by a lack of business.

Globally, Airbnb has favoured travellers by allowing refunds, outside its own published guidelines. In doing so, the company has angered its hosts who have been left bearing the brunt of the cancellations.



Airbnb has launched a relief fund for hosts struggling to make ends meet. A total of \$US17 million has been contributed to the fund by employees, investors and founders; and grants of up to \$5000 will be made to hosts most in need and who also satisfy eligibility criteria.



One of the eligibility criteria published by Airbnb says the host must “Only share their primary or secondary residence—no more than two active listings”

This criterion will exclude all apartment-based short-term letting operators who have more than one rental listing. That business model seems to be doomed by both the pandemic and Airbnb’s lack of financial support – a loss not mourned by long-suffering permanent residents.

If Airbnb had also considered the wear and tear caused to common property by short-term letting in residential apartment buildings – many no doubt managed by some of their hosts

- We Live Here might not have been so opposed to its activities.

So where to now for Airbnb?

It will be many months, if not years before we know the full toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry and the long-term impact it will have on “disruptors” such as Airbnb. However, if Airbnb and other short-term letting platforms do survive, we hope that the review of the *Owners’ Corporation Amendment (Short-stay Accommodation Bill) 2006*, due in 2021, will lead to proper regulation of the industry, which hitherto has been so sadly lacking Victoria.

Short-term operators bail out

Earlier this year we reported on the first successful case against a short-stay operator who was issued consent orders by VCAT and required to pay compensation to the resident who complained.

We have now been advised that Experience Hotel Apartments which was involved in the VCAT action, has pulled out all together from the building, and the 90 apartments it managed are being converted into normal long-term rentals.

Other smaller operators are also pulling out from this building.

This is very welcome news and a clear indication of the impact COVID-19 is having on the short-term rental market.

For years the short-term letting industry has been a nightmare for residents in residential apartment buildings. Now fortunes have changed and the short-term operators are suffering from the incubo that is COVID-19.

If any other readers have observed long-term rentals replacing short-term letting please let us know.

COVID-19 and apartment living

Is your building taking extra precautions to prevent the risk of COVID-19?

For example:

- Frequent sanitising of high touch point such as intercom and lifts buttons.
- Hand sanitiser dispensers on each floor.
- Signage about washing hands.
- A limit on the number of people in each lift.
- Closing of some common areas.

We would welcome feedback on how the COVID-19 pandemic is being managed in your building and whether any specific issues have arisen.

Your stories

Thank you to all those who have contributed your stories to date, please keep your emails and cards coming in!

Campaign donations

As a not-for-profit organisation, donations from individuals and buildings keep our campaigns going. To register as a supporter of We Live Here or to donate, please visit our website at welivehere.net. We Live Here does not accept donations from commercial tourism interests ●



Barbara Francis & Rus Littleton

EMAIL: CAMPAIGN@WELIVEHERE.NET

LEARN MORE AT WELIVEHERE.NET



Pet's Corner

Keen to get back home

“

Will is waiting for his girlfriend outside the food store in Russell St and Hatchi is getting restless.

”



▼ Will and Hatchi on a shopping trip to the city.



The couple has driven in from Newport to do their grocery shopping.

Will is working from home and Hatchi is getting more than one walk a day.

So, the lively Japanese Spitz should be grateful. The lockdown also means he doesn't have to go to day care.

“He goes for walks and we try and include him in our daily activities,” Will said.

“We're working from home and we're around more.”

Will works in software development and said it was good being home. “I like to keep busy,” he said ●

MELBOURNE BUSINESS NETWORK

What else can small businesses do to set themselves up for success?

Several weeks into this pandemic, we all have been impacted by border and school closures, industry shutdowns, social distancing, dramatic loss in revenue, etc. Finally, we are seeing some positive signs.

We are flattening the curve, the economic stimulus packages offered by the state and federal governments have taken shape and the City of Melbourne has released a multitude of grants and economic relief packages. The much-needed assistance is arriving.

