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Hoping to survive
Photo by Rhonda Dredge

Laneway Greens chefs Warren Flanagan (left) and Ash Ellis (right) represent one of a small number of local businesses who've been forging ahead as the CBD's cafes, restaurants and bars prepare for restrictions easing in June. *Continued on page 14.*

Complaints soar amid extended city construction hours

The City of Melbourne's fast-tracked approval of out-of-hours construction permits in March has resulted in construction-related noise complaints more than doubling compared to last year.

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
BUILDING

The council's chair of planning Cr Nicholas Reece told *CBD News* that more than 100 out-of-hours permits were issued for building sites in the CBD between March 30 and May 3. A council spokesperson wouldn't confirm how many more had been issued since.

While Cr Reece said that the extended construction hours responded to COVID-19 by helping keep the industry viable during uncertain times, his assistant chair of planning Cr Rohan Leppert slammed the changes as procedurally unfair. Cr Leppert said that like any change in council policy, the changes to construction hours should have come before councillors for a decision in an open forum to allow locals to have their say.

"All noise complaints about construction in February, March and April more than doubled compared to last year," Cr Leppert said. "I've made no secret of the fact that I do not support the new approach to out-of-hours construction permits, especially that an expectation for 6am construction starts has been established."

"While most Victorians are being urged to stay at home, and many older Victorians are essentially in 'lockdown', I don't think additional construction noise that makes staying at home a chore really helps the public health message."

"The default construction times in our local laws are there to protect amenity, but also people's health."

Protecting health is more important in a pandemic, not less."

Cr Reece said that while construction had increased by 50 per cent in the municipality outside of normal construction hours in April compared to November last year, the temporary measures were not being applied as a "blanket approval."

"They are being administered on a case-by-case basis under the existing local law via 'out-of-hours' permits," he said.

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.

Working on a case-by-case basis, the council has allowed for an extra hour of work each morning and evening on weekdays. Three hours of extra work has been allowed on Saturdays and six hours of limited activity on Sundays.

However, many residents claim that builders are exploiting the new rules, while many residents have been forced to move out of the CBD all together.

McKillop St resident Michael Munson told *CBD News* that with several projects currently taking place within close proximity of his family's apartment, the impacts were proving "unbearable."

"It's been pretty horrific actually. The levels of noise and rumbling in the house has been quite amazing," he said.

"Altogether it's actually unbearable. I just think environmental noise is

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Locals turn on pub plans

WORDS BY *David Schout*
PLANNING

CBD residents have turned on plans to transform the site of a run-down Bourke St building into an almost 1000-patron late-night venue.

Resident groups claim they were "misled" by developer O'Brien Group's plans to turn the 1840s-built Job Warehouse building and two adjoining lots into a large-scale hotel, and rejected the company's claims of having earned their support.

In a meeting with a representative from the hospitality and entertainment company in February, EastEnders president Dr Stan Capp and Residents 3000 president Rafael Camillo were informed the new venue would seek a 1am liquor licence for between 300 and 400 patrons, which they tentatively endorsed.

The empty heritage building, one of the oldest in Melbourne, has become an eyesore in recent years and

calls for its restoration have come from across the board.

However, the planning application made public on April 27 instead sought a 3am license for 957 patrons and noted support from both groups, a claim that was vehemently rejected.

"That was misleading," Dr Capp told *CBD News*.

"We had talked about one set of circumstances which was quite different to the planning application that was submitted. It's a bit disingenuous to move from some positive conceptual comments to something that's grossly different."

The groups' concerns chiefly surround the noise and amenity impact on nearby residents in Liverpool St, and in particular next door at 50 Bourke St which, at ground level, sits 10 metres from the proposed hotel.

Dr Capp said he was in favour of a "well-restored intimate area" on the site, and initial plans from the O'Brien Group, which owns the nearby Imperial Hotel, appeared a step in the right direction.

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“The importance of Melbourne getting this right”

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
PLANNING

The pending sale of a 1.4-hectare vacant site along the Flinders St rail corridor has divided the community over what is considered one of the CBD’s most strategically important parcels of land.

The state government-owned site, known as Treasury Square, is located next to the Flinders St railyard and spans the area between Exhibition and Flinders streets, and Wellington Parade South.

The government put the site on the open market in November last year and has since attracted interest from four high-profile bidding developers including Mirvac, Cbus Property, Dexus/John Holland and Brookfield Property. The site is earmarked for a \$2 billion development including three towers.

City of Melbourne councillors endorsed a motion put forward by Minister for Planning Richard Wynne on May 26 to subdivide the site and rezone the land as Capital City. In its report, council management labelled Treasury Square as a “significant and strategic site in central Melbourne.”

“These opportunities and constraints require an innovative and exemplary design response,” the report stated.

“It is imperative that any development on this site secures future strategic connections for the city. A generous pedestrian connection north-south from Flinders St through the site would connect the south eastern end of the central city to the Yarra River corridor, and link Treasury Gardens and Birrarung Marr.”

“Any development of this site must also anticipate and provide interfaces that support the future development of adjacent sites including Federation Square East, which will require decking of the rail corridor.”

While supportive of the rezoning of the site, council referred to a number of planning controls of concern including building heights, overshadowing of the Yarra River



▲ An image from the council report highlighting the subject land in blue.



Any development of this site must also anticipate and provide interfaces that support the future development of adjacent sites.



and Birrarung Marr and discouraging onsite carparking.

The council’s chair of planning Cr Nicholas Reece took to Twitter last month, stating that it was “hard to overstate the importance of Melbourne getting this right.”

While the state government stands to make a significant windfall of around \$500 million from the site, many local residents have strongly opposed the project.

Residents of One East Melbourne on Wellington Parade South, supported by Residents 3000, signed a joint letter of objection to Minister for Planning Richard Wynne stating the rezoning to Capital City was an inappropriate use of the land.

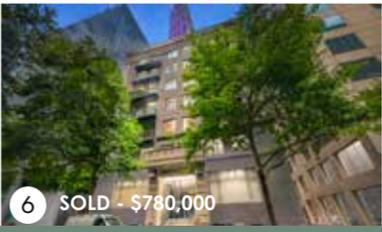
“This is a strategic site for the future vision of Melbourne and we should be advised what that vision is by our city planners before options are closed forever by a rezoning of public land to prepare for a sale,” the letter stated.

“Under the process adopted it will be market forces that will determine use and form of development of the site without any consideration of the potential future uses of the air rights to the south.”

Residents added that the negative social and environmental impacts of the proposed application and amendment outweighed the economic impacts, which they argued could be put to better use for the public as a park.

“The further development of the sports and entertainment area can also provide ongoing and sustainable job creation for the hospitality, entertainment industries as well as construction and infrastructure.” ●

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Locals turn on pub plans

Continued from page 1.

But he said what then appeared was different. "I'm not against a respectful renewal of the Job Warehouse. It's an important heritage building that dates back to 1848 and it's been a disgrace the way it's been allowed to deteriorate. So, I'm all in favour of getting it right. But you've got a real direct interface with residents (under the current plans)."

By late May the plans, which are yet to go before the City of Melbourne, had already received more than 50 objections.

O'Brien director Michael O'Brien did not directly address the concerns raised by residents, but said it was "committed to the renaissance of Bourke Hill", a CBD pocket which takes in some of the city's most historic buildings and unique streetscapes.

"O'Brien Group Australia has been actively discussing this state-significant project with the state government, the City of Melbourne, Heritage Victoria, Bourke Hill traders, Bourke Hill residents groups and will continue to do so."

The application - which includes plans for a restaurant, bar and two courtyards - rejected the notion that those nearby would be adversely impacted.

"The proposal seeks to provide a hotel in a central and accessible location which will have little discernible impact on the commercial or residential areas, as its activities will be absorbed within the existing environment," it stated.

While resident groups voiced their criticism of the plans, others expressed support - perhaps most notably the nearby Salvation Army, which has been located at 69 Bourke St since 1894.

Major Brendan Nottle said late-night activation of the area would increase foot traffic throughout the night.

"This increase in activity would encourage people to self-regulate their behaviour because of an increased awareness that they are being observed by other customers, the increased



▲ A render of O'Brien Group proposal from the Liverpool St side of the building. (Below) The Job Warehouse site today.

security presence and CCTV surveillance," he said.

Similarly, Pellegrini's Espresso Bar next door endorsed the 3am license as a way to "reduce the window of opportunity for street crime and graffiti" which reportedly affects their business.

By the time of publishing the June edition, the O'Brien Group had been provided with residents' objections.

Council process allows the applicant an opportunity to respond to the concerns raised and, should they wish, amend the application.

While it is unclear when the matter will go before the council, it is believed to be unlikely before July.

The council's chair of planning Cr Nicholas Reece said the council would duly weigh up each piece of evidence.

"The City of Melbourne has received a large number of objections from local residents to the proposal," he said.

"As is always the case, council will consider all the matters raised in objections against the requirements of the planning scheme." ●



David Schout

JOURNALIST

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Calls to withdraw market charter

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Eighteen members of the City of Melbourne's former Queen Victoria Market People's Panel have petitioned the City of Melbourne calling on it to withdraw a motion adopting its charter for the new public space at Market Square.

Councillors were expected to formally adopt the charter at its council meeting on May 26, which also recommended a move to pursue an indigenous name for the future public space currently occupied by the market's carpark.

However, at the time of publishing the June edition of *CBD News*, former members of the People's Panel - an initiative established by then newly-elected Lord Mayor Sally Capp in 2018 to bring consensus to the redevelopment of the market - were preparing to submit a petition to councillors requesting they withdraw the motion.

Those to have signed the petition included representatives from the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the Boonwurrung Foundation, Wurundjeri Elder Ron Jones, United Workers Union, Friends of Queen Victoria Market, as well as market traders and shoppers.

The panel members accused council of "blatant misrepresentation" stating that its recommendations for both the redevelopment of the market and the public space at Market Square were not fully considered.

As a major component of the what will be the guiding framework informing the design and future management and operations of the public space, the council is expected to pursue an Aboriginal place name for the site in conjunction with Aboriginal Melbourne.

The charter outlines that the City of Melbourne will be accountable for the management of Market Square, including the "implementation of any agreed arrangements for Queen Victoria Market Pty Ltd use and curation of the site", the council report stated ●

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Rate freeze marks an economic rebuild

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
ECONOMY

Despite unsurprisingly recording its first deficit in more than 30 years as a result of COVID-19, the City of Melbourne has made the symbolic move to implement a freeze on rate increases over the next financial year.

Having lost more than \$100 million since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March, the release of council's draft annual plan and budget on May 19 was unfortunately marred by a significant \$57.4 million deficit.

Despite the financial setbacks of COVID-19, however, years of strong fiscal management and economic growth has meant the council's finances are in good shape as it forecasts a return to surplus by the 2022-23 financial year.

The \$632 million draft budget is underpinned by a substantial \$168.5 million capital works program, \$41 million investment in transport infrastructure as well as a \$50 million COVID-19 recovery package to assist small businesses and precincts.

"Years of disciplined financial management means the City of Melbourne can step up in these unprecedented times," Lord Mayor Sally Capp said.

"This year, for the first time in more than 30 years, the budget will have a deficit. We are deliberately investing in our community now so we can support businesses and deliver infrastructure and stimulus as a platform for recovery."

Having made a habit of underspending its capital works budget for the best part of the past decade, CEO Justin Hanney told *CBD News* that new measures had been taken to ensure that trend wouldn't continue.

"Our investment on capital works has been prioritised with a focus on projects that will help our city recover from COVID-19," he said. "Internal project reporting has also been enhanced to track and manage the progress of capital projects."



▲ An artist's impression of a new-look Town Hall.

Headlining the infrastructure spend in the CBD is a \$45 million investment to ramp up the renewal of Queen Victoria Market, while \$6.5 million has been included to restore Melbourne Town Hall.

The \$41 million towards transport will also see car parks replaced with footpaths and 12 kilometres of pop-up cycling lanes (full story on page 14) to cater for social distancing as part of its COVID-19 recovery strategy.

The impacts of COVID-19 could likely see the council draw on its five-year \$75 million line of credit from ANZ Bank for the first time, however Mr Hanney said it would only be used on a "needs basis" to meet capital works requirements.

"The loan expires on June 30, 2021 but there are options to extend if required," Mr Hanney said. "The interest rate is 0.74 per cent and is very competitive."

The City of Melbourne's 1425 staff, 30 fewer full-time than last year, are the best-paid in the country and are expected to cost the council \$165.9 million during the 2020-21 financial year.

With the majority of council services delivered through its staff, the budget promises a reduction on expenditure on purchasing, contractors, consultants and administration and will look to "redeploy staff into areas with higher demand."

Mr Hanney said the current enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) had expired and the agreement process was on hold while

the council prioritised essential services in response to COVID-19.

"We have had positive discussions with unions and will revisit the new enterprise agreement in the coming months," Mr Hanney said.

In addition to providing rate relief at a cost of \$18.9 million, the council will also not increase fees and charges for 2020-21 for community services such as recreation centres, children's services and libraries.

Parking revenue is forecast to decline significantly due to a decrease in the number of cars in the city during the COVID-19 lockdown. Parking fee revenue is budgeted at \$28 million, down 33 per cent from \$43 million the previous year. Naturally, parking fine revenue is also budgeted down at \$16 million.

Overall, 64 per cent of council fees remain unchanged or are only increasing according to consumer price index (CPI).

Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood said the budget was putting "people and businesses first."

"We are freezing rates with a zero per cent rate rise. In every announcement since the pandemic hit, we've focussed on fixed costs for businesses and residents," he said.

"By not increasing rates and delivering essential services, programs and support packages, we are doing our bit to rebuild the local economy."

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the council was also preparing a package of "shovel-ready" projects to present to the federal and state governments to help stimulate the economy and create jobs.

Public submissions on the draft annual plan and budget 2020-21 are open until 5pm on June 17 ●

For more information:
participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au

Looking towards the future

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

While the Victorian Government has outlined the trajectory of a staged reopening, the City of Melbourne has begun to think through the needs of the CBD post-COVID-19.

The moment has coincided with the release of the Council's draft annual 2020-2021 budget.

