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Protest makes a return
Photo by Matt Hrkac

After months of quiet, the CBD was filled with tens of thousands of protestors on Saturday June 6, in a local iteration of Black Lives Matter protests sweeping the world. *Continued on page 9.*

“Carparking is not heritage”: Market Square charter endorsed

The City of Melbourne has finally adopted the charter for its new public open space at Queen Victoria Market (QVM) after a majority of councillors voted in favour of the initiative.

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The governing document provides the framework that will inform the space’s design and guide its future management and operations. The park will also be given an indigenous place name following strong community support for honouring the area’s Aboriginal heritage.

The news marks a significant milestone in the long-running saga that is the \$250 million QVM renewal program, with the future open space on what is currently the market’s car park having become the project’s battleground.

The adoption of the charter represents the beginning of the end of that battle, despite the best efforts of opponents of the open space who have long argued that the current car park is essential to the viability of the market.

The calls to retain the existing car park come in spite of the council having already committed to incorporating 500 new car parks within the Munro development on Queen St, as well as a further 500 in the future Southern development site on Franklin St.

The charter follows an extensive community consultation period and provides for a “diversity of uses” through the application of a range of “flexible” place management and curation principles, while reflecting on Aboriginal custodianship of the land.

While it was expected to be adopted at the May 26 council meeting, it was deferred to the Future Mel-

bourne Committee (FMC) meeting on June 2 to allow more time for the community to have its say.

A petition signed by 18 of the 40-member People’s Panel – an initiative established by Lord Mayor Sally Capp in 2018 to bring consensus to the market’s renewal - had been presented to the council ahead of the May 26 meeting calling on it to withdraw the charter.

Led by lobby group Friends of Queen Victoria Market, signatories of the petition had accused the council of “blatant misrepresentation” stating that its recommendations for the Market Square space had not been fully considered.

While the bid to transform the carpark into a new civic space for the market and the burgeoning City North population has overwhelming support within the community, “a loud minority” on June 2 reaffirmed their calls to retain the current car park.

Cr Rohan Leppert said that he “regretted” that some members of the People’s Panel had made recommendations outside of its scope of market infrastructure to “re-prosecute” car parking in the precinct.

Under a deal with the state government in 2014 which saw land to the south of the market on Franklin St transferred to the council to help fund the market’s renewal, the current car park was required to be rezoned and converted to park.

Cr Leppert reminded opponents that not doing so would have resulted in the council’s rate payers picking up an associated \$10 million penalty clause.

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Angst over injecting room site

WORDS BY *David Schout*
HEALTH

The Andrews government has nominated a CBD site for the state’s second medically supervised injecting room (MSIR), but a number of key stakeholders have raised concerns about the location.

Community health facility Cohealth, situated near the Queen Victoria Market, is the state government’s preferred pick for Victoria’s second injecting room.

An independent report found Victoria’s one and only facility in North Richmond saved at least 21 lives in its first 18 months and needs help dealing with demand.

While it only suggested the City of Melbourne should house the next facility, the government went a step further and nominated Cohealth, located near the corner of Victoria and Elizabeth streets, despite not consulting with the council.

Angered by the lack of consultation, the City of Melbourne then swiftly met with the state government to question the rationale behind the site, and suggest alternative locations.

It is believed the council’s key concerns surround the impact on local residents and the market, which it has committed \$250 million towards renewing.

“The City of Melbourne has already met with the Victorian Government and provided feedback on the potential for alternate sites and I will make sure the consultation process continues over the coming months,” Lord Mayor Sally Capp said.

“I will make sure local residents, workers and businesses have their views heard on this proposal from the Victorian Government.”

Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood put forward a motion at the June 23 Future Melbourne Committee meeting to formally reject the site.

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▲ A render of the Good Cycles plan to transform the undercroft at Customs Square.

Customs Square's new life

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
PLANNING

A piece of dead space CBD land has been picked as the site for Melbourne's first "social enterprise cluster" in a new proposal by Good Cycles.

The Customs Square precinct, opposite the Immigration Museum, is in the centre of Melbourne but is not well known by its name. The piece of land underneath railway tracks by the Yarra River has been neglected for years.

But soon it could host a cluster of social enterprises in 16 shipping containers, ranging through offices, dining, retail and community engagement - a project backed by local not-for-profit the Committee for Melbourne.

The plans for the site have been submitted to the City of Melbourne.

Behind the project is the social enterprise and bike shop Good Cycles that provides young people at risk of disengagement with employment opportunities.

CEO Jaison Hoernal said the project would

focus on employment, "providing real jobs to disadvantaged Victorians".

"This project is world-class and will demonstrate the power of social enterprise and strong partnerships," he said.

"Tracking the employment and social impact will be paramount."

Social impact specialists Think Impact are also on board.

"Think Impact have been engaged to develop a social value framework that will predict and measure the social value created across employment, collaboration and more," Mr Hoernal said.

The project is also designed to fit into the City of Melbourne's 10-year transport strategy through the promotion and education of active transport like cycling.

"We'll be promoting the benefits of riding a bike - not only is it great for our wellbeing but it contributes to reducing carbon emissions and congestion by replacing vehicles on the street," Mr Hoernal said.

Committee for Melbourne CEO Martine

Letts said the not-for-profit was backing the project because it would enhance Melbourne in a variety of ways.

"This will enhance Melbourne's economic, social and environmental future and is a great example of social innovation," she said.

"It's good to see the City of Melbourne, another Committee member, throwing its support behind this venture, which is consistent with the City's vision for the future of the CBD."

The proposal aligns with ongoing efforts by the City of Melbourne to revitalise the northern banks of the Yarra River, which it outlined in its latest strategy for the city section of the river last year ●



Meg Hill

JOURNALIST

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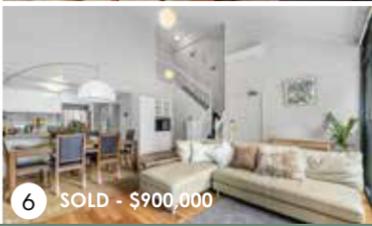
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PROPERTY

Angst over injecting room site

Continued from page 1.

The motion, due to be heard after the July edition of *CBD News* had been published, stipulated that the close proximity to the market made the site inappropriate, and instead requested the Victorian Government develop a heroin and ice taskforce.