From a business perspective, you have no doubt already revised your cashflow and terms of business, made some tough decisions about which staff members are mission critical and sadly which ones may not be, had honest conversations with your suppliers and are looking after your best customers like never before ...

But what next? What else should you be doing now?

Other markets, products or services

All businesses will need ensure that they are relevant in the “new normal” and that may involve pivoting. Explore other markets that might need your products and services – or could you even provide different products and services to your existing markets? Many organisations have already experienced great success by moving online.

Business continuity planning (BCP)

Most businesses have had to accept the challenge of working from home and managing

remote teams. Organisations who have previously been reluctant to try are finding that they can thrive in a decentralised model which might even be more cost-effective than a typical commercial lease. With the added complexity that many students are home schooling, working from home may no longer be as feasible. Businesses may need to explore how flexible workspace solutions could complement their operations.

New networks

More than ever, businesses will need new contacts and prospects. Networking, which has always been fundamental to business success, will be even more critical. Be sure to engage with networking groups which can assist you with making and nurturing new connections.

Melbourne Business Network (MBN) - COVID-19 business resources

Whether it is the new business grants available via the City of Melbourne or business assistance from the State or Federal Governments, we have collated all of these avenues of support in one place: melbournebusinessnetwork.org.au/mbn-covid-19-update

Business webinars

The MBN will be hosting a number of complimentary webinars geared at helping businesses during this time. Refer to our website for these sessions and be sure to subscribe to our newsletter: melbournebusinessnetwork.org.au ●



Wendi Dawson

WENDI DAWSON IS PRESIDENT OF THE MELBOURNE BUSINESS NETWORK

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Balance for rooftop bars

To whom it may concern,
I am a subscriber to *CBD News* and a CBD resident.

I observed your article on January 22 this year, “Loop Bar extension rejected”. You suggested the case also highlighted ambiguities in the city's rooftop regulations. You also indicated Mr Bunny said the rooftop had been designed to provide acoustic protection. My feedback on this matter is ...

- There is no ambiguity as to the trading hours to roof tops. The Council policy grants permits to sell alcohol until 1.00 am on rooftops as is the case with Good Heavens, The Imperial and Madame Brussels. Management of Loop are well aware of this limitation.
- The acoustic protection designed is one thing, though Mr Bunny or his team cannot be expected to control noise once patrons spill out onto the street. This is why the unambiguous licence regulations exist in the CBD. The Loop has an existing permit well beyond 1.00am downstairs in the same premises.
- The public has many other premises in the CBD to drink beyond 1.00am. Let's strike a reasonable balance and not bring this to rooftops.

Zak

Thank you

I wanted to thank you for your article about residents in lockdown, I really enjoyed reading it.

The CBD has a bit of a lack of community groups for CBD residents, especially on social media, so it was a nice chance to feel connection with a neighbour.

It's a weird period to be in the CBD and it's lovely to hear of others around the corner and how they're approaching it!

Lynn sounds like a beautiful character and we have a lot in common.

I also live by myself in the CBD. In fact, if I was a floor or two higher, we would almost be able to wave at each other from our windows, around the edges of the new Paragon building.

I also love yoga, in fact I trained as a teacher a few years back. (It's not my occupation though, I work as a concierge in a CBD corporate building).

I love reading and can't wait to get back to City Library.

I love watching the world going by from the vantage point of my window.

I'd love to connect with Lynn if that's something she's open to.

It's always nice to have a friend in the neighbourhood, especially someone who can check in during this period!

Thank you!