The budget has allocated funds to the logistics and provision of social distancing, while providing financial support for other areas to get back on their feet.

The most concrete decision has been to remove selected car parks to widen footpaths and create kilometres of new bike lanes, to create a more physically distanced city.

Of the \$15 million budgeted toward new bike lanes, \$10 million is new funding. The council aims for a quick provision of "pop-up" lanes while permanent arrangements are made.

The end result could be more than 12 kilometres of new bike lanes.

Another \$4.5 million was allocated to footpath work – with the upgrades on Elizabeth St marking that area as first on the list.

The Council has also given thought to the kind of events that will be needed to draw people back to the city when it is safe to do so.

A giant street party is one specific idea being thought over, stretching potentially all the way from Carlton to Docklands and Southbank in a celebration of reopening.

In terms of financial support, the council has announced it will invest \$17 million in the arts and creative sector, which may include a focus on making streets and open spaces more "interesting and vibrant".

A \$2.6 million investment specifically into events has also been announced, to support around 60 events in the municipality.

"Our investment will ensure Melbourne is ready to welcome people back to the city once restrictions on large gatherings of people have been relaxed," Lord Mayor Sally Capp said ●

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CITY OF MELBOURNE

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INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY TO KICK-START OUR ECONOMY



The City of Melbourne's draft Annual Plan and Budget 2020-21 invests \$168.5 million in infrastructure over the coming year, with an aim to create jobs and support Melbourne's economy as it emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Renewal of Queen Victoria Market precinct: \$45 million

- Improve conditions for traders and shoppers while preserving the unique heritage and character of the market.
- Including \$25 million investment to deliver 500 car parks on the doorstep of the market.

Restoring Melbourne Town Hall: \$6.5 million

- New customer service facilities, improved security and a flexible public forum space to encourage community participation in Committee and Council meetings.
- Roof conservation works.

Southbank Boulevard: \$12.8 million

- Delivering 2200 square metres of open space, along with new lawn areas, trees and seating.

Sporting facilities

- \$2.6 million investment in rebuilding the Western Pavilion at Royal Park, including new change rooms.
- \$260,000 towards three new courts at Royal Park Tennis Club.
- \$1 million for designs for Kensington Recreation Centre, featuring a new two-level facility plus refurbished pool, change facilities, café and more.

Have your say

Public submissions on the City of Melbourne's draft Annual Plan and Budget 2020-21 are open until Wednesday 17 June 2020.

participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au



CITY OF MELBOURNE

Complaints soar amid extended city construction hours

Continued from page 1.

really harmful after a long period of time and I've just learnt that two long-term neighbours who have been there for 15 to 20 years are moving out. There are other renters in the building who are moving out too, so that gives you an indication of where things are at."

Mr Munson said he regularly witnessed workers setting up before 5.30am and packing up after 8pm, and dismissed the council's claim of "striking a balance" for residents and the building industry.

"I don't see much balance for residents at all. The only good thing amongst all of this is that the works could be over and done with quicker," he said.

"It's caused stress for everyone. We're not the only ones either; there are other kids in the building. There are high school kids and two who are starting uni this year in lockdown, too. You've got families working from home with their kids - it's all a bit of a pressure cooker."

"People that live here are incredibly tolerant of sound. Garbage trucks are often going all night. If you want to live there you have to deal with it - and people are actually very good at dealing with it. But long-term residents are moving out. I just think this is a sign of how bad it's got."

Market St resident John Weretka, who has temporarily moved out of his apartment building opposite the Collins Arch development, said the level of construction activity in the city at present was making it "unliveable".

"We've lived in the city for 11 years. The quality of life has become worse and worse. There is literally construction going around everywhere. Month after month, year after year, the city becomes an unpleasant place," he said.

Mr Weretka and his neighbours made news in recent months after raising an issue to local and state governments regarding a "blinding" reflection from the stainless-steel façade of the Collins Arch towers currently under construction.

Having done his own testing, Mr Weretka found that the brightness represented about 75 per cent of the intensity of light of staring into

"We've lived in the city for 11 years. The quality of life has become worse and worse. There is literally construction going around everywhere."



direct sunlight. In a statement to the *Herald Sun*, the building's developer Cbus Property said it was aware of concerns and was "proactively" working on actioning an "effective solution."

However, Mr Weretka said that he had been informed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DEWLP) that rectification works would only be completed once construction of the building was complete.

The university teacher said all of the disruption had forced he and others in his building to move out.

"The glare and noise have been unbelievable," Mr Weretka said.

"The rectification works will continue for a year and a half after this. The panels are made out of polished stainless steel and was never been part of the building's approval. The light reflective levels are extraordinary." ●



Sean Car
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▲ Cr Nicholas Reece in love with the brick even when it is a tile.

Bring back the brick

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Rhonda Dredge
PLANNING

It has been business as usual for City of Melbourne councillor Nick Reece with days full of Zoom meetings and the added load of three children at his home in Fitzroy.

But while he's been working outside the CBD and exercising along nearby streets he has fallen in love with the brick.

"Melbourne is a city built of brick," he said, citing Guilford Lane as an example in the city.

"I love the look and texture of old brick walls. I think about the hours of hard work and skill of brick-layers, who more than 100 years ago built these beautiful walls literally brick by brick."

The council's chair of planning Cr Reece wants to bring the brick back to the CBD and give more protection to those brick walls that exist, particularly internal ones.

The COVID-19 lockdown has made people painfully aware of what we already have and created a desire among many to protect it.

Cr Reece said he was "heartbroken" when a brick wall was demolished recently next to the 1855 Le Louvre boutique in Collins St because the wall wasn't on the street.

"It was not covered by heritage protections because it was not part of the street facing façade, but it was part of the character of the square around Nauru House. There are too many examples like Le Louvre," he said.

Councillors don't have the power to save brick walls unless they are protected but they can try and change attitudes.

"There are more heritage controls than in the past but they don't apply to internal brickwork. There needs to be a new level of protection," he said.

Demolition for the Metro Tunnel has unearthed brick and bluestone walls at the back of Young and Jackson's. While they won't be demolished, there may be no



The recent trend towards brick tiles can be hit and miss. If it is done well then it works. But if it is done badly then it looks like the cheap faux brick wall that it is.



protection for maintaining their materiality.

Bluestone, Hawthorn bricks and red clinker bricks provide the colours of Melbourne. "You just don't get the same character in the precast, machine made, tilt slab and glass walls of today," he said.

The council has recently brought in a new Melbourne Design Guide C308 which provides details down to 20:1 of materials to protect this materiality. "We don't want to see beautiful brick under walls replaced," Cr Reece said.

He said the council is closely supervising the use of tile brick walls in tilt slab construction.

"The recent trend towards brick tiles can be hit and miss. If it is done well then it works. But if it is done badly then it looks like the cheap faux brick wall that it is."

In Peel St, Collingwood, there are examples of how this material has been used well at street level. Cr Reece is hoping to see ideas transported to the city and bricks used at the base of glass towers.

"Streets like this combine new and old references in materials," he said. "We see no reason why the first 20 metres can't use higher grade materials." ●

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/



Traders wary despite \$45 million market injection

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
LOCAL NEWS

While the City of Melbourne has committed \$45 million towards the renewal of Queen Victoria Market (QVM) during the next financial year, questions have been raised regarding the future of many of the market's traders post-COVID-19.

Like so many businesses, the impacts of coronavirus have been hard felt on the market floor with general merchandise traders, as well as those operating along String Bean Alley, having been forced to shut up shop.

While fresh food traders have been able to continue operating as essential services during COVID-19 lockdowns, the futures of many specialty traders remain uncertain as management and the council continue their focus on the market's renewal program.

To support market traders and their families during COVID-19, QVM management provided 100 per cent rent relief in March for a period of three months with a "likely extension beyond July 1" currently under review.

As the state government begins to ease restriction measures from June, QVM CEO Stan Liacos said permanent QVM traders would be able to return to the market "should they choose to do so."

However, the president of the Friends of Queen Victoria Market (FOQVM) lobby group Mary-Lou Howie told *CBD News* that many traders felt QVM management was operating on a "go-slow" policy.

"The thought is that management is trying to get the renewal through at the expense of the general merchandise traders who are hurting at present," she said.

"We believe that priority is being given to 'point of sale' at present i.e. under bench refrigeration in fruit and veg stalls, rather than helping general merchandise traders get back on their feet."

Ms Howie accused management of adopting a "wait and see" policy. "There appears to be no commitment to opening, or vision," she said.

Mr Liacos said that management had contacted more than 300 general merchandise



▲ An historic image of C Shed at Queen Victoria Market. The sheds will undergo their first refurb in more than 40 years.

traders during May and was committed to ensuring the market continued to serve locals as it had done for more than 140 years.

"We are continuing to work individually with all our specialty traders to discuss their plans on returning to the market," he said.

"Their feedback and the guidelines provided by the government will help us in refining our strategy for reopening the Upper Market and a return date for all general merchandise traders in the open sheds."

"With over 300 individual and largely family-owned businesses who have been unable to trade at the market for some time, we understand the transition back to the market will vary markedly between traders."

Mr Liacos said management's priority in the COVID-19 recovery was working with existing traders to encourage and help them adapt and be flexible in meeting the expectations, needs and demand of local customers, rather than tourists.

"Our initial focus on the reintroduction of non-food trading will be a sharp focus on local demand. We will clearly not see the return of

domestic and international visitors for some time yet," he said.

"Our market curation approach in the first phase of reintroduced trading will be determined by a heavy emphasis on meeting local customer demands and priority given of those traders that can and want to trade on multiple days rather than on select single days."

Mary-Lou Howie said that management had left it "very late" to be surveying traders.

"As always, the devil is in the detail," she said.

"The traders are in still the dark about when they are coming back, who is coming back and specifically on which site they are going to be located. You know what they say about real estate, it is location, location, location. It can make or break businesses."

"Unfortunately there is no transparent process in place as their used to be; a clear framework for traders as to their entitlements and placement concerning re-entry into the QVM environment."

On May 26, the \$238 million Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal program's quarterly

report was accepted by councillors, which contained an overview of the status of the program's key projects.

"As at 31 March, 2020, the total Queen Victoria Market Precinct program expenditure since 2013 is \$29.21 million and the total expenditure for financial year 2019-20 is \$5.83 million," City of Melbourne CEO Justin Hanney told *CBD News*.

Headlining its \$168.5 million capital works program as part of the 2020-21 draft annual budget, Mr Hanney said \$45 million would be spent on the renewal this year.

"This includes \$25 million towards the Munro development and \$11 million towards restoring the market's heritage sheds," he said.

"We will invest in planning for enhancements to the Dairy Hall, Meat and Fish Hall, Food Court and Elizabeth St terraces."

Long-awaited restoration works of the market's heritage sheds also began on May 25 across Sheds J, K, L and M and will continue until December.

During the first stage of works the upper market will operate across sheds A to F, while market management works with traders across sheds C to M on trading location.

"In line with previous commitments to traders, there will be space for traders to return to the market when they are able to do so," a council spokesperson said.

"The logistics of restoration works will continue to be worked through as COVID-19 restrictions ease further and restoration works are completed."

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the council would also be continuing to progress key elements of the renewal, including new trader facilities, open space at Market Square and delivering 500 new car parks as part of the Munro development.

"Due to the impact of COVID-19 on visitors to the market, we've accelerated these important restoration works to reduce disruption to traders and customers," Cr Capp said.

"The market's sheds will now be restored by 2022, which will reduce the timeline and disruption by approximately eight to 12 months." ●

Local government elections to proceed

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
ELECTIONS

The state government has confirmed that local government elections will still go ahead as planned on Saturday, October 24.

Questions had been raised recent months as to whether the elections would be pushed back amid COVID-19 lockdowns and public safety measures to allow the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) more time to compile electoral rolls. However, Minister for Local Government Adem Somyurek confirmed that Victorians would still be able to have their say this October with "safe and secure" postal votes to be used for the elections.

Mr Somyurek said it would be the first time postal voting had been used across all Victorian councils, following changes to the *Local Government Act 2020* requiring a state-wide and uniform approach to voting.

"Victorians have the right to a democratic say on who represents them at all levels of government," Minister Somyurek said. "The Chief Health Officer has advised that it is safe for the postal election to proceed this year."

The VEC's electoral commissioner Warwick Gately AM acknowledged the announcement. "The upcoming local government elections in Victoria will support continuity of democratic representation for Victorian communities," Mr Gately said.

"The VEC will continue to monitor and implement advice issued by the Chief Health Officer of Victoria to ensure the elections are conducted with minimal risk to the health and safety of Victorians."

Ballot packs will be mailed to voters and will include voting instructions, candidate information, a ballot paper, and a reply-paid

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Voters must confirm they are enrolled on either the State electoral roll or their council roll before 4.00pm on Friday, August 28.

”

envelope. Postal voting is completely secret. "We will continue to liaise with Australia Post, given their critical role in the elections," Mr Gately said.

Voters must confirm they are enrolled on either the State electoral roll or their council roll before 4.00pm on Friday, August 28. The VEC said it would take additional measures to protect the health and wellbeing of staff, candidates and the public.

"This includes provisions to maintain physical distancing requirements and hygiene standards at all election office and count locations. It's anticipated the adjustments will extend the time period for finalising results by one week," a VEC spokesperson said.

"It is important to remember that voting is compulsory for voters who are on the State roll. State-enrolled voters who don't vote may be fined." ●

Future Melbourne virtually reunited

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne had a "historic" Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting on May 5, taking advantage for the first time of new legislation allowing for virtual council meetings.

It was the first time councillors Jackie Watts and Susan Riley were able to take part in a Council Meeting since lockdown and social distancing measures came into practice.

The council had made a policy decision to cease attendance of at-risk councillors to in-person meetings.

On May 1 the Victorian Government's *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020* introduced new mechanisms to allow for virtual council meetings – to ensure local government decision-making can continue during the coronavirus pandemic.

These new measures will be in force until November 1.