But a struggle between Town Hall and Spring St looms should the government stand firm in its belief the northern CBD site is a best-fit.

While it has committed to keeping an open mind to other locations in the upcoming six-month consultation period, it is believed Cohealth's CBD facility best matches the criteria set out in the report chaired by Professor Margaret Hamilton AO.

"This review has shown the safe injecting room (in North Richmond) is doing exactly what it is designed to do – saving lives and changing lives," Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley said.

"If in our work consulting with the local council, they locate a different site that also meets the criteria set by that panel, then we'll remain open to that."

"We'll be conducting a thorough consultation process that will examine the criteria the independent review set out – including a range of local factors like health and social service providers and expectations of local residents."

Queen Victoria Market CEO Stan Liacos told *CBD News* the announcement caught management "completely by surprise", and said the close proximity to the market would be cause for concern.

"This proposed location will no doubt be a matter of concern to the 700-plus day and night market traders operating at the market," he said, confirming they would ensure traders' views were heard in upcoming dealings with the state government.

Debate since the opening of the North Richmond facility has often been vexed, and something the Andrews government has been forced to strongly defend.



▲ Local resident Martin Mulvihill in the garden he helped establish.



▲ Cohealth: the state government's preferred site located near the Queen Victoria Market.

Cr Capp, however, said the council's key issue was not to do with the wider effectiveness of injecting facilities, but rather the government's nominated facility.

"There's broad agreement within the City of Melbourne that it is critically important to find the most appropriate site for a new medically supervised injecting room," she said.

"We acknowledge that these facilities save lives on the inside but we need to ensure that any issues outside the doors do not impact negatively on locals."

One of those locals is Martin Mulvihill, who resides next door in the affordable housing apartments above Drill Hall.

A retired teacher, Mr Mulvihill has worked tirelessly to establish a garden in the Drill Hall's forecourt, something he said has had an extraordinarily positive affect on vulnerable local residents.

Having taught in troubled communities he is not at odds with the "overwhelming evidence"

behind safe injecting rooms, but questioned the state government's proposed location.

"Some residents have said they're very concerned, and fearful about safety," he said.

"They've heard all the stories from North Richmond. My concern is the garden itself. I'm fairly convinced in my mind that if we have an injecting site, this will become an area where deals could be done or, like in North Richmond when people can't get in, an overflow area. But one way or another I think it will change the dynamics."

Mr Mulvihill believed the government's motives were well-founded.

"The Premier is right, life is a moral paramount in a society like ours. It's a chief value I suppose in a democracy."

However, he said the nomination of Cohealth was rushed and urged it to seriously assess the potential impact on his neighbours, arguing there was a need to balance "saving life and nourishing life".

"We've got very vulnerable people around here. In terms of how they feel about the area and their safety, particularly those with a disability, I think they should look at those factors."

Cohealth chief executive Nicole Bartholomeusz welcomed the move but said it was only in "a very early stage".

The state government is expected to release further details in July about the upcoming six-month consultation period to determine the best site within the City of Melbourne ●



David Schout

JOURNALIST

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Residents seek exemption U-turn

WORDS BY *David Schout*
PLANNING

CBD residents angered by plans to turn the 1840s built Job Warehouse into an almost 1000-patron bar will ask the new Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Melissa Horne to change the 3am liquor licence exemption granted by now resigned minister Marlene Kairouz.

In April, Ms Kairouz granted pub operators the O'Brien Group a special exemption to trade until 3am at their proposed Bourke St venue as it was deemed a site of "cultural importance".

But on June 16 the minister quit after details emerged of her alleged involvement in wide scale Labor Party branch stacking, alongside factional ally Adem Somyurek.

On June 22, Melissa Horne was appointed to the portfolio and local resident Jenny Eltham - one of more than 80 objectors to the proposal - said they would ask the new minister for the exemption to be scrapped.

"We're going to ask the question," she said.

"As soon as we know who it is, we've got emails ready to go questioning the decision."

Locally, there is widespread consensus that the dilapidated Job Warehouse site, which has stood in disrepair for a number of years, needs renewal.

But residents believe the current proposal falls well short of what is appropriate for the area.

"It's not a popular outcome," Ms Eltham said.

"Everyone's in support of something happening with the Job Warehouse and having it look better than it currently is. I think people were much more supportive of something smaller, more bespoke and more in keeping with the precinct ... people are happy to have something there, but not something (catering) for 1000 people, and not until 3am. Some of those apartments are only six metres away."

A hearing for the licence is set to go before the state's liquor commission after the public notice period

On June 22, Melissa Horne was appointed to the portfolio and local resident Jenny Eltham - one of over 80 objectors to the proposal - said they would ask the new minister for the exemption to be scrapped.



concludes on July 2.

In 2008, the Brumby government introduced a freeze on late-night liquor licences in response to alcohol-related harm and crime in inner-Melbourne.

Since then, applicants wishing to trade beyond 1am require a ministerial exemption, which the minister can assign provided the venue is of "economic or cultural" importance to the state.

Last month *CBD News* reported that the CBD's two residents' groups - EastEnders and Residents 3000 - both believed they were "mised" by the O'Brien Group.

In meetings with the group, representatives were told the new venue would seek a 1am liquor licence, for between 300 and 400 patrons.

Instead, it included plans for a 3am licence and for 957 patrons.

By way of comparison the nearby Imperial Hotel - also owned and operated by the O'Brien Group - operates more than three floors and has a maximum capacity of 894 patrons ●

"Carparking is not heritage": Market Square charter endorsed

Continued from page 1.

"I want to get rid of an idea and that is that every time we can consider a QVM related matter we can re-prosecute the idea of whether or not the market space can have a car park," he said.

"When the People's Panel was commissioned, they were asked to look at market infrastructure, not parking, but trader services. They knew parking was out of scope and I regret they decided to make recommendations that were out of scope."

"We're not going to subject our ratepayers to a \$10 million poison pill. We're also not going to subject our rate payers to a new process when we've consulted with our rate payers time and time again. And we know that the public open space is overwhelmingly supported by the locals, by the broader Melbourne community, and by traders."

While QVM is listed on the state and national heritage registers, some submissions had tried to claim that the car park itself, which lies on top of what was Melbourne's first cemetery, was heritage.