Phoebe



SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:
NEWS@CBDNEWS.COM.AU

墨尔本市长工作寄语

随着我们正在适应截然不同的生活方式，墨尔本必须保持一个充满爱心的城市，在困难时期提供帮助。我们知道，对于大多数人来说，这是一个极其紧张的情况，照顾那些面临最大风险的人从未如此重要。

各级政府都在积极地抗击COVID-19病毒，墨尔本在封锁期间，继续为社区提供必要的服务，包括垃圾收集和回收利用、为老年人提供服务、家庭和儿童的服务以及对无家可归者支持服务，这些都是我们必要的公共卫生职能。

市政府正在向600多名老年居民和残疾居民提供膳食和家庭服务；家庭暴力和咨询服务正在增加；幼托中心依然开放；妇幼保健援助通过电话和视频会议提供。我们继续提供社区的疫苗接种服务，我们的日常支持团队正在帮助露宿街头的人们寻找避难住所，并且在全市范围内加强了清洁服务。

目前的这些情况也要求我们相互帮助，度过由于突然关闭而带来的创伤性经济冲击。州政府和联邦政府提供了数十亿澳元，支持商业和已经失业的工人。地方政府也在为咖啡馆、餐馆、艺术家，以及各种其他小商业尽自己的一份力量，这些都是我们社区的的心脏和灵魂。

墨尔本市16500家企业中，约80%是小商业。他们是家庭经营商、个体经营商和小

公司，他们冒险将自己的想法转化为维持生计的生意，并为他人提供工作。这些人确实受到了影响，不仅仅是资产负债表上所显示的。

作为最接近基层民众的政府，我们地方市政议会与许多小商业经营者及其员工有直接和个人的联系。我们如何才能最好地支持他们，并确保他们在这场磨难中幸存下来？我们复苏的速度和力度将取决于我们在此期间所提供的道义支持和财政生命线的支持。

墨尔本市政最近宣布了一项500万澳元的配套支持计划，其中包括在三个月内免除某些许可证、注册和街头交易许可证的费用，为电子商务和在线活动特别拨款，将市政拥有的大楼租户的租金减半，以及制定一项市政费的困难政策。维多利亚女王市场提供基本的食品服务，其600名贸易商将在未来三个月获得100%的租金减免。

墨尔本还是艺术家和表演者之都，在这次疫情中他们受到的经济冲击最大。墨尔本市政府将提供200万澳元的专项拨款，用以帮助他们，包括那些规模较小的创意组织，计划和创作接下来的作品或者在网上展示其表演。这些文化艺术的创作和表演都是我们这个城市文化生活的支柱。在平常时期，这些文化创作表演也促进了其他行业的发展，吸引了来自世界各地的游客，尤其是每



年的这个时候。

墨尔本市政已经建立了一个商务礼宾服务，提供一对一的咨询，为获得财务支持、服务及信息。针对企业和创意团体的配套支持计划已经产生了数百个查询和数千个申请。需要帮助的人是那么多，但是没有简单的方法可以让每个人能得以满足。

我们要求物业主考虑为当地企业提供临

时租金折扣，同时我们这些能够经受住这场风暴的人应该抓住机会，通过网络或电话与当地零售商和餐馆联系消费。组织最受欢迎的饭店那儿送餐上门，或者从当地书店订购书籍。尽管这些都是不起眼的行动，但将有助于我们社区的商业心脏继续跳动。

尽管我们的市中心出奇地安静，少了数百万行人通常会在街上穿行，但是安全和保障仍然是重中之重。

许多商店关了门，成千上万的居民居家。但是墨尔本市政的合规检查工作人员每天在大街上进行检查，并且与维多利亚警方密切合作。我们的清洁服务人员利用这个机会对城市进行大清扫、擦洗和消毒。我们市政府与州政府以及社区服务提供者共同协调工作，已经帮助大多数露宿者进入临时住所，使他们得到照顾。任何人都不应被抛弃，能看到墨尔本人对此有这么深刻的感受是令人鼓舞的。

我一点也不惊讶，在维多利亚州那个可怕的夏季森林大火危机期间，我们墨尔本人的慷慨大度得到了展示，我们当时几乎没有意识到更糟糕的事情即将到来。我们墨尔本是一个以人为本的关爱社区，没有比这更好的时机来强化这一理念了。