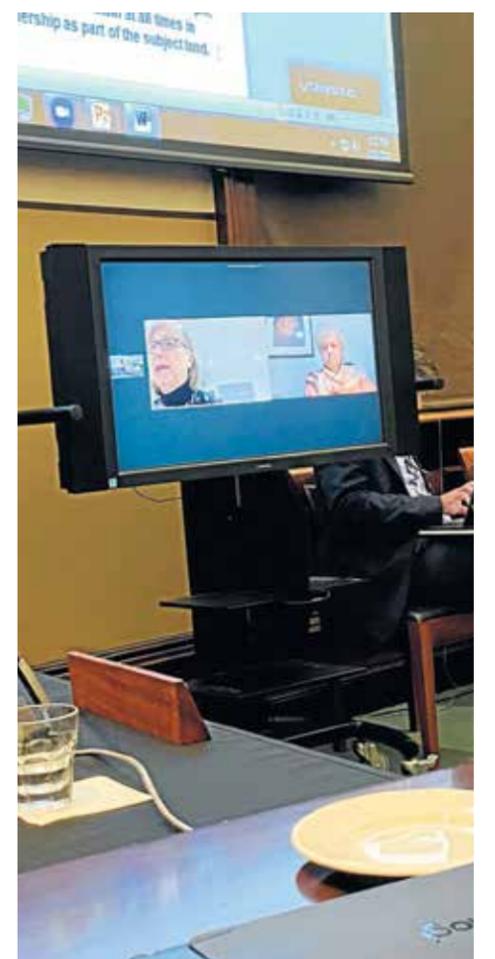
Lord Mayor Sally Capp said it was a very special meeting.

"We are absolutely delighted that councillors Watts and Riley are legally attending the first virtual Future Melbourne Committee of the City of Melbourne following the passing of the legislation last week," the Lord Mayor said.

"It's absolutely fantastic, we've missed you and your involvement in the forums that we have had but how fantastic that we can now have you formally and legally involved in these proceedings."

"It is historical for the City of Melbourne and many other municipalities since the legislation was passed last week, and thanks very much to the team for making this happen." ●

▼ Councillors Watts and Riley tune in remotely last month.



A rare find

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Rhonda Dredge
LOCAL NEWS

Gold coins have sold out at Max Stern & Co as the price of gold gets close to a record high of \$2637 an ounce.

People have been delving into their stashes and reassessing their collections during the lockdown.

Some have had lucky breaks. "If you've got a gold coin, now is the time to sell it," director Sam Seigel said.

The shop, in the old NAB headquarters at 271 Collins St, has stayed open during the pandemic and witnessed some of the desperation.

Last month there was an armed robbery of gold bullion from a store nearby but Sam is philosophical.

"People think of gold as a safe haven," he said. Passing trade for the coin and stamp business has dropped to nil. "We get one or two customers a day."

But the business has kept on its 12 staff and they are busy with eBay and website orders, even though international mail order is stuck in transit.

Max Stern has been operating in the CBD since 1956, first in the Port Phillip Arcade and now at Collins St. Sam is the son-in-law of founder Max Stern who passed away two years ago.

The store is a happy place, brightly lit, inviting and reminiscent of innocent childhood days spent collecting stamps from far-off places in a world that was less precarious.

Hidden within an album can be a special stamp. "Usually stamp albums have been handed down. Mostly customers have very little knowledge," Sam said.

One album was brought in last month with a stamp collected in 1980 because of its cultural interest, but worth \$2500 some 40 years later because of its rarity.

“

If you've got a gold coin, now is the time to sell it.

”

The find was the first issue of a Chinese Lunar New Year stamp. The rest of the album was only worth \$100 but the red stamp seems to glow in the middle of the page.

You could call it a lucky stamp, released in the Year of the Monkey and worth only eight cents. "It had a low print run," Max said. "It is very popular. It can sell 30 or 40 times."

Sam loves talking about collections. Ten dollar notes from the original 1966 mint are now worth \$100 and mint quality pennies are worthy a pretty penny.

Any penny is worth a dollar but if in perfect condition from 1911 or 1912 can be worth \$500.

For those just beginning, the Royal Australian Mint is still releasing products, including a \$2 coin on May 18 which was a collector's item, selling for \$15 and dedicated to the tooth fairy ●



Rhonda Dredge
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▼ Sam Seigel with a brilliant rare Chinese stamp brought in during the lockdown.



Vaping ban divides the community

WORDS BY Tamara Clark
PHOTOGRAPHY BY John Tadigiri
HEALTH

The City of Melbourne has unanimously passed a ban on e-cigarettes and vaping in selected areas throughout the city.

The move comes after councillors voted in favour of a motion to amend council's local law to align with the *Tobacco Act 1987* by including vaping using an e-cigarette at the Future Melbourne Committee meeting on May 5.

"The proposed changes aim to strengthen our existing smoke-free initiatives by further protecting children and young people from accessing, using and being exposed to e-cigarettes," Lord Mayor Sally Capp said.

"The National Health and Medical Research Council, and the Chief Medical Officer Brendan Murphy believe that there is insufficient evidence that e-cigarettes have a role as cessation aids, and the Therapeutic Goods Administration has not assessed e-cigarettes for use as a method to withdraw from smoking."

Cr Capp said that the amendment meant using an e-cigarette was now defined as "smoking" and would be banned in existing and future smoke-free areas, such as Bourke Street Mall.

However, the move by the council has been met with widespread criticism from many in the community, with Reason Party leader Fiona Patten stating, "vaping isn't smoking" and that councillors were misinformed about vaping.

"I am concerned that the council has been misinformed on the issue and that a ban will do more harm than good," she said. "The council needs to listen to what the experts are saying – that vaping is a significant help for those trying to quit."

"There is no reasonable case for banning vaping on health grounds as there is no evidence of risk from passive vaping. The UK Royal



▲ A woman enjoys an e-cigarette on Elizabeth St.

College of Physicians, which have been a leader in research on this issue, agreed declaring that so far there is, 'no direct evidence that passive exposure is likely to cause significant harm'."

Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn from the Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association and School of Public Health and Community Medicine at University of New South Wales, also wrote to councillors asking them to postpone the decision until they were armed with all the facts.

"Smoking remains a high public health priority and is the leading preventable cause of death in Australia," Associate Professor Colin Mendelsohn said. "All methods to help smokers to quit should be encouraged. Banning vaping in smoke-free areas sends a message that vaping is as harmful as smoking and will discourage smokers from switching to vaping."

“

Banning vaping in smoke-free areas sends a message that vaping is as harmful as smoking and will discourage smokers from switching to vaping.

”

The council received a number of submissions opposing the move, with many asking for scientific proof that vaping is as bad for you as smoking and questioning whether the amendment was "about health or money making".

"The City of Melbourne values the health and wellbeing of the community, particularly during and following the current coronavirus pandemic, which is why we are considering this proposal to strengthen our smoke-free policy," the Lord Mayor said.

"Revenue is not and has never been a consideration for implementing smoking bans in the City of Melbourne," she said. "Our emphasis is on educating people about our smoke-free areas, not fining them. In 2019 we issued 19 fines for smoking in a smoke-free area across all City of Melbourne smoke-free zones." ●

State uses crisis powers to build

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
PLANNING

The construction boom in the CBD has been boosted by a state government initiative to use the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis to speed up building and development.

The state government has already fast-tracked billions of dollars' worth of building and development through a taskforce set up to keep the industry running through the crisis.

Six huge CBD developments have already been approved.

The first to be fast tracked were 555 Collins St and 52-60 Collins St – by Charter Hall and Dexus respectively.

The Charter Hall application for a \$1.5 billion twin tower project had been lodged in April 2019.

The Dexus application for a 26-storey office tower was lodged in August 2019. The proposal had caused some controversy by proposing the partial demolition of the heritage-listed ANU House and raised concerns regarding overshadowing.

On May 25 four more CBD developments were added. These were:

- A \$290 million, 21-storey office building at 140 Lonsdale St, which will become the Melbourne headquarters of the Australian Federal Police (AFP);
- A 68-storey development at 640 Bourke St, worth \$234 million, including 857 apartments, retail space and an art gallery;
- A \$180 million, 41-storey hotel development at 600 Lonsdale St featuring 288 hotel rooms, as well as office and retail space; and
- A 20-storey, commercial office and retail building at 683-699 Elizabeth St located in an emerging biomedical precinct worth \$60 million.

Minister for Planning Richard Wynne and Treasurer Tim Pallas will oversee the Building Victoria's Recovery Taskforce which will investigate planning and investment opportunities.

A state government media release said the



▲ 555 Collins St.



▲ 52-60 Collins St.



▲ 640 Bourke St.

taskforce would help to “remove barriers to building and development works” and work with “industry and unions” to review existing major building and development projects.

Initially it will focus on overseeing the fast-tracking of planning approvals using ministerial powers. The state government said this was to reconcile COVID-19 related delays to the Victorian planning system.

Minister for Planning Richard Wynne said it would “ensure the building and development industry is a driving force for Victoria's economy through this pandemic and beyond”.

“It will help deliver existing projects more efficiently and assist new projects to get off the ground faster,” he said.

The taskforce will also advise on a pipeline

of longer-term projects, including the expansion of social housing options. It will run for an initial three months before reporting to the government with recommendations.

The taskforce is co-chaired by Roger Teale, Jude Munro AO and Stan Krpan.

Roger Teale was a former President of the Property Council (Vic) and Senior Executive at LendLease, Jude Munro AO is chair of the Victorian Planning Authority and Stan Krpan is a Victorian Public Service CEO.

The taskforce will receive advice from three industry working groups and be guided by a steering committee, involving representatives from industry peak bodies and unions.

At their May 26 council meeting, City of Melbourne councillors endorsed a motion

detailing a series of measures aimed at helping the taskforce identify and expedite “shovel-ready” state and locally significant projects, while establishing its own fast-tracking processes.

The motion also prioritised planning in urban renewal areas such as Arden, Macauley and Fishermans Bend ●



Meg Hill

JOURNALIST

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Third tower approved for research hub

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The approval of a third and final tower in a block-long project on the CBD's northern fringe has been fast-tracked by the state government as part of an effort to speed up development during COVID-19.

In May the council endorsed the 18-level office tower on the Elizabeth St site adjacent to the Haymarket roundabout, currently owned and occupied by Bob Jane T-Mart. It was quickly followed with an approval by Minister for Planning Richard Wynne announced on May 25.

The site is considered stage three in the “Elizabeth North” plans, an ambitious project aiming to transform an entire block into a biomedical hub to further bolster an area already occupied by the University of Melbourne and other research facilities.

Next door, stage two will see developer PDG build a 17-level facility for biotech giants CSL committed to move their global headquarters, while stage one will see an education facility built atop the heritage-listed Melford Motors site.

Both the recently-approved office tower and CSL site significantly exceed preferred height limits for the northern end of Elizabeth St, something acknowledged by planning chair Cr Nicholas Reece at the May 5 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting.

“If we were here five years ago considering an 85-metre tower on a site with a 60-metre control, you'd probably say the proponent was ‘dreaming,’” he said.

However, the council has considered the research and education uses of the developments.

Further, it has attached a “non-accommodation” use to the new tower to ensure it contributes to the area known as the “knowledge precinct”.

“If we were here five years ago considering an 85-metre tower on a site with a 60-metre control, you'd probably say the proponent was ‘dreaming’” - Cr Nicholas Reece.



The second condition put forward by the council specifies that there is 24-hour unobstructed public access to the ground-level arcade that links Elizabeth and Peel streets.

“This is a very large site along Elizabeth St and we do need those through-block links to provide for better linkages through that area,” Cr Reece said.

In 2017, planning minister Richard Wynne approved a \$208 million, 1008-dwelling development on the now PDG-owned site, stretching across four towers.

That proposal included 700 student units, and was criticised by the council.

After that project failed to materialise, plans for the site were significantly changed and since then the move for a research and development hub has continued to gather momentum ●

▼ A render of the approved 18-storey development at the Haymarket roundabout.



CBD's new digs

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
HISTORY

One of the most significant archaeological discoveries in the CBD in recent years has been uncovered on a King St construction site.

The remains of a 19th-century girls' school in one of Melbourne's earliest buildings and thousands of artefacts dating back to settlement have been revealed during excavation works for the Aspire Melbourne development near the corner of La Trobe and King streets.

Heritage Victoria's principal archaeologist Jeremy Smith said the findings stood out among sites in the CBD.

"I think there's five digs on in Melbourne at the moment, and of about 200 sites we've investigated in Melbourne over the past few years, the age of what we've found here are some of the earliest archaeological finds we've ever found in Melbourne, not including Indigenous archaeology," he said.

Among the discoveries are the ruins of a six-room sandstone cottage which was used as a school for young women.

A newspaper clipping from the Port Phillip Gazette dated April 1846 confirms the site was owned and occupied by a Mrs Bruford, who was advertising for pupils to enrol in her school.

"We know the cottage is talked about in records in 1846, it potentially was a couple of years earlier that it was constructed," Mr Smith said.

"Melbourne wasn't settled until 1835, and it is without doubt one of the earliest buildings in this part of Melbourne."

"The foundations of the cottage are sandstone not bluestone which is very unusual in Melbourne, more found in Sydney and Launceston."

"It's often an indication when we find remains built in sandstone that its very, very early, it's possible the stone actually came across from Launceston and we know Melbourne was settled by people who came across from there."

Artefacts found include jewellery, cosmetic items, brushes, needles and pins, likely to date back to the operation of the school in the years before and during the Gold Rush.

The remains of shops and warehouses that functioned as grain stores, grocers, stables, spirit merchants, and hay merchants have also been uncovered.

Heritage Victoria had previously identified the site as having high

archaeological potential and required the developer to conduct archaeological excavations before commencing construction.

The find triggered an eight-week archaeological dig which is now reaching its conclusion.

"About 15 years ago we did a predictive model in the city and worked out where about 800 sites were that had potentially survived," Mr Smith said.

"The King St sites were flagged in that study."

It's hoped a display of artefacts will be established on the site from where they were excavated.

Mr Smith also said there were discussions commencing about larger exhibitions – potentially at the State Library – to bring together archaeological findings from the CBD over the past few years, including from the Metro Tunnel project.

ICD Property's managing director Matt Khoo said the company was looking to incorporate the findings into the future site.

"It's incredible that ICD Property has been able to uncover this alongside the expert hands of Heritage Victoria and Terra Culture to return the lost history to Melbourne and discover so much about the site's previous use relating to the girls' school and beyond," he said.