As the council's chair of heritage, Cr Leppert provided a sobering assessment of such theories.

"There's nothing heritage about carparking. If there was, it would be in the citation. It's not," he said.

"No part of the heritage citations suggests in any way that either the carpark or the bitumen, which is the heritage fabric that our state legislature actually measures and serves to decide the extent of demolition to be permitted, is heritage. The reason the land is in there [Heritage Register] is because of the cemetery beneath."

With the closure of the current car park, many traders have questioned how trucks and larger vehicles will be able to access the market via Franklin and Queen streets, which are expected to see increased congestion.

While it's understood the new Northern Shed on Queen St will accommodate smaller trucks, larger trucks would be expected drop off in the early hours of market trading days. Large vehicle access is also expected to be looked at as part of the future Southern development.

Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood said he sympathised with some traders, with market amenities, car parking

and large vehicle access having been proposed to go underneath the market's sheds in council's original proposal knocked back by Heritage Victoria in 2018.

"I continue to have sympathy on the issue," he said. "Particularly truck parking and logistics being right there underneath the market and unfortunately that's an issue that we've had to deal with by some of the very people who are saying let's keep the carpark where it is."

"I want to make the point that we would have been able to avoid all of these things, deliver the open space, which is one of the most critical parts of this entire renewal and I think it will be a fantastic thing for the market going forward."

Cr Nicholas Reece cited some of Europe's most renowned markets, which he said had all transformed car parks into new civic space for the market and broader community with great success.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the charter was all about providing "flexibility" to respect as many market stakeholders as possible.

"What I fear about this debate and about some of the submissions is that it's almost set up like a trader versus the rest and that's what we're trying to avoid. We're trying to create a space in which there is benefit for everyone," Cr Capp said.

The charter will be reviewed when the name for the market is established following consultation with key indigenous advisory groups, as well as when the design process for the space is complete.

In opposing the motion put forward to councillors by management, Cr Jackie Watts foreshadowed an alternative motion, which was supported by Cr Beverley Pinder-Mortimer ●



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Recycling goes solar

WORDS BY *Marco Holden Jeffery*
ENVIRONMENT

The City of Melbourne has proposed a \$24.7 million investment in waste management infrastructure across the city, including two new waste recovery hubs and 51 solar-powered recycling bins.

City of Melbourne environment portfolio chair Cr Cathy Oke said the project demonstrated the council's commitment to reducing litter and encouraging reuse in a city that generated more than 40,000 tonnes in kerbside waste annually.

"Both these initiatives will support our move towards a circular economy where we maximise reuse, recycling and recovery, and minimise waste to landfill," she said.

The new solar compactor recycling bins would complement the city's 396 solar compactor rubbish bins installed in 2018.

The solar rubbish bins weren't without teething issues - *CBD News* reported in April 2019 that council had been forced to relocate some of them after repeated power failures due to a lack of direct sunlight.

A council spokesperson said the recycling bins would be placed next to the solar rubbish bins, which were "all operating and positioned to receive adequate sunlight".

Cr Oke said the new recycling bins would also be instrumental in cutting the number of rubbish truck collections, reducing noise and pollution city-wide.

"Solar powered compactor bins have already helped us cut the number of rubbish truck collections down from 90,000 a month, to just 12,000 a month," Cr Oke said.

"Like the solar rubbish bins, solar recycling bins will use gentle compaction to increase capacity to about six times that of a regular recycling bin, which means they don't need to be emptied as often."

The waste recovery hubs were expected to process up to 85 tonnes of waste a month, on



▲ Cr Cathy Oke and Charley use one of the recycling bins with solar powered sensors.

“

Solar powered compactor bins have already helped us cut the number of rubbish truck collections down from 90,000 a month, to just 12,000.

”

top of recyclable materials that would be diverted from landfill.

Nearby businesses would pay a fee based on how frequently they disposed of their landfill waste at the hubs.

Cr Oke said the council was working towards "finalising the best location for the new hubs" and expected to install them in 2021.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the centres would remove up to 110 commercial bins in the city's laneways and reduce waste collection truck trips by up to 7000.

"Bins in laneways look ugly, take up valuable space, cause odour and can attract insects and vermin," she said.

"By delivering on our commitment to establish more resource recovery hubs we are working to reduce noise, smell and mess in our city." ●

New Local Government Minister announced

COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Victorian Upper House Member for Eastern Metropolitan Shaun Leane was sworn in as the new Minister for Local Government on June 22.

The new appointment follows the sacking of former Minister for Local Government Adem Somyurek, and fellow Labor factional allies Robin Scott and Marlene Kairouz amid branch stacking allegations aired on *60 Minutes* in June.

Mr Leane resigned as President of the Legislative Council on June 18, and was replaced unopposed by Northern Metropolitan Region Member Nazih Elasmr.

Premier Daniel Andrews said Mr Leane would support local councils grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr Leane also takes over the portfolios of suburban development and veterans.

The change in ministers comes at a critical time for municipalities across the state with local government elections to be held on October 24.

While Lord Mayor Sally Capp is the only current councillor to formally announce that she is recontesting, she does have some early competition after it was reported last month that the Labor Party had finalised a ticket for this year's elections.

While it is yet to formally announce its ticket publicly, *The Age* reported on June 3 that Lord Mayoral candidate Phil Reed (Slater and Gordon) would lead Labor's push, while one-time federal candidate Wesa Chau would run as deputy.

It's also understood that Davydd Griffiths - the partner of Labor's former state member for Melbourne Jennifer Kannis - and Glen Eira councillor Mary Delahunty would run first and second on the ticket, respectively.

Further election updates will be provided in the August edition of *CBD News* ●

CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



This year, the City of Melbourne's prestigious Melbourne Awards celebrate community champions who have stepped up during the COVID-19 crisis.

The six new categories are open to those who have shown great leadership, kindness and generosity during the pandemic in the areas of business, digital innovation, youth, community, arts and culture, and essential services.