墨尔本市长
萨莉·卡普 (Sally Capp)



扶助市中心的商业

墨尔本的商业是这座城市的命脉。墨尔本市政正在提供服务来帮助支持受COVID-19疫情影响的商业。

市长萨莉·卡普 (Sally Capp) 鼓励商家来接受墨尔本市政的支持计划。

市长说：“我们的COVID-19商务礼宾接待热线是小型商业在困难时期的实用资源。”

“我们已经启动了这条专用电话线，这样小商业就可以致电了解我们提供什么支持，以及如何获得我们服务的有关重要信息。”

“该专用线的工作人员由墨尔本市政的团队组成，他们可以直接与小商业的业主对话，并在整个过程中提供指导帮助他们申请这个支持。”

业主可以在周一至周五的上午7:30至下午6点之间以及周末的上午10点至下午4点之间拨打9658 9658 这个商务礼宾热线。

市长说，墨尔本有超过16500家经营商，其中80%是个体经营者，家庭经营者和只有几个雇员的小商业。

她说：“确实需要帮助这些正在受到严重影响的人，因此，我们正在竭尽全力帮助商家保持经营，并保住墨尔本人的工作岗位。”

墨尔本市政正在提供许多救济和支持措施，以便在未来几周和几个月内帮助当地商业。

配套支持计划措施包括免除某些费用，减少市政拥有物业中租户的租金，制定市政费困难政策以及为艺术表演界提供200万澳元的专项资助。

中小型商业也可以申请高达500万澳元的快速响应专款，包括：

高达\$5000的投资在线和电子商务活动费用；

高达\$2000的培训和专业发展费用；

高达\$10000的基本工程项目(以一对一相应投入匹配)，以适应不断变化的条件。

各项资助现已开始申请，符合条件的商家和非营利组织可以在melbourne.vic.gov.au/business网上申请。

COVID-19商务礼宾热线

要了解您的商业活动可以获得哪些支持，请致电墨尔本市政的COVID-19商务礼宾热线9658 9658，商业咨询按1。

该热线电话拨打时间：周一至周五上午7:30至下午6:00，周末上午10:00至下午4:00。

也可点击：melbourne.vic.gov.au/business 上网了解。

网上文学之城

墨尔本市被联合国教科文组织列为文学之城，其特点之一是中央商务区(CBD)及周边的一些具有标志性和独特之处的公共图书馆，包括维多利亚州立图书馆、城市图书馆、博伊德 (Boyd) 图书馆和港区图书馆。

正如我们的读者所知，如今这些图书馆由于新冠病毒(COVID-19)疫情而关闭，但是墨尔本市的网上在线图书馆服务需求出现了大幅增长，因为墨尔本人都在执行社交距

离并待在家中。

在过去的一个月里，数以千计的免费电子书、电子有声读物、电子杂志、在线报纸、网上电影、视频和学习资源都被进入用过。

市长萨莉·卡普说，与去年同期相比，电子图书馆的使用率上升了23%，电子图书是最受欢迎的服务。

市长说：“现在人们比以往任何时候都更多地利用我们巨大而免费的图书馆资源，由

于他们不能亲自进入我们的图书馆。”

“我们记录了有史以来单月最高的在线借书次数，共有19182次，这包括8837次的电子书和10345次的有声读物”。

“我们的儿童图书管理员也通过YouTube频道提供在线讲故事时段。”

市长说，墨尔本市的图书馆是我国资源最丰富的图书馆之一。

通过与Beamafilm和Kanopy的合作，墨尔本市图书馆会员可以观看免费电视节目，

教育视频，艺术电影和纪录片。会员还可以通过Freegal下载免费音乐。

上个月，通过墨尔本市图书馆服务的电影播出流量增长了54%。Beamafilm电影月平均流量增加了一倍，而Kanopy电影播出量在三月份达到了3666部，是一个月内最高的使用量。

Local festival's head start in digital world

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Zack Ahmed*
 ARTS & CULTURE

Across the world festivals, businesses and workplaces are moving their operations online. But some were more prepared than others.