"We are keen to have discussions around integrating these findings into the building's design. Whether through displaying some of the findings in a permanent artwork exhibition in Aspire's ground floor or otherwise – we hope to find the most appropriate and respectful way of incorporating the site's history into its future with Aspire if possible."

The construction of the 65-storey Aspire is now underway, with builder Hickory having been appointed to deliver the Elenberg Fraser-designed project.

Adjacent to Flagstaff Gardens, the \$440 million skyscraper received financial backing from global conglomerate Goldman Sachs – in partnership with MaxCap Group – and is anticipated to begin staged completion by October 2021, with full completion by early 2022.

The building will include 594 apartments and six levels of "world-class" amenities.

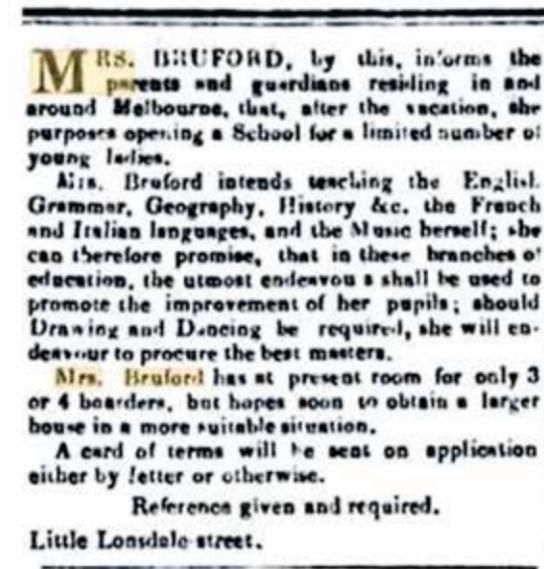
Acknowledging the tough economic climate, ICD Property and MaxCap said they were "proud to acknowledge that throughout the project's approximate three-year construction life cycle, approximately 1,000 jobs are expected to be created." ●



▲ Archaeologists work at the King St building site.



▲ Some of the many unearthed artefacts.



▲ The newspaper clipping from the Port Phillip Gazette.



▲ The 65-storey Aspire tower which will be built on the site.

Green light for Elizabeth Street works

COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The redevelopment of Elizabeth Street's southern end could finally begin later this year after the City of Melbourne gave the green light to construction works.

Long earmarked for renewal and once called an "ugly duckling" of the city by former Lord Mayor Robert Doyle, the works will create wider footpaths, an improved aesthetic and upgraded flood resilience on the stretch of road between Flinders St and Flinders Lane.

In total, pedestrians will see a basketball court-sized increase in space.

The project is part of a wider strategic shift at Town Hall for a merit-based approach to commuter space to better serve the nine in 10 people who navigate the city on foot.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the Elizabeth St intersection immediately outside Flinders Street Station was an important "gateway" to the CBD in need of renewal.

"Once COVID-19 restrictions have lifted,

we'll have more than 9300 people pounding the pavement at the Elizabeth St intersection during evening peak hour," she said.

"We want to extend the footpath on the eastern side of Elizabeth St to double the amount of space for pedestrians. Congestion will be reduced and pedestrian access to tram stops and Flinders Street Station improved."

The southbound traffic lane on Elizabeth St will permanently close at the conclusion of the project to make room for pedestrians, while streetscape works will include the installation of new street furniture, bluestone paving and greenery.

A new underground drain network will also be installed to alleviate the chance of flooding, the last of which occurred in 2011 when a severe rainstorm caused flash flooding and disruptions to transport.

The project will further disrupt an area of the CBD already undergoing significant works as part of the Metro Tunnel project.

Cr Capp said neither nearby works nor the

current pandemic would impact on the council's plans.

"We've had a few comments more recently suggesting that while we're in COVID-19, is it appropriate to be considering projects like this. I would say that this is one of the projects that represents the transformation of areas in our city to where we want them to be; where they're going to be safe because they can accommodate the enormous pedestrian flows that happen throughout the day."

The council's chair of planning Cr Nicholas Reece said the upgrades had been planned for some time.

"Undertaking works in such a popular and landmark city location was always going to require balancing the needs of city residents, workers, businesses as well as coordinating with other nearby developments and construction," he said.

"We're a step closer to starting this project and making changes to benefit thousands of Melburnians every day." ●



▲ A revitalised Elizabeth St streetscape near Flinders St.

REBUILDING MELBOURNE'S ECONOMY WITH STIMULUS AND RATES RELIEF

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Melbourne hard. Business and retail have been severely impacted, tourist visitation has plummeted and international students are doing it tough.

The City of Melbourne is taking action to respond to the pandemic, and protect jobs and businesses. The Council's draft Annual Plan and Budget 2020-21 invests a record \$50 million in a COVID-19 Recovery Package and implements a freeze on rate increases for residential and non-residential properties.

With a proposed total budget spend of \$632 million, the draft Budget is designed to support ratepayers, strengthen our community and rebuild the local economy. The City of Melbourne is doing all it can to help businesses thrive again, create jobs and bring the city back to its vibrant best.

COVID-19 has a combined impact of more than \$100 million on the City of Melbourne's draft Budget and rebuilding Melbourne's economy will take time and hard work. For the first time in more than 30 years, the Budget will be in deficit. This will help the City of Melbourne support our business community and invest in infrastructure and stimulus as a path to recovery.



DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN AND BUDGET 2020-21 SNAPSHOT

Major investment

-  Rates freeze for commercial and residential properties
-  Infrastructure: **\$168.5 million**
-  COVID-19 Recovery Package: **\$50 million**
-  Transport: **\$41 million**
-  Climate action: **\$32 million**
-  Major events: **\$19 million**
-  Arts: **\$17 million**
-  Community facilities: **\$12.5 million**

Infrastructure

The City of Melbourne will invest \$168.5 million in infrastructure for our local community and economy, including getting on with the Queen Victoria Market precinct renewal, restoring Melbourne Town Hall and delivering women's sporting facilities. In addition, a package of infrastructure projects are being prepared to present to the Victorian and Australian governments. These shovel-ready projects will create jobs, stimulate Melbourne's economy and protect the city's liveability.

Major events

The City of Melbourne will invest \$19 million in major events in a bid to entice people back to the city once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

Protecting arts and culture

The City of Melbourne will invest \$17 million in artists and arts organisations in the coming year through grants, investment in public art and programming. This will also support creatives to continue working through the shutdown by developing new works and online projects.



Supporting the Queen Victoria Market precinct renewal

Combatting social isolation and supporting rough sleepers

The City of Melbourne will invest up to \$2 million this year to support people who are homeless, as well as investing in programs to address loneliness and social isolation among seniors. This includes \$330,000 towards a daily support team which connects rough sleepers with accommodation and support.

Supporting our knowledge economy

The City of Melbourne will invest \$1 million in renewing and maintaining

its traditional and digital library collections, and a further \$180,000 to upgrade Southbank Library. As part of this, \$200,000 will be invested in the Startup Action Plan. This plan is designed to boost the skills of local startups and promote Melbourne as a great place to start, grow and go global with a business.

Supporting international students

To support international students impacted by COVID-19, the City of Melbourne will invest \$50,000 to create pathways to employment and \$10,000 on wellbeing initiatives.



Supporting our knowledge economy

HAVE YOUR SAY

Public submissions on the draft Annual Plan and Budget 2020-21 are open until 5pm Wednesday 17 June 2020. Visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au



ADVERTISEMENT
Your City of Melbourne Community Update



COVID-19 RECOVERY PACKAGE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND RETAIL

The City of Melbourne is supporting small businesses and retail precincts through a \$50 million COVID-19 Recovery Package. This includes \$18.9 million in residential and commercial rate relief and direct grants to small businesses.

To attract people back into the city when the time is right, \$19 million will be set aside to be spent on major events and festivals. Council will collaborate with precincts to boost marketing and events and protect local shopping strips and neighbourhoods.

To improve safety and bolster community confidence as more people return to our streets, laneways and parks, \$6 million will go towards extra cleaning across our public areas. Traders can also request a free service to clean and sanitise door handles and other touch-point areas.

The COVID-19 Business Concierge Hotline has connected more than 4000 businesses with information specific to their individual needs.

RATES RELIEF FOR BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS

Since the pandemic hit, the City of Melbourne has continued to focus on fixed costs for businesses and residents. To support struggling ratepayers, rates will be frozen in 2020-21.

Fees and charges for community services such as recreation centres, children's services and libraries, will not be increased this year.



Supporting businesses and residents



YOUR COUNCIL

◀ Melbourne City Council (from left):

Cr Susan Riley, Cr Kevin Louey, Cr Beverley Pinder, Cr Nicolas Frances Gilley MBE, Lord Mayor Sally Capp, Cr Nicholas Reece, Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood, Cr Rohan Leppert, Cr Cathy Oke, Cr Philip Le Liu, Cr Jackie Watts OAM.

Council's vision

Find out more about the Council's shared vision for the city, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/councilplan

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Hoping to survive

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Rhonda Dredge
LOCAL NEWS

The CBD's prime hipster hang-outs could be up for a shake-out as cafes begin the slow process of wooing back their customers.

Degraves St has been dead for two months, Centre Place on a drip feed and Flinders Lane empty.

Journal, once a popular meeting place for the city's literati, is offering a daily toastie.

RMB Cafe on the city's grooviest corner, has coffees and that's all. They're grateful for the support of workers from the Telstra building next door.

"You can't do hospo from home," Uma Jahan, a barista at Journal, said. The café closed for a month but is now getting by with a few regulars.

One customer with an office in Degraves St worked from home to protect his immuno-suppressed mother. Since the relaxing of restrictions last week he has returned to his city office.

Another customer, Mark Phelan, has a practice in the nearby Nicholas Building and he's coped with the eerie emptiness of the CBD.

"Winter is a great time of the year," he said. "The sun shines down Centre Place at 1.15pm. You get about 30 minutes."

Gone are the days when a barista had a line of orders to fill and speed was of the essence. Now customers are staying to talk while waiting for their coffees.

"You can be social without being physically close," Jarrod Cross said, who was on duty with Uma. He used to be too busy to chat but now he likes to see a spring in customers' steps.

"You might never see someone again but you get a smile out of them," he said.

Good, old-fashioned sociability might save some businesses but others cannot survive on a trickle of customers.

Laneway Greens across the street from Journal has done a complete redesign of its business during the lockdown.

"We were lucky," CEO Richard Docherty

"We reacted quickly. We shut down the restaurants. We had a product available in a week."



said. "We reacted quickly. We shut down the restaurants. We had a product available in a week. We were one of the first to the market. We got a bit of traction."

Their new product, lunch boxes with pre-cooked grain, curries and vegies for steaming or roasting, was well-received, he said. "There was mass hysteria at the beginning."

Docherty said his retail outlets (two in the CBD and one in Richmond) had access to about 50,000 customers. Now the business is delivering healthy meals throughout Victoria.

"It (the lockdown) made us think differently. No one was coming to us so we had to go to them," he said. The company launched a new website on Monday and reduced the number of meals from seven to five, three Melbourne boxes and two plant boxes.

At the local level, however, they might have to give up their Flinders Lane store.

"I feel that the next 12 months to 18 months will be challenging," Docherty said. "We're paying rent. Bringing staff into the CBD may not be a viable option. I've got no idea how many people will return but our business will survive." ●



▲ Familiar faces at Journal: Uma Jahan and Jarrod Cross.



▲ Laneway Greens chefs Warren Flanagan (left) and Ash Ellis (right) forging a new healthy online business.

Pop-up bike lanes to ease looming congestion

WORDS BY David Schout
PHOTOGRAPHY BY John Tadigiri
TRANSPORT

The City of Melbourne will install 12 kilometres of pop-up cycling lanes to help the city deal with expected traffic chaos as COVID-19 restrictions ease.

Facing reduced public transport capacity and gridlock on the roads, workers are being urged by the council to jump onto two wheels to ease the commuter strain.

The temporary lanes will be created by removing on-street parking in busy pedestrian areas, which will also allow for wider footpaths.

Details on the locations of the new lanes had not been finalised by *CBD News*' deadline, although the state's peak cycling group Bicycle Network advocated their installation on Exhibition, Elizabeth, Little Collins and Little Bourke streets.

The group has recorded a significant increase in numbers on bike paths throughout Melbourne during COVID-19, and said the move should be a permanent one.

"Bike rider numbers have boomed in Melbourne so it's great that something is being done to make sure we can keep riding and maintain physical distancing," CEO Craig Richards said.

"When restrictions begin to lift we won't be able to use public transport like we used to. Bike lanes will be a vital part of our new transport mix."

The decision by Town Hall follows moves by other cities such as Vancouver, Milan, Berlin, Auckland and Paris to install pop-up cycling infrastructure.

The RACV has also backed the move, calling on other councils to follow the City of Melbourne's lead.

"We are concerned that the road network will be overwhelmed with people driving for more trips, causing delays that cost business and frustrate commuters," senior planner Stuart Outhred said.

"To mitigate this, there is likely to be a need for people to avoid travelling at peak times, to work from home where possible, and ride or walk, especially for short journeys."

It reiterated the need to instil safe options for cyclists, and said the move simply made sense.



"This is a low-risk, low-cost approach to allow people to walk or ride bikes by reallocating road space," Mr Outhred said.

The council has, for some time now, been strong advocates for commuters swapping four wheels for two.

However, research conducted as part of its 10-year transport strategy released last year suggested four in 10 people found cycling in Melbourne "unsafe and intimidating".

As such, it committed to increasing the level of protected cycling lanes from 6km to 50km by the end of 2030.

Pro-cycling Lord Mayor Sally Capp has said the long-term project would "increase rider safety and encourage more people to ride bikes" ●



We are concerned that the road network will be overwhelmed with people driving for more trips, causing delays that cost business and frustrate commuters.



Grillin' it: QVM cooking school wins council grant

WORDS BY *Jack Hayes*
BUSINESS

The City of Melbourne has awarded its first round of grants as part of their financial support package to help businesses adapt to COVID-19 restrictions. The program provides financial support for businesses to invest in online and e-commerce capabilities, take part in training and professional development and undertake capital works. Among the first successful applicants is the Queen Victoria Market's own Whack It On The Barbie, a barbecue and wood-fired cooking school providing virtual classes.