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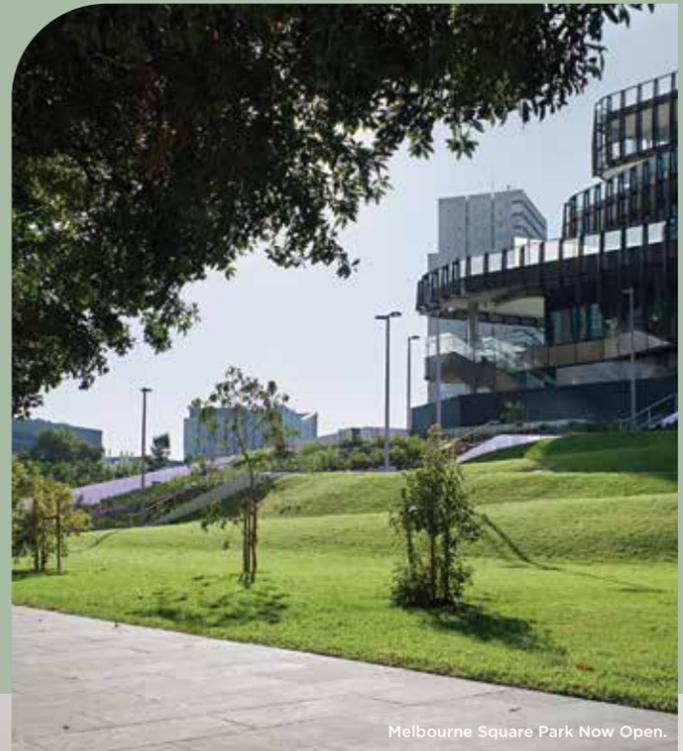
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Council fast-tracks new cycling lanes

WORDS BY *David Schout*
TRANSPORT

New cycling lanes spanning the CBD and beyond will be installed in the next 12 months as the City of Melbourne ramps up its bicycle infrastructure pledge.

In a move that further accelerates a “bicycle-friendly city” shift, the council announced a raft of dedicated lanes that seek to both increase cyclist numbers and maintain rider confidence on the roads.

By July 2021, cyclists will have four new dedicated lanes along the entire east-west length of the Hoddle Grid, including on Flinders Lane, Little Lonsdale, Little Bourke and Little Collins streets.

Work on Exhibition St, deemed a “priority project”, has already begun and will soon have cycling lanes between Flinders and Bourke streets.

Where possible, the lanes will be “protected” - that is, will provide cyclists with a physical barrier to motor vehicles.

In the council’s extensive research before the release of last year’s 10-year transport strategy, many current and would-be cyclists reported feeling intimidated on inner-city roads.

“By fast-tracking the delivery of bike lanes on key routes, we’re creating streets that people can feel confident riding along, which in turn will free up space on our roads, buses, trams and trains,” Lord Mayor Sally Capp said.

“Our research shows that it’s essential to create physical protection from motor vehicles to encourage more people to ride in the central city.”

The upgrades will see some car parks removed to make space for the new lanes, although the council said the figure represented less than one per cent of its overall parking spots.

The \$16 million cycling spend in the next 12 months is more than three times the council’s previous record of \$5.1 in 2012-13, when it installed the LaTrobe St bicycle lanes.

Town Hall had already committed to long-term cycling infrastructure reform prior to now, but the sharp rise in cycling during the COVID-19 shutdown has hastened their plans.

“Riding and walking have increased in popularity during the pandemic. As people return to the city they will want to travel in ways that allow them to maintain physical distance,” Cr Capp said.

“I look forward to seeing lots of Melburnians enjoying our city on bikes - as I do - especially those who’ve taken up riding as a way to stay fit and healthy during the pandemic.”

Cyclist groups said the council were to be congratulated for their efforts to expedite the project’s delivery.

“The Lord Mayor and councillors have shown what can be achieved if you have a sense of urgency and the commitment to deliver benefits to the community,” Bicycle Network CEO Craig Richards said.

Fellow group Bike Melbourne said they had lobbied Town Hall to use cheaper materials for the installation of protected bike lanes, rather than costly and time-expensive concrete barriers.

“Anything that makes it cheaper while keeping protection is a win,” the group said in a tweet in June.

“It is amazing that to have a council that listens to your proposals and uses them in developing their own policies. The City of Melbourne can never implement everything we ask for - but it’s clear that the councillors and officers have respect for community ideas.”

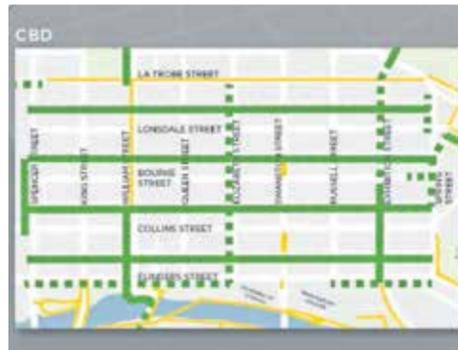
Bike Melbourne said that one kilometre of concrete protection typically costed more than \$2 million, whereas the council’s latest announcement included recyclable materials that were considerably cheaper.

“With COVID-19 and the huge increase in cyclist numbers to and from the CBD, the impetus to build new lanes is greater again,” Cr Rohan Leppert tweeted.

“That’s why we’re going for cheaper materials and treatments, but not compromising on



▲ A render of new cycling lanes on Exhibition St.



▲ A map of the CBD showing new bike lanes (green).

safety. Physical separation, not just paint, is the order of the day.”

In more exciting news for those on two wheels, the council has also committed to new CBD cycling lanes along Flinders and Elizabeth streets, slated for completion in the 2021-22 financial year ●

Hotel outbreak

HEALTH

At the time of publishing the July edition of *CBD News*, a cluster of 14 COVID-19 cases had been linked to the Stamford Plaza Hotel on Little Collins St.

A security contractor at the hotel, which has been one of many in the CBD quarantining return travellers, returned a positive coronavirus test on June 17, while another person previously linked to another cluster was revealed to be a worker at the hotel.

On June 21, three new cases were reported taking the total to 12, before two further tested positive the following day.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) said investigations into potential sources of transmission, testing of staff and follow up of close contacts continued.

Premier Daniel Andrews announced on June 20 that lockdowns measures would be re-tightened amid a spike in community transmissions across Melbourne. Until July 12, only five visitors are permitted in the home, while businesses such as restaurants are only allowed up to 20 guests at a time.

As of June 23, the total number of cases in Victoria had risen to 1864, with 131 of those active.