While most festival directors have had to issue sorry statements of cancellations, the Emerging Writers' Festival (EWF) announced in early April that this year's festival – which is usually held across the CBD and surrounds – would go ahead.

Years of running the EWF's Digital Writers' Festival and EWF digital stream had stood the festival in good stead and the team were confident to move the festival online – scheduling it for June 16 – June 23.

EWF artistic director Ruby-Rose Pivet-Marsh said it was important the festival continued to develop and promote Australia's new writing talent and create platforms for connecting writing communities and their audiences.

"We are excited to be able to move forward with an online festival, as we feel that now – more than ever – it is vitally important to provide platforms for art and artists, and to also provide inspiration and opportunities to our audiences," she said.

"A digital festival is a very different beast to a live festival, particularly in the literary sector, but it is an exciting one. Digital story telling is rich and extends beyond a lot of barriers in terms of both access and imagination."

She also said that EWF had learnt through the Digital Writers' Festival that being effective in an online festival didn't have to be overly complicated or overwhelming.

"We are familiar with trying out new platforms, technologies and expressions and are constantly questioning and challenging our programming and production."

"This has made us especially agile in this time and space. I think above everything else, the experience of having run the Digital Writers' Festival has equipped us with the knowledge



▲ *Cultivating Creativity Masterclass at the 2019 festival with (left to right) Natalie Kon-Yu, Jen Tran and Carly Findlay.*

that this can work and the confidence that it will work well."

Writers Alistair Baldwin, Bridget Caldwell, Jamie Marina Lau and Panda Wong will feature in the full online program launch on June 2, speaking about the times they found (or failed to find) connection.

Alistair Baldwin, a writer and comedian who lives in Southbank and works for multiple television shows produced by the ABC, featured in *CBD News*' sister publication *Southbank News*' June 2019 edition.

The full program will be announced in early June ●

For more information:
emergingwritersfestival.com.au



Meg Hill
 JOURNALIST
 MEG@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

Resident groups adjust to changes

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
 COMMUNITY

CBD locals can still engage with their neighbours during COVID-19 restrictions, with Residents 3000 moving its regular interactions online.

Residents3000 vice-president Susan Saunders said that while its monthly meetings at the Kelvin Club would be postponed until further notice, residents should still engage online through the group's Facebook and Instagram platforms.

"We are still sending out emails to our members and website subscribers," she said. "As a committee, we are meeting via Zoom weekly. We have also upgraded our website."

EastEnders group president Stan Capp also encouraged locals to stay connected via the Residents 3000 Facebook page, with regular updates provided on issues such as construction hours, essential services, homelessness and rubbish collection.

Mr Capp, who is a committee member of Residents 3000, had already suspended the EastEnders group's monthly coffee meetings due to COVID-19, but is in regular communication with members via email.

He told members last month that he and other resident group presidents, including Residents 3000 president Rafa Camillo, had held video meetings with State Member for Melbourne Ellen Sandell and Lord Mayor of Melbourne Sally Capp and updates from these meetings would be provided via Facebook ●

For more information:
residents3000.com.au
facebook.com/residents3000/

Colliers International Melbourne City Sales

 Daniel Wolman National Director	 Oliver Hay National Director	 Matthew Stagg Director	 Chris Ling Associate Director	 Leon Ma 马海翔 Associate Director
 Holly Richards Marketing Executive	 Tanisha Seeling Marketing Assistant	 Anthony Kirwan Manager	 Dave Walker Executive	 George Davies Executive

We can achieve you better results, faster. Contact the City of Melbourne specialists for an obligation free discussion about your commercial property today on 03 9612 8862 or visit colliers.com.au/melbournecitysalesexperts

**Experts in the Melbourne CBD and City Fringe
 Commercial Property Market**