With more than 20 years of experience as a trained chef and food industry professional, Whack It On The Barbie owner and operator, Ryan Andrijich, said the grants would allow him to stay connected with his community during these times of isolation.

"What it has given me, or maybe pushed me into doing, is adding online retail to my website, which included equipment and gift packs," Mr Andrijich said. "From there we committed further to provide live events on Facebook and Instagram, to help people keep in touch and engage with us." With one half of his family Croatian vignerons, the other Australian farmers, food has always been in Mr Andrijich's blood.

Now with rise in popularity of American style barbequing and two decades of perfecting the art of cooking with fire and smoke, Mr Andrijich is inspiring a new generation of home cooks.

"I learnt that style of cooking at home. And I learnt how families do it, but I understand it like a chef does. So that allows me to teach it and explain it in a way that is more approachable," he said.

Although his cooking technique of using fire and smoke may be ancient in nature, Mr Andrijich's approach in evolving his business is anything but.

"It is easy to lead with the attitude of 'if it isn't broken, don't fix it.' Don't get me wrong, spending hours on the computer learning a program that [works out the] postage for products

I'm sending out, isn't exactly my number one priority," he said.

"But these are the little things, now that we have a bit of time, will allow us to add a bit more contingency to our business model."

"The support of both the City of Melbourne and Queen Victoria Market has been amazing. To know you're not going to drown in rent and costs while this has happened, has been incredible."

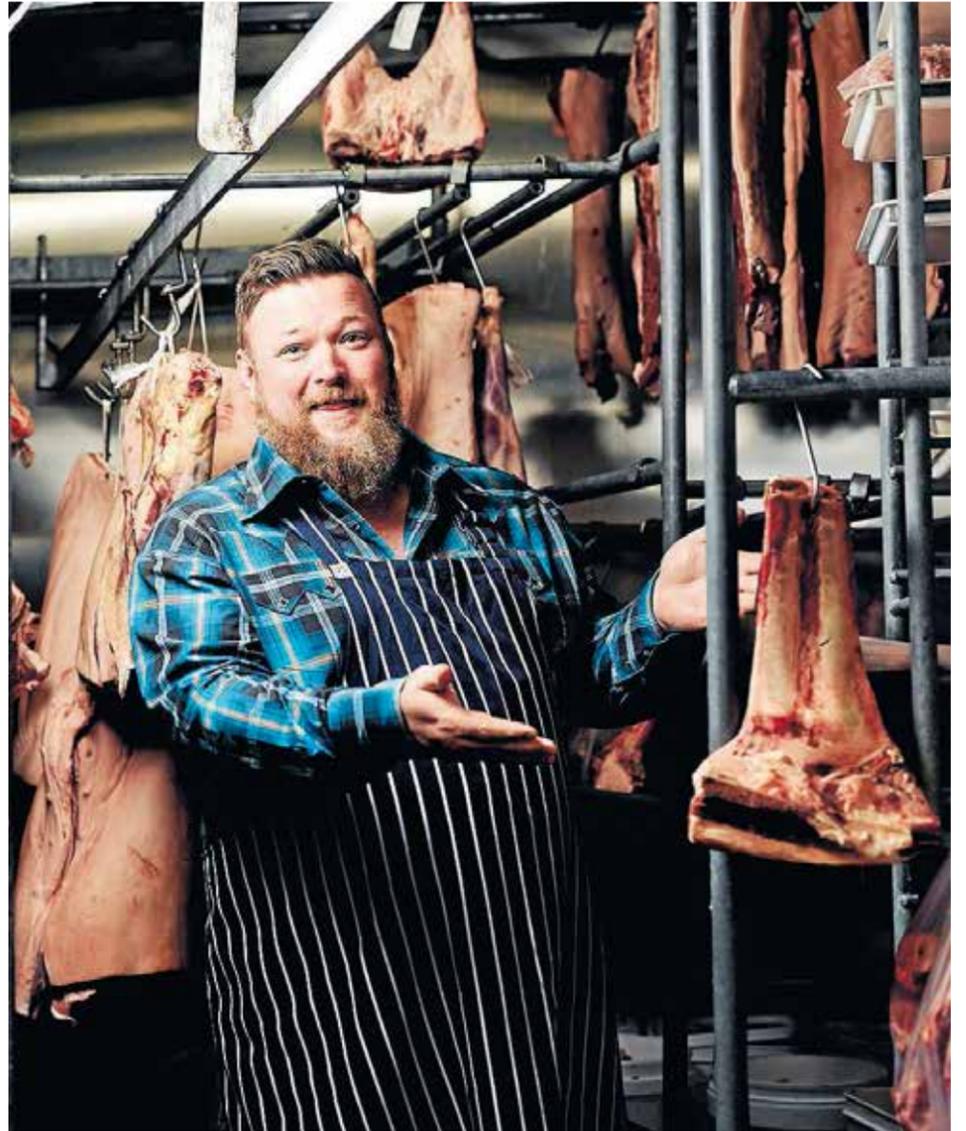
With almost 400 businesses sharing in \$1.7 million of funding, with the remaining \$3.3 million to be allocated as more grants are approved, Lord Mayor Sally Capp said this was just the beginning of the council's investment in Melbourne's business community. "Small businesses make up about 80 per cent of the total number of businesses in the City of Melbourne and are run by people and families who have turned an idea or a passion into an enterprise," the Lord Mayor said. "These businesses play a major role in providing jobs for Melburnians, and right now, they urgently need our support."

"We have received an overwhelming response to this grants program with thousands of small and medium-sized businesses applying for financial support."

"This goes to show that even in tough times, our local businesses are ready to tackle challenges head on, think differently and adapt, which is an admirable spirit we want to reward and support as much as we can."

Now with a new arsenal of American made Primo ceramic grills, Mr Andrijich is keenly awaiting the day he can re-open his doors and usher in a new era at Whack It On The Barbie.

"We hope everyone stays safe. When we get back to face-to-face classes, we are going to do it with caution and safety. We can't wait to get back to classes," he said ●



▲ Ryan Andrijich.



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For more information:
whackitonthebarbie.com

\$17 million for local art

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
ARTS & CULTURE

The City of Melbourne will invest \$17 million in the arts to keep Melburnians connected to our creative sector as the city responds to COVID-19.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the City of Melbourne's draft Budget for 2020-21 invested significantly in our arts and cultural sectors.

"Melbourne is Australia's undisputed arts and cultural capital, but these sectors need to be supported due to the severe downturn from COVID-19," the Lord Mayor said.

"Arts and culture are a huge factor in our city's nation-leading liveability and contribute \$31 billion annually to the Victorian economy."

"Investing in our creative talent now will cement our city's strengths, while protecting local jobs and supporting billions of dollars in economic activity. More arts and culture in Melbourne means local businesses thrive and more people stay in jobs."

Arts, Culture and Heritage portfolio Chair Councillor Rohan Leppert said the funding would enable creatives to continue to work through the shutdown by developing new works and online projects.

"We will invest \$4.6 million for arts programming and artist support across our ArtPlay children's space at Birrarung Marr, the Signal creative studio for young people along Flinders Walk and our Arts House contemporary performance space in North Melbourne," Cr Leppert said.

"An injection of \$1.5 million will boost public art projects to make our city streets and open spaces more interesting and vibrant for the benefit of everyone who enjoys our public spaces."

"Our Test Sites public art program is now open for expressions of interest with a pool of \$125,000 available. Grants of up to \$5000 will be made to 25 artists to participate in this online public art project."

"In collaboration with Testing Grounds, we hope the artists will be able to come together and share their projects once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted."

Testing Grounds program director and curator Arie Rain Glorie said the public art program was a rare opportunity for artists.

"Testing Grounds has been a partner with the City of Melbourne on this program since the beginning of last year. Normally artists would get the opportunity to come to Testing Grounds and get advice on doing public art and go through ideas," he said.

"Because the site is closed due to COVID-19 the City of Melbourne has approached us to do it as a virtual program, where people get paid to research and develop an idea."

"It's open to all types of creative practice, and at all different levels of



▲ A previous Test Site workshop held at Federation Square.

"[It's] a rare opportunity for artists to do research and development without the pressure of presentation."



experience. In previous years artists had to test a physical public artwork, whereas now we will help them get pitch ready."

This takes much of the pressure out of the program, while the financial support has been raised significantly.

"It's a really great opportunity that can only be beneficial to artists particularly in that it's not so outcome focused, a rare opportunity for artists to do research and development without the pressure of presentation," he said.

Cr Leppert said the council was also providing funding for multi-year grants.

"We're also providing \$4.2 million in annual and multi-year arts grants. We have lifted our annual arts grants pool to \$850,000 and will recommence indexation of multi-year grants to support small, medium and independent arts organisations," he said.

"We are thrilled to be delivering YIRRAMBOI in 2021, showcasing outstanding First Nations artists. Our arts grants framework will include \$125,000 in support for artists with a focus on contemporary Aboriginal works to deliver as part of YIRRAMBOI."

Expressions of interest for the Test Sites 2020 program can be made online until May 31 ●

CBD LOCAL

“You feel part of something bigger, something with a pulse”

For many people with young families, COVID-19 restrictions have been both a blessing and a curse.

On the one hand, being bound to a confined space for extended periods of time has tested patience levels.

But on the other, parents have been able to spend large amounts of quality time with their kids - a luxury rarely afforded during the business of day-to-day life.

McKillop St resident Michael Munson has experienced these ups and downs during the past two months.

More positively, the ABC employee has been able to spend lots of time with his six-year-old son.

“There’s been some really nice bonding during this time,” he told *CBD News*.

“It’s not often you get to spend so much time with your kids. Everyone works all the time these days, so you never really get a chance to slow down.”

But lockdown has also been tough, for him, his partner and son.

In particular, a 14-hour weekday window for construction work during the pandemic (the City of Melbourne is allowing work from 6am to 8pm) has made things especially difficult.

And with at least four construction sites within a 50-metre radius of his apartment in the Excelsior building, continuous disruption has drained him.

“It’s been pretty horrific actually. The levels of noise and rumbling in the house has been quite amazing.

“It’s caused stress for everyone. We’re not the only ones either; there’s other kids in the building. There are high school kids and two who are starting uni this year in lockdown, too. You’ve got families working from home with their kids - it’s all a bit of a pressure cooker.”

Michael said the current situation was the worst it had been in his 10 years in the CBD.

“The only good thing among all this is that the works might be over with quicker.”

A decade ago, he and his partner stumbled upon their apartment, which sits between Bourke and Little Collins streets, and were surprised at both the size and price, which was far more affordable than the inner suburbs.

They took a punt, and haven’t looked back.

He described the city - despite the current situation - as “exciting” and “stimulating”.

“We like being around people. When we go away then come back, there’s always a realisation that this is good place to live,” he said.

“You feel a part of something bigger, something with a pulse.”

Michael and his partner, a contemporary dancer and choreographer, both work close to the city, and spend little time commuting.

They don’t own a car and get by walking, cycling or taking public transport.

They also do their shopping at Queen Victoria Market - nicely ticking the boxes of quintessential CBD living.

Perhaps most pleasing to them is that, despite being surrounded by high-rise buildings, there’s a collective spirit with those nearby.

“Within our building there’s a really strong sense of community. There are other families, many who work in really interesting areas. We often get together.”

Many are owner-occupiers (something he said was “probably unique”) who have lived in the same apartment for well over a decade.

“I have more of a sense of community now than when I lived in Prahran because you’re bumping into people all the time.”

A lifetime musician, Michael works as a sound librarian at the ABC.

This journey began in his university days, when during a period on exchange at the



University of California San Diego he “walked into a job” in the music department.

When he returned home he found jobs in different music libraries around town, before landing the position at the national broadcaster.

There he works in a team of four, looking after the entire network of audio for both TV and radio.

“It’s quite a rare job I guess. I don’t know many others. Right now it’s really busy. Music is back,” he said with a laugh.

“There’s a lot of request shows and people playing music, I guess, to fill some air time. We’re flat out.”

As a long-term CBD resident, he feels strongly that everyone needs to be doing more to address homelessness within the Hoddle Grid.

“We are extremely privileged to have a home in the Melbourne CBD as so many sleep rough. We need to find a place for these people to call home for any repair to begin.” ●



David Schout

JOURNALIST

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TRADER PROFILE



Market favourite reopens



The menu has also changed. Daytime dishes remain the same but a wide range of traditional curries from Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia will be introduced for dinner.



“The assistance has been really great, without it we would have been busted,” he said.

While the food court has been shut, cafes in the market are allowed to seat up to 20 people internally. Outside tables are four metres apart from each other on Victoria St.

The market and the City of Melbourne have provided great support, according to Mr Sivaraj.

“It’s a big blow for the market too. Even if they were open there would be no people and no tourists,” he said.

“I hope this soon comes to an end and people forget and return to the markets,” Mr Sivaraj said. “We hope other people come from all over Australia to the markets and we are really looking forward to it.”

“People might not be able to travel to Asian places for a while. They can come here to eat Drums. We seem to have depended too much on overseas tourists, so in the meantime, this will help move the economy.”

The menu has also changed. Daytime dishes remain the same but a wide range of traditional curries from Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia will be introduced for dinner.

Drums has been around since 1996, exposing Melbournians and visitors to Sri Lankan and Indian food.

The group is involved in a number of street food festivals and markets and has a permanent spot at the Dandenong Market selling Kothu Roti year-round.

As it stands, Drums is open from Thursday to Sunday between 10am and 3pm and between 4pm and 9pm, Thursday through Saturday.

Orders can be placed through UberEats, Door Dash and Deliveroo.

drumscafe.com.au ●

WORDS BY *Tamara Clark*

Drums Café in the Queen Victoria Market (QVM) has reopened with a focus on takeaway food and delivery after recent COVID-19 restrictions forced the business to close.

This followed seven weeks of no income for the business as the QVM was shut as well as all of Drums’s pop up locations.

With income and sales having fallen almost 95 per cent due to COVID-19, owner Vijay Sivaraj said he had never experienced such financial difficulty in his life.