“We have made some great progress in slowing the spread of coronavirus, but we are still seeing new cases in the community,” Victoria’s chief health officer Professor Brett Sutton said speaking on June 23.

“This is the seventh consecutive day of double-digit case growth in Victoria, with a continuing and concerning number of new cases associated with transmission in households and families.”

“As a consequence, the Victorian Government has announced a tightening of the rules and has reduced the number of visitors you can have in your home to five. Outside of the home, people can now gather in groups of up to 10 only.”

For more information and updates visit dhhs.vic.gov.au ●

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WORDS BY *Marco Holden Jeffrey*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

For every tale of hardship during the coronavirus pandemic, there has been another of kindness and selflessness.

And in a one-off “community champions” edition of the Melbourne Awards, the City of Melbourne will recognise the hard work of the unsung heroes who supported their community throughout the pandemic and lockdown.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the awards were being reimagined this year to honour acts of compassion, integrity and heroism in the face of the pandemic.

“Melbourne is a caring city and I am proud of the many ways that Melburnians help and support each other in times of crisis,” she said.

The 2020 Melbourne Awards would honour individuals, businesses and community groups who had a positive impact on the City of Melbourne community during the pandemic.

The Lord Mayor said this could include anyone “from neighbours who came to our rescue in times of need, to essential workers who do so much more than their jobs, and businesses that reach out to support people in tough times”.

Alongside the coveted Melburnian of the Year award, the 2020 awards will include a category recognising an “essential service” champion, such as a medical worker or supermarket attendant, for their work during the lockdown.

Other categories include youth, business, digital innovation, and arts and culture champions.

The Melbourne Awards have been awarded annually since 2007 to “celebrate the inspiring people and organisations that create a better Melbourne through their work”.

Past winners of Melburnian of the Year include oncologist and anti-tobacco lobbyist Dr Bronwyn King, medical research philanthropist and former Western Bulldogs vice president



The 2020 Melbourne Awards would honour individuals, businesses and community groups who had a positive impact on the City of Melbourne community during the pandemic.



Susan Alberti, and former Essendon great and motor neurone disease campaigner Neale Daniher.

Anyone can nominate or self-nominate an individual or group for any of the categories, even those based outside of the City of Melbourne - as long as their impact was within the city area.

Nominations will be open from July 1 to August 7, with the winners announced at a ceremony scheduled to take place at Melbourne Town Hall on November 14, health requirements permitting ●

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



▲ Lord Mayor Sally Capp (top left) and Cr Jackie Watts (bottom right) meet with EastEnders residents in June.

Residents meet again

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
COMMUNITY

CBD residents’ group EastEnders met on June 15 for the first time since lockdown began in a Zoom meeting with Lord Mayor Sally Capp and Cr Jackie Watts.

Twenty-four residents attended and were given a first-hand account by the Lord Mayor and Cr Watts of the council’s response to COVID-19.

“Sally is not only an excellent leader of our city but also a good listener to the various views of residents. We are grateful for her strong support of EastEnders and her interest and responsiveness is acknowledged with appreciation,” EastEnders President Stan Capp said.

The Lord Mayor first spoke about the council’s role during the “survival phase” of the pandemic, including support packages for small businesses, artists and for international

students, and a rates hardship policy.

“Although we’ve got the smallest bucket, we did try and find the gaps and we did try and move quickly on those groups where we felt they weren’t receiving immediate support from other levels of government,” the Lord Mayor said.

“Unfortunately, in the end we disappointed more people than we delighted because we were over-subscribed to every single support package that was put in place but nonetheless, we’ve been doing the best we can.”

The Lord Mayor said the next phase was “very much about recovery and revival”.

Residents at the meeting got the chance to ask direct questions about their concerns, a chance they had missed over the past few months as meetings were cancelled.

Questions were asked regarding the controversial Job Warehouse development, Hosier Lane, homelessness and construction hours in the CBD ●

Strategy to ease life for elders

AGEING

The City of Melbourne is finalising its draft four-year plan to address the needs of older people living in the municipality.

The *Melbourne: A Great Place to Age* strategic plan was launched in October 2019 in an attempt to address findings that older people in the City of Melbourne were vulnerable.

The findings included that, of residents aged 65 and over, 30 per cent relied on an aged pension and over a third of residents over 60 had no internet access. A third were also living alone.

The strategy was also devised to address the unprecedented population, infrastructure and housing growth, and longer life expectancy.

The draft that has been put together since October outlined four outcome areas as:

- Respect: civic participation, respect and social inclusion
- Safety: housing, outdoor spaces and buildings and transportation
- Connection: social participation
- Support: community and health services, communication and information

One specific action outlined included a dementia-friendly neighbourhood “demonstration project” with community education, design of the built environment and partnerships with peak bodies, community organisations, and people living with dementia and their families.

The draft plan states based on the impact of COVID-19 additional actions were added. These include:

- Addressing loneliness and social isolation, particularly with the COVID-19 physical distancing requirements, through providing targeted programs in local neighbourhoods to increase access to the internet, technology, training and support to reduce the digital divide;

- Providing outreach to vulnerable older people to support social participation within their neighbourhood, with a priority on building community in high-rise developments; and
- Providing outreach, individual advocacy and individual support to connect older people with services and programs, in particular vulnerable groups facing barriers to accessing services.

The council’s people city portfolio chair Cr Beverley Pinder said she was “greatly moved” by the report.

“In our quest to be one of the great cities of the world in which to grow older, we must listen and respond to the experiences of older people living and working in our city,” she said.

Cr Pinder said feedback on the draft strategy was “comprehensive and enlightening.”

“Loneliness and isolation are also challenging – and this is exacerbated by crises such as COVID-19. We must act together as a community to help our ageing people connect meaningfully in their day-to-day lives,” she said.

“Through your feedback, we heard that connection to community is incredibly important to older residents and I’m proud of the work that we already do in this area through supporting community groups and providing social support.”

“And, with the number of Melbourne residents aged 60 and over expected to triple in the next 20 years, it’s important that we continue to support older residents to live active, healthy, happy lives where they feel connected to and valued by all whom they interact with in the community.”

The draft strategy went before councillors for approval at the June 23 Future Melbourne Committee meeting shortly after the July edition of *CBD News* had been published ●

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

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Mass protest makes a return

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
PROTEST

After months of quiet the Melbourne CBD was filled with tens of thousands of protestors on Saturday June 6, in a local iteration of Black Lives Matter protests sweeping the world.

The rally, organised by the Warriors of Aboriginal Resistance (WAR), was titled *Stop Black Deaths in Custody – Justice for George Floyd*.

It was called in the wake of the now infamous murder of George Floyd by a police officer in the US. WAR organisers stated their solidarity with protesters in the US, and their objective of protesting similar injustices in Australia.

“This is a global movement, and this is an issue that Australia is a part of too. When the footage emerged of the murder of George Floyd by four Minneapolis police officers, as he desperately pleaded ‘I can’t breathe’, we were all horrified and outraged, but not surprised,” the organisers wrote in *The Saturday Paper*.

“We were immediately reminded of the cries of ‘I can’t breathe’ that Dunghutti man David Dungay Jr made as he had the life crushed out of him by officers in Sydney’s Long Bay prison. We thought of Auntie Tanya Day, of Ray Thomas Jr, of Joyce Clarke, of Ms Dhu, of Kumanjari

Walker, of Veronica Nelson and of far too many others.”

Volunteers at the rally handed out over 55,000 PPE masks and 55,000 bottles of hand sanitiser. More than 500 people volunteered to help.

The rally began at the steps of Parliament at 2pm and marched to the Flinders St intersection, where tens of thousands stayed until it was dark.

The staging of the protests continues to divide the community amid the state government’s COVID-19 lockdown measures.

At the time of publishing the July edition of *CBD News*, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) had reported that only three new cases had since been linked to the event and that there was no evidence to suggest it was responsible for recent spikes in Victoria.

“If you attended the Black Lives Matter march in the city on Saturday, June 6 there is currently no requirement to quarantine or get tested if you do not have symptoms,” Prof Brett Sutton said. “However, should you develop any symptoms, no matter how mild, it is critically important that you get tested.” ●

▼ Protesters gather at the intersection of Flinders and Swanston streets on June 6. Photo: Matt Hrkac.



▲ Helena Huynh kept Corner & Bench open in Hardware Lane.

Yesterday, I was crying

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Rhonda Dredge*
BUSINESS

It has been an emotional road back for businesses as they rebrand themselves for a different CBD in the interval between the old regime and the new.

Some have taken advantage of the quieter streets to strengthen their connections with locals.

In the old high turnover days, Corner & Bench in Hardware Lane had 30 tables out the front.

By mid-June there were only six tables and customers were assured of getting one in the sun without having to wait in a queue for ages or compete with tourists.

“Customers don’t have to line up,” Helena Huynh said, as she cleared away the dishes. “We’re happy to have some [customers] and people are happy to be at work.”

Businesses are taking it day by day as numbers in the street fluctuate. Only a few cafes are open for lunch to take advantage of the sunny winter.

Helena estimated there were 24 sit-down customers over the lunch break in two sittings.

On the day the café was first allowed to serve sit-down customers, they put just one table out, displaying their takeaway products, such as freshly baked meat pies.

The café had stayed open during the lockdown and like many similar businesses in the CBD believed they had developed new loyalty in their customers. “If we didn’t stay open, we were just a food shop,” Helena said.

But the decision meant that they had to change the way they did business, putting packaged catering products ahead of traditional service and cultivating the few locals around.

“It was a big learning curve. We did deliveries to homes. We were so supported. We got 10 orders from one person. We started selling wholesale. We put the stuff up the front,” Helena said.

Becco on Crossley St is another business that has been forced to reassess. The café reverted to a produce store during the shutdown and even though it has re-opened, owner Simon Hartley is keeping the produce going.

“We want them to work together,” he said. “Through the store we had different customers and they came to the restaurant.”

He said that bookings were aggressive in the first week Becco re-opened, regular customers insistent to return. “This week was quieter. We had more walk-ins.”

There is more time for conversation and customers are made to feel welcome in what Bill Morton at the Paperback Bookshop in Bourke St is calling the “interregnum”.

“It’s great to be able to engage with people about books,” Bill said, on the first day the shop opened its doors to the public.

He and staff were on the premises during the lockdown doing online orders, but these weren’t as satisfying as actually dealing with readers and their views, even if they did disagree about books.

Personality counts for more in this period of uncertainty and members of Melbourne’s nearby legal establishment were chatting freely on Hardware Lane when *CBD News* visited on Thursday, June 18.

“Thursday is the new Friday,” Helena said. “People work from home on Friday to make a long weekend.”

Hopefully the new space for conversation will help create goodwill. “Today I’m happy but if you saw me yesterday, I was crying,” she said.

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/



Move to simplify apartment rules

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
STRATA

The City of Melbourne has moved to overhaul its relationship with apartment dwellers after three months of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed weaknesses.

At a June 2 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting, councillors unanimously voted for a motion moved by Lord Mayor Sally Capp that noted the predominance of apartment living in the municipality, and the challenges presented to it by COVID-19.

As a result, the motion requested council management to review information and services and produce “tailored support” to volunteer owners’ corporations (OCs) and strata title owners. It also stipulated the delivery of a virtual support workshop for the strata community.

But while the motion was carried unanimously, some councillors expressed reservations.

Cr Capp said the initiative sought to address the issues apartment dwellers had faced in recent months.

“We know in the City of Melbourne that the majority of our residents live in high-rises of some sort – 83 per cent, just over 140,000 people,” the Lord Mayor said.

“When you are living in apartments the type of issues you face are different to those that live in single dwellings and it’s important that we can reflect the issues that are being faced and provide support for people living in apartments.”

The Lord Mayor said many issues became clear during the pandemic but had existed beforehand.

“

We know in the City of Melbourne that the majority of our residents live in high-rises of some sort – 83 per cent, just over 140,000 people.

”

Julie McLean from the Strata Community Association Victoria (SCAV) welcomed the move.

“As the motion confirms, managing jointly-owned private community spaces without specific guidelines or directions from the authorities has been challenging and has, as a result, left owners’ corporation committees at the risk of failure of meeting some of their duties and obligations,” she said.

“Committees, owners, tenants, strata and building managers have been left having to decipher vague generic directions that do not specifically speak to the unique circumstances of strata spaces.”