He said the market’s support of three months of rental assistance for food stores had been critical for his business.



Flinders St traffic changes for Town Hall Station works

Road users and pedestrians in Melbourne's CBD can expect significant changes from late May as work on the Metro Tunnel Project's Town Hall Station moves up a gear.



From early June, vehicles travelling on St Kilda Rd towards the CBD will no longer be able to turn left into Flinders St. Vehicles can access the west of the CBD by using Kings Way, Southbank Boulevard and Russell St.

Flinders St westbound will remain open to traffic.

The Flinders St pedestrian crossing between St Paul's Cathedral and Federation Square will temporarily close in early June.

This crossing will remain shut for up to 20 months, but an alternative signalised crossing will be open near Hosier Lane in late May, allowing pedestrians to cross Flinders St between Federation Square and Hosier Lane.

The traffic changes are taking place after months of planning and significant consultation with stakeholders.

The changes improve safety at one of Melbourne's busiest intersections for drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and tram users as larger trucks enter and exit the Federation Square acoustic shed while tunnelling and excavation progresses.

Works on the new station are ramping up with three road headers now digging deep under Swanston St to remove up to 140,000 cubic metres of rock and soil as part of Town Hall Station construction.

Using larger trucks will more than halve the number of trucks needed, meaning fewer large vehicle movements around the City Square and

Flinders Quarter construction sites alongside Swanston St.

The traffic changes will allow trucks to use the quickest, safest and most efficient route to exit the CBD, which is to travel eastbound along Flinders St and access the M1.

Wayfinding signage will be used to guide pedestrians and drivers toward the alternative routes, and the road network will be monitored in real time to respond quickly to any incidents or congestion.

These changes will be in place for approximately two years. Road users are encouraged to plan ahead.

Work on the Metro Tunnel is continuing as part of the Victorian Government's critical transport infrastructure program, with strict protocols in place to protect construction crews, consistent with the latest advice from the Chief Health Officer.

This includes modifying construction activities to maintain physical distancing, enhanced industrial cleaning and additional hygiene measures ●

For more information:
metrotunnel.vic.gov.au

Putting the relationship first

The massive crack of thunder and the blindingly bright flashes of lightening smashed the darkness in my bedroom to smithereens and snapped me from my slumber at 3am in the morning.

But the one thing that kept me awake for the rest of the night was the image of the man that had literally positioned himself inside a bridge to sleep. As that man's mind began to relax and his body slowly began to recuperate from the hours upon hours that he had spent mindlessly wandering the streets of the city, he had needlessly put his life at risk by sleeping on the very edge of a rapidly and unexpectedly rising Yarra River.

People are doing all they can to ensure that the city's most vulnerable are kept alive.

The City Salvos do all they can to not only keep people alive, but to actually give them a life.

Many of the people that we see have convinced themselves that the rest of society views them as nothing more than human garbage. Some even refer to themselves as being human cardboard - one dimensional creatures that have nothing of any worth whatsoever to contribute to society. I understand that this is the messaging that they have had thrust upon them right throughout their lives.

That is why at the City Salvos at Bourke St, we have moved from a transnational model of care to a relationship first approach to caring for the individual. Rather than having a person receive a bag of food and be sent on their way, we are absolutely committed to "the long haul" with individuals. If we are going to see significant transformation occur in people's lives and circumstances, then there must be significant investment of time and resources for the long-term, simply because every single individual is worth it.

To be able to effectively implement this model we need to ensure that we have adequate resources to do it.

This month The Salvation Army is running its annual Red Shield Appeal. For the first time in 55 years, we are unable to door knock because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, we are encouraging people, if they are able, to donate online at tiny.cc/project614

Together we can ensure that no one is left in need ●



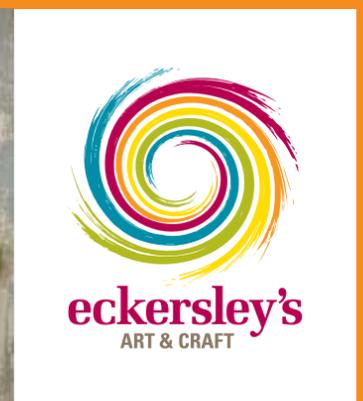
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For more information visit metrotunnel.vic.gov.au



**More trains,
more often**



HISTORY

And there she was, just riding down the street ...

(With apologies to Manfred Mann)

A horsewoman stopping to pose for a photo opportunity is not something you'd expect to see in the centre of Melbourne, even in 1929 when this photo was taken. But here she is on a sunny winter's day, correctly kitted out, riding her horse along Exhibition St.

We don't know who she is, why she's there, or where she's heading, but she's just come from the direction of the Yarra River, so perhaps she's come from the Tan, Melbourne's answer to Hyde Park's Rotten Row. This almost two-and-a-half-mile (four-kilometre) tanbark horse-riding track circuits the Royal Botanic Gardens. It's been a favourite horse-riding spot for Melburnians since the early 20th century and it will continue to be until the 1960s. Move forward to 2020 and it has a different surface and is known as the Tan Track, but it's still one of Melbourne's go-to places, and probably Melbourne's most popular walking and running track.

Our horsewoman is posing near the corner of Collins St and the pedestrians turning the corner there are well rugged up, so despite the sunshine, it must be a chilly day. No trams are in sight and the street is almost empty of traffic, so it's probably a weekend – Saturday afternoon once the shops are closed, or Sunday.

On the left of the photo is the Occidental Hotel. There's been a hotel on this site since 1848. It's a favourite with the rich and famous. For decades the society columns of the local newspapers report on its wedding receptions, parties and country, interstate and overseas visitors, including Dame Nellie Melba, who stays there frequently, admiring its homely atmosphere.

In 1929, when the photo was taken, the Occidental is run by Mrs Mary Baird, whom journalist Clive Turnbull considered "a great exemplar of the best traditions of hotelkeeping". In a 1954 article in *The Herald* newspaper, he waxed lyrical about Mrs Baird's hospitality: "Mrs Baird knew all about her regular guests, their likes and dislikes, the state of their health, the fate of their relatives. To be greeted by Mrs Baird was like being received by some old and understanding friend".

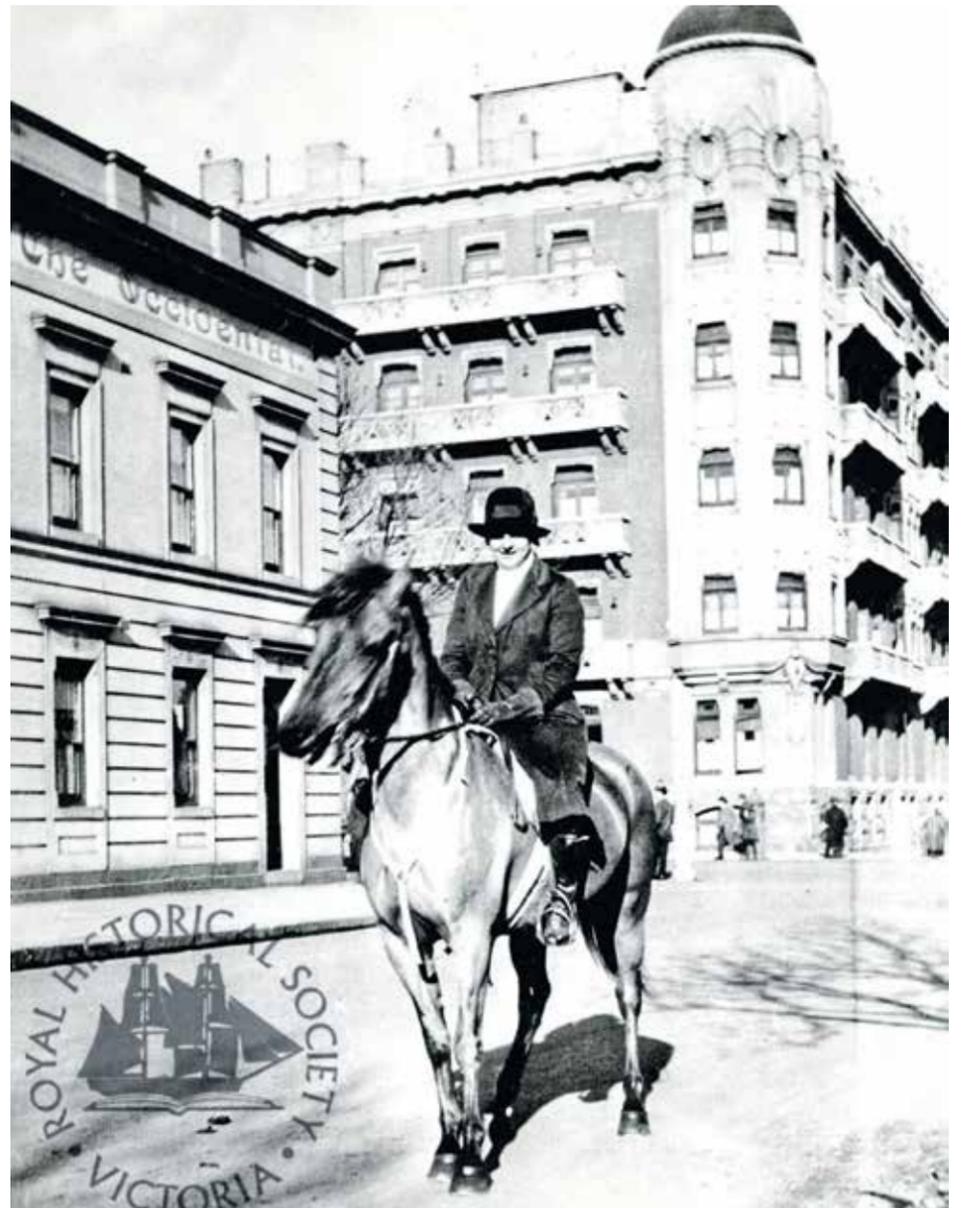
Maybe our horsewoman is one of Mrs Baird's guests. It's unlikely to be Mrs Baird herself – she is 60 years old in 1929. Age does not stop her presiding over her hotel, though. She is its chatelaine from 1928 until just before her death in January 1944 aged 75.

Prominent in the background of this photo is Lister House, designed by architects Oakden and Ballantyne in 1916. The basement, ground and first two floors are occupied by doctors and dentists, but above that are residences – flats – a concept in modern living that is new to Melbourne's CBD. In some ways they can be seen as a 1920s version of the apartments that are scattered throughout the city in the 2000s, but they are the height of modernity in the 1920s, providing permanent homes for newlyweds and empty-nesters, pied-à-terres for well-off country families and city bases for longer-stay travellers.

Both buildings are gone now. Lister House, built in 1916, was demolished in 1969 and Collins Place has taken over that corner. The Occidental Hotel was demolished in the late 1950s to make way for the Reserve Bank building, so ending more than a century of occupation that began with the Duke of York Hotel in the goldrush era of the 1850s. Such is the way of things that the site is under redevelopment once more.

These two inter-war buildings were part of the Collins St landscape during a period when to refer to the "Paris end" needed no explanation. Here were elegant buildings in a tree-lined street, the haunt of sophisticated individuals sipping coffee at outdoor cafés (just a few and only for a short time in the late 1950s) or dropping into a bistro or bar before heading off for an evening's entertainment at the theatre (this was the theatre district, too). Then back to the Occidental for a late night supper, perhaps. Or home to the Lister House and a neat, modern home away from home.

As to the horsewoman, her presence jars – she is out of time and out of place. She belongs in an "upstairs downstairs" world, one that is fast disappearing. This is the very end of the "Roaring '20s", an era that epitomised the shaking off of the old order and an exuberant embracing of



▲ Occidental Hotel and Lister House, corners of Exhibition and Collins streets with horseman in foreground, C1929.

new ways of living after the devastation of the First World War and its aftermath.

What neither photographer nor subject knows is that those years of prosperity are about to give way to another world-changing catastrophe – an economic depression that will only end a decade later with another war ●



Dr. Cheryl Griffin
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

RESIDENTS 3000



When the going gets tough ...

City residents get going. The online world is buzzing in the time of COVID-19 as humans do what they do well. Innovate. Collaborate.

We residents live in a beautiful city. Have you noticed that Father Autumn does not know about the virus? April and May often show Melbourne's weather at its best and this year is no exception. We are so lucky to have extensive parks in which to enjoy the changing season even with social distancing being observed. Plane trees in the city streets are at their best right now.

Residents 3000 is keeping in touch with its members through regular posts on Facebook, Instagram and our website. Community interest in what is happening is evident through increasing numbers of views, shares and likes. Socialising, gossiping and generally keeping in touch online is filling the gap left by not being able to hold our regular monthly forums.

Your committee is meeting via Zoom every two weeks to keep the organisation on track. In the past month, committee members have met (online) with the Lord Mayor Sally Capp and Cr Nicholas Reece to communicate residents' needs in the lockdown period. The committee is heartened by the response from governments, charities and the police to help accommodate the homeless people. We are urging that such action continues over time as a way to solve a complex problem both now and after

the pandemic. It is amazing how things tend to happen in times of crisis.

Residents 3000 has been talking with our members of parliament to ensure there is good two-way information flow. Where necessary, information is passed on through our social media outlets and member mailings. We are involved in responses to the current Royal Commission into mental health, which is important as it impacts the homeless problem. We are urging members to support our local small businesses and have been posting stories about what they are doing and how they are managing to serve their customers in innovative, safe ways.

Our representation to City of Melbourne planning has not stopped. Currently there is a renovation in the eastern end of Bourke St (54-62 known as the Job Warehouse or Crossleys Building, built 1848-49 and is heritage-listed) that wants to open until 3am in the morning. Residents are opposing such laws that have no regard for the sleep needs of the next-door neighbours.

Remember that we are not living in the time of the devastating Spanish Flu that plagued the world from 1918-20. Economies were in dire straits after the Great War. People were

suffering. Food was scarce.

But today we have technology to help us battle the virus. We start from a strong economy. But what we must do, is collaborate with one another. Work together to stop the transmission of the virus. A virus without hosts to reinfect cannot survive.

So fellow members of Residents 3000, if you have the slightest sniffle, headache or sneeze get yourself tested. Don't touch the lift buttons, no shaking hands, work from home if you can, and above all, be kind to your fellow citizen. Don't forget to smile! Find little things that are wonderful, like a beautiful day or a colourful autumn leaf and cherish those things. With that we can win ●



Sue Saunders
VICE PRESIDENT OF RESIDENTS 3000 MELBOURNE





A concierge's perspective on vertical living

Many vertical villages count their concierge as among their most valued feature, but how do these "keepers of the keys" view our vertical lifestyle?

Often the first person encountered when starting your vertical living journey is the building concierge.

It was for me.

And I really liked the idea that I wasn't entering an anonymous building - that there was someone readily contactable and knowledgeable in the ways of this apartment building.

At that time, I wasn't quite sure what to expect from a vertical village concierge.

I was aware that the origins of the role could be traced back to old France where the royal household employed a concierge to cater to the various needs of guests and be the "keeper of the keys" to the many castle rooms.

And I was also aware that rather than dying off, this role was alive and well in a range of sectors - albeit with a less regal focus. There is the familiar hotel concierge who helps visitors secure those tricky theatre tickets, then there is the airport concierge and, more recently, the hospital concierge. And with a nod to their exclusive past, the well-to-do can avail themselves of the services of a personal concierge (not to be confused with one's personal assistant or butler!)

But what could I expect from a vertical village concierge?

According to the US National Concierge Association (and yes, there are several such groups), duties will differ from place to place. But being well-connected and passionate about their role are invaluable traits. Also high on the list is the ability to listen and observe and then make sense of what is seen and heard.

So, what have our vertical village concierges observed about our vertical lifestyle?

For this I turned to James Naidu - my building's concierge who introduced me into the

world of vertical living.

Originally from the corporate sector, James is a five-and-a-half-year concierge veteran. Currently based in Victoria Point in Docklands, James is very well known to the more than 1000 residents who dwell there, as well as the many service providers and delivery staff who frequent our building.

I first asked this keeper of the keys what he had observed as the best feature of vertical living.

"Safety" was James's ready reply - "without a doubt, it's safety".

Digging a little deeper, I asked what form this safety took.

James noted the visible security measures that are now common across our buildings as well as the growing monitoring services. But more than this, James said that residents felt safe in vertical villages as they did not have to deal with every issue on their own.

"Compare that to living in a house. If something happens, it's all up to you."

This means that if you are living solo, or are new to the country or are not very physically active, if you live in a vertical village, you have a known first port of call. And this, according to James, is a great benefit of vertical living.

Turning next to key challenges confronting our sector, James's view is that the biggest issue on our horizon is designing new ways to live with COVID-19.

And he emphasises "with".

In his opinion, it's not really going to be "post-COVID-19" anytime soon.

Rather, James muses, it will be more "how can we live safely and comfortably while this virus is still around?" And with restrictions slowly lifting, the challenge (and perhaps opportunity) is for each building to comprehensively review how can we live together, balancing safety with comfort.

This led nicely onto our third question about

his biggest challenge as concierge and James then spoke about the issues which consumed a great deal of his time.

It will likely come as no surprise that the top complaint was noise - and that our "stay-at-home orders" have seen a dramatic increase in the number of noise complaints with a corresponding drop in people's tolerance of these incidents. Resolving such issues is where a seasoned concierge shows their mettle and James's strategy is to take a personal approach by directly engaging with all parties and seeking reasonable resolution - and, in so doing, "educating people about standards".

For our final topic, I asked James about what innovations he saw for our sector.

Perhaps drawing upon his corporate background, James nominated the trend towards better systems integration, especially the ability for residents to access information in the way they wanted.

I also asked his opinion about some trends, including the move towards 24/7 concierge services. His advice is that we need to be very clear about this role and, in particular, whether this is a concierge or security position - or some new hybrid.

Regarding the demand for better and brighter amenities, James's view is that flashy facilities are exciting when people move in, but as time goes on, most don't utilise these. In his opinion, it is what is inside a resident's apartment that is more important - along with the face that greets you as you enter your vertical village! ●



Janette Corcoran

JANETTE CORCORAN IS ANAPARTMENT LIVING EXPERT.

LEARN MORE ON FACEBOOK.COM/SKYPADLIVING/

WE LIVE HERE

Cladding: are you on the funding list?

Does your building qualify for support from the state government's cladding rectification fund?

It's a common question and we were delighted to be approached recently by Cladding Safety Victoria (CSV) with an offer to explain the process in detail.

CSV was established last year to work with individual owners, identified by the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) as having extreme- or high-risk cladding, on the appropriate solution for their building.

CSV has been tasked with providing advice on how to reduce fire risk, helping owners to find qualified project managers and other professionals. In higher risk situations, CSV is responsible for funding approved works.

Despite the ravages of COVID-19, We Live Here was able to meet virtually with CSV to delve into the details.

Now we have a great deal of information to share with you ...

Meet your new Municipal Building Surveyor!

The Minister for Planning Richard Wynne has appointed the VBA as the Municipal Building Surveyor (MBS) for more than 400 buildings assessed as having the highest risk from cladding.

In these cases, the VBA has assumed the functions of the MBS from the relevant local government. This means that affected buildings in inner Melbourne will be dealing with the VBA rather than the City of Melbourne.

The audit

Through the state-wide cladding audit, the VBA has been working with owners' corporations (OCs) to identify buildings with combustible cladding to assess the relative risks for these buildings.

About 2200 buildings have been inspected and assessed through the VBA audit.

We have learnt that the state-wide cladding audit has resumed building inspections during COVID-19 restrictions, with protective equipment and social distancing measures.

If your building is to be inspected as part of the audit, you should receive a letter from the VBA. Building managers and OCs should also be contacted by the VBA prior to any inspection (We Live Here does know that notices have not always been received - if you have experienced this, please let us know). The inspection usually involves cutting out a piece of each different type cladding, each about the size of a CD. The holes will be plugged and sealed by the inspectors.

VBA sends the samples off for chemical and fire resistance testing. The inspection entails much more than samples. The extent, location and fire risk of all instances of cladding will be examined in detail. The inspectors will require access to as-built drawings and other documentation.

Four stages to determine eligibility for funding

There are four stages to determine eligibility. Your building must satisfy ALL criteria:

1. Deemed higher risk by the state-wide cladding audit;
2. Subject to a Building Notice or Order related to combustible external wall cladding;
3. Referred to CSV by either the VBA or the City of Melbourne; and
4. Prioritised for rectification by CSV.

To date, 487 buildings have been referred to the CSV. These buildings are now being

"prioritised". CSV says that it is reviewing 60 buildings a month.

Just before going to press we asked CSV how many buildings have already been approved for funding. We will update you in the next column.

Don't call us, we'll call you

If CSV determines that your building is eligible, they will contact your OC to invite participation in the funding program. That would be a day to celebrate!

The buildings that qualify will receive a great deal of assistance from CSV - much more than just the funds.

Understandably CSV wants to make sure that its money is being well spent, and it takes high-level oversight of the appointment of the quantity surveyor and project manager and builders - all from the state government accredited vendor panels.

Knowing that your project team has been accredited by the state government will be a great comfort for OCs.

One big question we put to CSV is what happens if the rectification is urgent and the building has to proceed with rectification without the government funding - could eligible buildings be reimbursed for costs already incurred? Good news - according to CSV, if the works are exclusively for cladding and due process has been followed, such costs could well be eligible for funding.

If you have any questions about the cladding rectification program or you have an experience you wish to share, please let us know. We will stay in close contact with CSV so that we can keep you up to date with developments.

Short-term operators crunched

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

COVID-19 and apartment living

Is your building changing any processes as Melbourne prepares for a post-COVID-19 reopening?

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

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LEARN MORE AT WELIVEHERE.NET



▼ Caitlyn with her spoodle Charlie.

Pet's Corner

A match made in heaven

“

Two-and-a-half-year-old spoodle Charlie loves to play tug of war with his owner, Caitlyn. The pair are a “match made in heaven”, she told CBD News last month. They get along fantastically well because both of them are both big time explorers.

”



WORDS BY *Tamara Clark*

While Melbourne has always been home to Charlie, it hasn't been so for Caitlyn and she said a perfect day for the couple was spent together scoping out new areas of the city and sometimes beyond.

Charlie loves the feeling of freedom and loves to be let off his lead when he can. Both Charlie and Caitlyn have ventured through each of the city's parks. And although he

stays on a lead at Flagstaff Gardens, it is still his favourite park to play in because there is so much to investigate.

Safety is paramount to Caitlyn. Charlie is a small creature and his enthusiasm can sometimes be taken as a threat! This little guy is camera shy but will do anything for treats.

“Charlie is an incomparable animal,” Caitlyn said. Being an animal lover, she has had many beautiful connections with dogs, but her relationship with Charlie holds the biggest and most special place in her heart ●

OWNERS' CORPORATION MANAGEMENT

Curbing bad behaviour with “positive architecture”

WORDS BY *Alex Smale*
OF THE KNIGHT –
OWNERS' CORPORATION MANAGERS

There is a concept within design known as “hostile architecture” which describes attempts to use built environment to modify behaviour. As soon as you learn about this you will start to see it everywhere.



A common example is skate stoppers, which are metal strips often on ledges and railings which are there to deter skateboarders. A more egregious example would be spikes placed on the ground to deter homeless people from resting.

From improper waste disposal to vandalism, bad behaviour is very common in strata properties. While it can be difficult to control the behaviour of residents, one thing committees do have some control over is the built environment. Committees should think about how they can modify their buildings to encourage good behaviour.

The problem with hostile architecture is that it has an oppressive effect on those who use these spaces. Coming home every day and seeing spikes or deterrents, would likely have a depressive impact on residents and does not

encourage community or pride in one's home.

There are ways for strata communities, however, to take the lessons of hostile architecture to do the opposite: amend the built environment in positive ways to encourage good behaviour. One example of this is the Oakland Buddha. In Oakland California one man was so tired of crime and rubbish being dumped on a corner in front of his house that he installed a Buddha figure feeling it would be a neutral symbol that would deter bad behaviour. The effect the Buddha had was more than anyone could have expected. Not only did the crime rate reduce and rubbish dumping stop, over time the local Vietnamese community turned the area into a shrine.

Another example within strata is a building in Melbourne that has a resident rubber duck,

named “Quackers” that watches over the car park. There is a sign next to him that explains that he is there to keep everyone safe and ensure no one parks in someone else's space.

It does not need to be as extreme as the installation of religious symbols or novelty toys, sometimes something as simple as placing a painting in the foyer can deter vandalism and have a positive influence on those who use the space. Studies have also shown that plants and green spaces can reduce crime rates. In Japan and Scotland, blue streetlights have been installed in an attempt to curb crime and suicide.

If strata committees want to curb bad behaviour, think beyond breach notices and signs and look to the building itself. You may be surprised the impact small changes to improve the environment can have ●

CRITIC

Keeping it light

Anna MacDonald works at the Paperback Bookshop at Bourke St and she's published a book of essays called Between the Word and the World that deals with the concept of distance.

The book claims to be about walking and being-in-the-world but it is quite academic in style.

Place is mostly used by MacDonald to explore poetics rather than personal engagement.

To be fair, the book was published before the pandemic lockdown, when fewer people took walking as seriously as followers of Walter Benjamin and Baudelaire.

Now walking has become a creative activity for the majority as a means of both exercise and making precious social contact with others, both planned and casual.

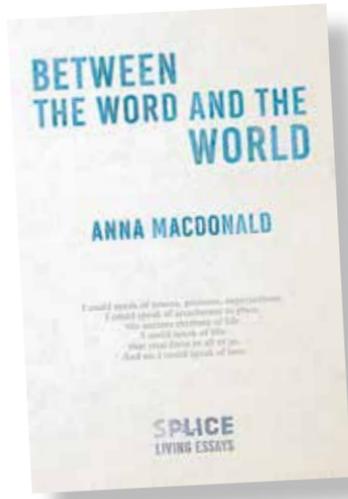
The book lacks what has kept many people going during a period dominated by screens – conversations with others while out on meanders.

“Looking” is deemed more important, possibly because it connects in a more direct way with the aesthetics of reading.

For the places in which MacDonald wanders most confidently are literary locations, including a Le Corbusier house with horizontal windows that restrict the inhabitants' views of the sea and sky.

Even though the partial perspective and lack of clarity are confusing to the protagonist of *OK, Mr Field*, he finds they create room for fantasy. When he unscrews the windows and the wind blows in the glass he is more susceptible to the world, according to MacDonald.

This is a lovely metaphor that challenges the view of a human as a French-inspired flaneur, blithely collecting observations and impressions on the path through life, in favour of one being overwhelmed by it.



▲ Between the Word and the World, Anna MacDonald, Splice Living Essays, 2019

MacDonald, unsurprisingly given her profession, loves text and narrative and the claim at the beginning of the book that she is more in the world than the word is strange.

By the eighth essay she is writing about twists of fate and strange doublings, storytelling strategies and postmodern games as she examines the subjectivities of the protagonists from the books she has reviewed.

Many ideas are explored, including some relevant to our current situation.

A protagonist from a short story in *Southerly* finds his conversations by Skype strangely empty and the moment he turns on his tablet he resents his own company.

By contrast, working with his hands to renovate his house “makes him feel real”.

An essay on *The Lonely City* provides a definition of being lonely as a desire for intimacy that is not fulfilled and in another on following the literary trail MacDonald castigates herself for not respecting the privacy of an author.

Books can fill this complex space between the company of people and the company of self and the views of this well-read bookseller are precious at a time like this.

Between the Word and the World is actually quite a dense book of literary criticism of work by Esther Kinsky, Katharine Kilalea and Olivia Laing, among others, that is presented in a light form ●



Coffee break

Gary proudly displayed his loyalty card

Journal Flinders Lane



Rhonda Dredge
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HERITAGE

Reflecting on heritage

The current shutdown has given many of us pause to reconsider our impact on the world and the way we structure our lives and build our cities, and heritage should take a place in that discussion.



Numerous studies show that heritage protection, among other community-focussed urban planning frameworks, can have a significantly positive impact on wellbeing, not only through materiality and nostalgia, but also in the kinds of spaces and human scale heritage buildings often provide.