“As the last near pandemic was 2003, this pandemic will not be the last and to review and learn from this experience, both good and bad, is necessary to help the strata sector to be more



resilient in the future.”

Southbank Residents Association (SRA) president Tony Penna also supported the move.

He said owners in Southbank were “perplexed, confused and bewildered with what they should and shouldn’t be doing with this pandemic”.

“We also hope the outcomes of the motion will be reviewed at some stage in the future,” he said.

“We know that the pandemic is still in its early stage. If there are lessons to be learnt from this or things that could be done better we hope that this, whatever it will be, a policy or process or a document, will certainly be reviewed at the end of it.”

But some councillors expressed concerns about the motion, particularly around the idea of requesting management to “interpret public health orders”.

Cr Arron Wood said he was worried the clause went against the decided intent of the council at the beginning of the pandemic.

“When we started COVID-19 we talked about DHHS being the single source of truth and indeed our own organisation really pushed hard that there should be a single source of truth,” he said.

“Wherever we insert ourselves in interpreting public health orders I think that we can put ourselves into some positions that we potentially don’t want to be in.”

Cr Beverley Pinder also expressed concern about the move causing confusion.

“There’s a whole range of issues that are really for an owner market, not for a council to be interfering,” Cr Pinder said ●



▲ The Collins St sinkhole. Photo: Dominic Dirupo.

“Hellmouth”: ground opens up on Collins St

WORDS BY *Marco Holden Jeffrey*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Some Melburnians were questioning if the end of the world was upon them when a sinkhole opened up on Collins St on Tuesday, June 2.

The sinkhole - dubbed a “Hellmouth” by one online commenter - was discovered by a resident overnight and stopped eastbound traffic on the roadway between Queen and Elizabeth streets.

A council spokesperson said the one cubic metre sinkhole was caused by a crack in the stormwater drain running down Collins St.

A roadworks crew used CCTV drainage robot cameras to identify and repair the crack, as well as identify another crack developing further along the drain.

The road was reopened once repairs were completed on Friday, June 5, and closed briefly on Thursday, June 11 for additional asphaltting works before reopening the same day.

The spokesperson said the City of Melbourne had scheduled the drain to be replaced in full in 2021.

Sinkholes in urban areas often appear when

faulty drains, pipes and water mains leak into the soil or clay under a road and wash it away, causing the road to collapse - or more accurately - sink.

But University of Melbourne earthquake professor Mark Quigley said it wouldn’t be feasible - or even a priority - to focus on preventing future sinkholes in the city.

“Prevention is quite challenging because to do that you’d have to basically ensure that there’s no leaky ageing infrastructure under an entire city,” he said.

Instead council could focus on predicting where sinkholes would emerge, before “a pinprick in a water main becomes something that could engulf a car.”

Prof Quigley said a regular survey of the area using a ground-penetrating radar to detect voids underneath the street that could develop into sinkholes would be a more feasible solution for council.

He also encouraged locals to learn to recognise the warning signs of sinkholes - “circular shaped cracks and anomalous depressions” in the road - and report them to council if spotted ●

Fighting unemployment and climate change

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*
ENVIRONMENT

To combat the two biggest challenges facing Victorians in 2020—climate change and COVID-19—the City of Melbourne has announced a new project to plant 150,000 new trees, shrubs and grasses in the municipality over the next six months.

Commencing this week, the “Greening the City” project will respond to the six per cent unemployment rate in Victoria by creating 64 new jobs, and help to fight climate change through biodiversity.

“We will provide jobs to 64 people who would otherwise be unemployed as a result of COVID-19. They will work for six months on the largest revegetation project we have ever undertaken,” Lord Mayor Sally Capp said.

Having completed their induction last week, the newly employed workers will soon be planting 94 trees on the Maribyrnong River bike path, 14 trees in Fitzroy Gardens to re-establish the historic Hotham Walk, and 80 new trees at Royal Park Golf Course.

Cr Capp said that this was a crucial investment which will keep the city green for future generations.

“We have always appreciated the importance of our parks and gardens to our city and this has been even more evident during the pandemic. They provide space for people to safely exercise and enjoy some fresh air during lockdown,” the Lord Mayor said.

During the coming months, 116,000 native grasses and wildflowers and 30,000 shrubs will be planted—including Tufted Bluebells, Kangaroo Grass and Common Wallaby Grass.

This is in addition to the thousands of native trees which will be scattered around the city. “We will plant 1000 semi-advanced trees and 3000 tube stock trees. This includes indigenous species such as River Red Gum, Golden Wattle, Coastal Banksia and Yarra Gum—a near threatened species in Victoria,” the Lord Mayor said.

The council’s Greening the City project is in collaboration with CityWide and the Victorian Government and will be funded through the Working for Victoria initiative.

“

Cr Oke also said the project would make a large contribution towards the council’s target of 40 percent tree canopy by 2040.

”

It also comes as an addition to the council’s \$1.8 million annual investment in planting 3000 semi-advanced trees each year.

Environment portfolio chair Cr Cathy Oke said one of the main benefits of the new project is that it will help to reduce the urban heat island effect.

“Planting trees is one of the most effective and simple ways to respond to the climate emergency,” Cr Oke said.

“While we respond to COVID-19, we haven’t stopped taking climate action. As these new trees grow they will increase our city’s canopy coverage and help reduce the urban heat island effect by creating more shade.”

Cr Oke also said the project would make a large contribution towards the council’s target of 40 percent tree canopy cover on public land by 2040.

“This project will create 24,000 sqm of understorey habitat, increasing understorey vegetation in the city by six per cent, in a significant step towards our goal to increase understorey cover by 20 percent by 2027,” Cr Oke said.

Not only is this good news for CBD dwellers hoping to enjoy more greenery, but it will also guarantee more protection for Melbourne’s native animals.

At time of writing there are plans to plant in Royal Park, the Inner Circle Railway corridor, Dynon Road corridor, Lorimer St in Docklands and Oak St in Parkville. The council is still in the process of deciding where the trees will be located in the CBD ●

Lighting up Chinatown

ARTS & CULTURE

The City of Melbourne has begun installing 80 new permanent red and gold lanterns in Chinatown to brighten the precinct as more visitors return to the city.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the lanterns would adorn Little Bourke St from Swanston St to Exhibition St.