Some of the hardest hit businesses over the past few months naturally have been live music, performance and arts spaces that rely on communities gathering together. This makes the continuing demolition of the Palace Theatre on Bourke St even more tragic, with a historic venue purpose-built for cultural activities over the long term removed, ironically for a small hotel that may not even be viable when it's construction ends due to a lack of international travel.

In a city where a storied heritage venue was emphatically seen as more valuable than the profits of a single developer and hotel chain, the anxiety felt across Melbourne's music scene right now may be somewhat abated.

It looks like the Walk Arcade is also currently moving ahead with plans for redevelopment while the city streets are empty. This will see heritage buildings demolished and Union Lane street art gone by the time we get back from a central site that could have been so much more than serviced apartments and more gentrified retail space.

If we create a planning culture where our smaller heritage buildings are truly valued as long-term assets, we'd also see far more unique spaces for creative, hospitality and economic activities open up when this temporary crisis ends, many of which are currently seen only as opportunities for more intensive, gentrified use and quick-buck developments.

We are going to see many calls over the next few months for a reduction in red and green tape, the removal of recently won rules over plot-ratios, setbacks and heritage preservation, and the fast-tracking of development approvals in a time where planning democracy and review is made physically harder.

Instead of caving in to short-term economic arguments, our decision-makers need to take this pause to look at the long-term opportunities for re-shaping heritage and planning discussion away from a developer-led process to one for all Melbournians ●



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MUSIC

Light Scape

Immerse yourself in a brilliant sound and vision show at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (RBGV) in June and July.

After the sun has set there will be a tremendous light show among the trees and gardens. Entitled *Light Scape*, the installation will run from June 19 to July 19. There will be large-scale installations, many lights on ornamental lakes and trees shimmering in brilliant lights.

This show follows on from the fabulous 2018 fire show that many Melbournians will fondly remember. Local artists involved will no doubt be inspired by shows such as the Gertrude Street Projection Festival, or maybe even the lights at Rendlesham Forest in England.

Originating from the Kew Botanic Gardens in the UK, this show has been a great spectacle for many years. Entry will be via the Observatory Gate on Birdwood Terrace, where the old school telescopes are to be found, across the road from the Shrine of Remembrance.

During this era of lockdowns, social distancing and isolation, there will no doubt have been some awesome music created out of this epoch. A short film that documented the spirit of Melbourne from the late 1990s is a film entitled *98:3000 Before Federation*. A couple of film makers documented the urban decay, and vast spaces that would be built on and developed in future years. In this virtual world people can see an edited version of this documentary on YouTube with a soundtrack by Melbourne band Mineral Sands. The full-length film screened at the 2002 Melbourne Fringe Festival at the Kaleide Theatre RMIT with a live soundtrack performed by Mineral Sands. Soundcloud has a channel devoted to the space rock Mineral Sands instrumental tracks with the streaming of *First Station*, one of the more popular tracks.

The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance is calling on all musos to tell the government how COVID-19 is affecting them.

A Senate Committee inquiring into the federal government's response to COVID-19 needs to hear from workers in the arts and entertainment about how the public health restrictions have impacted our industries. These two sectors were among the first and hardest hit, with tens of thousands of workers ineligible for JobKeeper and no sign of a rescue package from the government.

You can make a submission on the Parliamentary website or by emailing covid.sen@aph.gov.au. Submissions close on May 28. Many of Triple R's radio shows have been delivered via the DJs' home studio set-ups. To keep broadcasting in the current circumstances Triple R has been doing a stack of work to keep the shows happening. Visit the Triple R website for a behind-the-scenes look at all the broadcasters and their efforts to keep the music playing.

In its quest to highlight moments of artistic excellence, 3PBS will revisit the uncompromisingly honest Studio 5 Live session recorded by Mo'Ju on Homebrew back in August 2018. This was shortly following the release of her celebrated album *Native Tongue* but preceded her name change to Mo'Ju.

You can catch Mo'Ju on 3PBS on the night of June 1 ●



Chris Mineral
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保留历史遗留砖墙

墨尔本市政议员尼克·里斯(Nick Reece)的生活一如既往，他在菲茨罗伊(Fitzroy)的家中开了几天的Zoom网上会议，还照看着三个孩子。

撰稿: Rhonda Dredge

他在中央商务区(CBD)的外围工作，当他在附近的街道上锻炼的时候，他爱上了这里的砖墙。

他说：“墨尔本是一座用砖建造起来的城市”，并以Guilford 巷道为例。

“我喜欢旧砖墙的外观和纹理，使我想到了当初砌砖工人的辛勤劳动和技术，他们在100多年前一砖一瓦地建造了这些美丽的砖墙。”

里斯议员希望CBD恢复砖墙，并对现存的砖墙给予更多保护，尤其是内部砖墙。

COVID-19疫情的封锁让人们极度地意识到我们已经拥有了什么，许多人由此产生了要保护所拥有的愿望。

里斯议员说，最近在柯林斯(Collins)街1855年罗浮宫精品店附近拆除一堵砖墙时，他感到很“伤心”，因为在那条街上再也看不到那堵墙了。

“那堵墙并没有受到遗产保护，只因为它不是面向街道，但它是瑙鲁大厦(Nauru House)周围广场特征的一部分。

市政议员无权挽救砖墙，除非这些砖



墙获得遗产保护，但议员可以尝试改变人们的态度。

他说：“与过去相比，遗产管理有所加强，但都不适用于内部的砖墙，因此需要一个新的保护级别。”

地铁隧道工程的拆除工作中，Young and Jackson酒店的后方发掘了砖墙和青石墙，尽管不会销毁，但可能没有保护措施，来保持它们的重要性。

蓝石、山楂砖和红色熟料砖为墨尔本

城市增添了色彩。“在当今的预制墙、机械制造墙、倾斜平板墙和玻璃墙中，是无法获得同样个性感受的。”

市政最近引入了一个新的墨尔本设计指南C308，该指南提供了20:1的材料细节来保护这一重要性。“我们不想看到漂亮的砖墙被推倒，被取代。”

“目前的砖瓦趋势可能会是一波三折，如果做得好，那就行得通，但是，如果做得不好，那么看起来就像是廉价的人造砖

墙。”

在科林伍德(Collingwood)的皮尔(Peel)街，有一些很好的实例，可以说明如何在街道上使用这些砖块的。里斯议员希望看到这种创意能用在市中心，在玻璃墙塔底部使用砖块。

他说：“像这样的街道能考虑将新材料和传统材质相结合”，“我们看不出为什么不能在离地面最初的20米使用更高等级的材质。”



第三座大楼批准建造研究中心

位于中央商务区(CBD)北部边缘的第三座也是最后一座大楼已经获得墨尔本市政批准建造。

撰稿: David Schout

今年5月，市政议会批准了伊丽莎白(Elizabeth)街上一座18层办公楼的建造规划，该大楼靠近Haymarket的环形交叉路口附近，目前由Bob Jane T-Mart拥有和占用。

该项目地块被视为“伊丽莎白北部”规划的第三阶段，这是一个雄心勃勃的项目，旨在将整个街区改造成一个生物医学中心区域，以进一步支持墨尔本大学和其他研究机构的设施。

就在旁边，规划的第二阶段将由地

产开发商PDG为生物技术巨头CSL公司建造一个17层的设施，CSL承诺将其全球总部迁进此新楼。而规划的第一阶段将会是在Melford Motors遗产建筑的顶部建造一个教育设施。

市政规划主管尼古拉斯·里斯(Nicholas Reece)在5月5日举行的未来墨尔本委员会会议上承认，最近批准的办公大楼和CSL工程都大大超出了伊丽莎白街北端的首选高度限制。

他说：“如果五年前我们在一个控制60米高度的地点考虑建一座85米高的大楼，你可能会说提议者是在‘做梦’。”

电子烟禁令通过

撰稿: Tamara Clark

墨尔本市政一致通过了一项禁令，在市区指定区域内禁止使用电子烟和电子烟喷雾。

在5月5日的墨尔本未来委员会会议上，市政议员投票通过了一项议案，在《1987年烟草法案》的法律框架下，修改墨尔本市政的地方法律，禁止使用包括电子烟喷雾的电子烟。

市长萨利·卡普(Sally Capp)表示：“修正议案旨在进一步保护儿童和青少年避免接触、使用和被动接触电子烟，加强我们现有的无烟措施。”

“国家健康和医学研究委员会和联邦政府首席医疗官布伦登·墨菲(Brendan Murphy)认为，没有足够的证据证明电子烟具有戒烟辅助作用，并且医疗用品管理局(Therapeutic Goods Administration)还尚未评估电子烟是否可以作为戒烟的一种方法。”

卡普市长说，该修正案意味着把使用电子烟定义为“吸烟”，并且将在现有及未来

的无烟区域(如伯克(Bourke)街购物中心)禁止使用电子烟。

然而，市政议会的这一举措也遭到了社区中许多人的广泛批评，理性党(Reason Party)领袖菲奥娜·帕特恩(Fiona Paten)指出：“电子烟喷雾不是吸烟”，市政议员对电子烟喷雾有所误解。

她说：“该禁令弊大于利。”

市政议会还收到了众多反对这一举措的意见，许多人要求提供科学证据证明电子烟和吸烟一样有害，并质疑修正案到底是“关于健康还是赚钱问题”。

市长说：“墨尔本市政重视社区的健康和福祉，尤其是在当前的冠状病毒疫情期间以及疫情之后，这就是为什么我们正在考虑这项修正议案，以加强我们的无烟政策。”

她说：“对我们墨尔本市政来说，收入不是也从来不是实施禁烟令的考虑因素。我们的重点是教育人们了解我们的无烟区，而不是罚款。在2019年，我们对墨尔本所有无烟区内的吸烟行为开出了19张罚单。”

伊丽莎白街工程获准实施

墨尔本市政批准，伊丽莎白(Elizabeth)街南端的改造工程将在今年晚些时候实施。

撰稿: David Schout

该项目工程早就被指定为更新改造弗林德斯街(Flinders St)和弗林德斯巷(Flinders Lane)之间的道路，以创造出更宽的人行道、更美的街景和更强的抗洪能力。前市长罗伯特·道尔(Robert Doyle)曾称此段街道为该城市的“丑小鸭”。

改造后，为行人增加整个篮球场大小的空间。

该项目是市政基于优质的方法，更大范围战略转变的一部分，旨在提高通勤空间，更好地服务于穿越市区90%的行人。

市长萨利·卡普(Sally Capp)说，紧靠弗林德斯街车站外的伊丽莎白街十字路口是通往中央商务区(CBD)的重要“大门”，需要改造更新。

她说：“一旦COVID-19疫情的限制解

除，我们将有超过9300人在傍晚高峰时段穿越伊丽莎白街十字路人行道。”

“我们希望把伊丽莎白街东面的行人空间拓展一倍，让行人有更多的空间，减少拥挤情况，行人前往火车站和弗林德斯街地铁站的通道亦会改善。”

伊丽莎白街南端的行车道将在工程项目结束后永久关闭，为行人腾出空间，而街景工程将包括安装新的街道装饰、青石铺路以及绿化。

此外，还将安装新的地下排水管道网络，以减少洪水泛滥的可能性。最近的一次洪水泛滥就发生在2011年，当时由于一场暴雨导致洪水泛滥以及交通中断。

该项目施工将会更加阻碍CBD部分区域的交通，目前的地铁隧道项目工程施工已经影响了这些区域。

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Mama Alto's Hot Desk

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Torrey Atkin*
 ARTS & CULTURE

This time last year *CBD News* covered the Wheeler Centre's Hot Desk fellowships. Twenty-four writers were given a stipend and a workspace in the Wheeler Centre to work on their writing projects.

Much has changed – some of last year's winners even travelled to the Centre from regional and interstate areas. But the 2020 fellowships went ahead, and a Melbourne icon is among the fellows.

The name Mama Alto would stand out for many in the list of 21 talented winners. The jazz singer, cabaret artist and "gender transcendent diva" has made her way into the fabric of Melbourne's entertainment scene.

Now she is planning to use her fellowship to expand her artistic practice.

"I have always loved writing and the power of the written word, but I wanted to move into this area in a more mindful, meaningful and considered way," she said.

"In 2019, I was selected for the Creative Victoria program supporting intensive research and development, the Creators Fund, and I used my time and resources in the program to extend and deepen my practice as a cabaret artist - but it also lead to me embarking on my first major book, an exploration of 'the concept of the diva'."

Mama Alto said she emerged from that project a better artist and with the beginnings of an artist's book: a collated bricolage of essays, poetry, memoir, music writing and analysis.

She hopes by the end of her Wheeler Centre fellowship the book will be nearly complete.

The fellowships are, of course, adapted to our times. While an in-person writing space is out of the question, financial, professional and community support will be provided to the fellows in whatever way possible.

That's welcome news in a scenario where most artist's income has been totally uprooted,



and the future of the industry is up in the air.

"I am privileged to have found stable income at this time in a new role for an arts organisation, but I worry for artists who do not have that stability and I try to do what I can to amplify that message," Mama Alto said.

"This is a tough time to create in - not only are artists under the usual pressures to perform or create or write brilliantly, but now there are added the challenges of digital delivery with whatever technology might already be at hand."

"There's arguably a great deal more effort, energy and stress in this way of creating - for far less financial and spiritual gain."

For Mama Alto, like most Melburnians, the

physicality of the CBD has been a part of their experience of the arts. Even while that physical dimension has, for the time being, disappeared, her fellowship is a continuation of it.

"To me, the city is a place of coming together - and intrinsic to that is storytelling. I think I do always feel conscious that for millennia Kulin peoples have gathered by the Birrarung here for tanderrum, and for thousands of years told stories and made culture on the lands which are now the CBD," Mama Alto said.

"For me, as a child, going into the city from the suburbs where we lived was mostly to experience the arts, at places like Arts Centre Melbourne, the NGV, the State Library and

the East End theatre district, at independent bookshops and small performance venues."

"And in that way, this city really shaped me. Now, in my performances - some in those same places I adored as a child - it's quite emotional. Stories are formative. And it's important who we uplift to help tell those stories, to be the custodians and amplifiers of our collective histories, imaginations and experiences." ●

For more information:
wheelercentre.com

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