“Chinatown has been an important part of our city since the gold rush days of the 1850s, and Melbourne’s Chinatown is the longest continuous Chinese settlement in the western world,” the Lord Mayor said.

“With the careful easing of restrictions, we’re finally able to come in and sit down for a bowl of piping hot noodles and plates of delicious dumplings. We want to extend that warm and welcoming atmosphere outside with these striking lanterns bathing the precinct in soft, warm light.”

The Lord Mayor said that the lanterns had been custom-made with laser-cut stainless steel that was powder-coated in “luminous red” paint.

“While many Chinatown precincts around

the world use cloth lanterns that need to be replaced regularly, these new lanterns have a life cycle of 25 years and will only require minor maintenance making them a much more sustainable and durable option,” she said.

Prosperous city portfolio chair Cr Kevin Louey said extensive consultation had been sought with the Chinatown Precinct Association.

Chinatown Precinct Association president Danny Doon said, “Chinese restaurants constitute over 80 per cent of Melbourne Chinatown’s shopfront, so the COVID-19 pandemic has virtually closed down Chinatown for the past three months and is worst event in living memory for the precinct.”

“Nevertheless, the restaurateurs and traders are ready to bounce back. We can feel it happening week by week as the restrictions ease.”

While the state government was expected to allow 50 patrons at a time inside businesses and venues such as restaurants on June 22, a recent spike in COVID-19 cases has meant that the limit of 20 will remain pending further review on July 12 ●



▲ Left to right: Cr Kevin Louey, Danny Doon, Eng Lim and Lord Mayor Sally Capp.



▲ Loft apartment in Elizabeth St.



▲ Dong Ye Li on the job on Spring St.

An apartment for the times

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
REAL ESTATE

Local real estate agents Fletchers Projects has a property for sale directly across the street from the office they believe is ideally suited to the times.

In the past, the two-level loft at 398 Elizabeth St might have been rented to students.

But now there are not many around.

“I feel the CBD’s rental market has been reshaped,” real estate agent Dongye Li told *CBD News*. And he thinks this might be the new norm, not just a transition.

That’s why he’s promoting the 70 sqm apartment as perfect for someone who works at home in the new safety-conscious era.

The loft is an ideal city pad for someone seeking privacy because it is the only one on the second floor and shares a lift with only two other units.

“You could walk in and walk out, and no one could interrupt no matter what happens in the outside world,” Dongye said. “You could get away from the hustle and bustle.”

He said people might be afraid of interacting

with neighbours because of the virus. “If we have to stay at home, this is warm and homey.”

While this busy corner of the city might not have the allure of Spring St, it has an affordable price ticket of \$498,000.

The unit was built about two-and-a-half years ago and the asking price is similar to its original purchase price.

Design-wise the décor is very photogenic, and the aesthetics should appeal. There is even a small corner balcony with enough room for a conversation nook overlooking the intersection of A-Beckett and Elizabeth streets.

The bedroom is upstairs and the living downstairs with a built-in breakfast bar and small slit windows looking out on the life below.

“You could work from home and meet clients downstairs,” Dongye said.

He expects the apartment will sell to a local owner occupier or “sophisticated” investor. Overseas inquiries have dried up.

“We’ve been getting pretty good enquires and I would expect that more local residences will shift from suburbs to urban area as the rent is quite tempting,” he said.

There has been a pick-up with enquiries increasing by 35 per cent in June ●

International student program resurrected

WORDS BY Meg Hill
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne will look to relaunch an old international student support program to help the community that has been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The council voted unanimously to undertake an assessment of The Couch International Student Program and consider funding a year-long revival.

The program ran in 2011 and 2012 at the Salvation Army on Bourke St and was launched after the murder of a recently graduated international student Nitin Garg in Yarraville in 2010.

At the time it was funded by the state government.

Chair of the people city portfolio Cr Beverley Pinder moved the motion and said COVID-19 provided the opportunity for the program to be “resurrected”.

“The program was actually supported and funded by two successive governments, the Bracks and Brumby governments, but subsequently there was an attempt to morph it into what is now called Study Melbourne and it has

not worked in that,” Cr Pinder said.

“It has not produced the pastoral care that it did during those years of troubled times. We are now faced with troubled times of a different nature and I believe the red couch needs to be returned to Salvos.”

Cr Pinder said the program had provided a safe place for students to relax, learn, socialise, connect with support services, study, and to be part of peer and social networks.

“It was to be part of a community where ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation or even socioeconomic background did not matter,” Cr Pinder said.

“Nearly 150 free meals provided each night and food parcels for those that needed additional comfort at home.”

The program won the 2013 Victorian Multicultural Award for Excellence and an award for the most active international student association.

International students have been hard hit by the pandemic and lockdown.

The council recently released a food voucher program for the community but was forced to cap it after 36 hours that saw 17,000 students apply ●

Migrant workers underpaid at restaurant

COURTS

The Fair Work Ombudsman has secured penalties of \$209,000 against the restaurateur of Dainty Sichuan, which operates a number of restaurants in the CBD.

The penalties were secured for employees, mostly overseas workers on working holiday and student visas, who were underpaid at the restaurant and another under the same management.

The Federal Circuit Court ordered Ye Shao to pay penalties of \$15,000 and his companies Wynn Sichuan Pty Ltd and Nine Dragons Pty Ltd to pay \$95,000 and \$88,000 respectively.

During an audit in June 2016, Fair Work inspectors found that 30 employees across the two restaurants had been underpaid a total of \$30,995 and the regulator took action in 2017.

Inspectors found that 17 employees at Dainty Sichuan were underpaid \$18,190 and 13 employees at Tina’s Noodle Kitchen were underpaid \$12,805.

Employees were paid flat hourly rates of between \$10 per hour and \$23.33 per hour in breach of the *Restaurant Industry Award 2010*. Some worked six or seven days a week, and over

10 hours per day.

Fair Work Ombudsman Sandra Parker welcomed the court’s penalties.

“The exploitation of migrant workers is unacceptable as they can be particularly vulnerable in the workplace due to language barriers or visa status. Minimum wage rates apply to everyone in Australia, including visa-holders, and they are not negotiable,” Ms Parker said.

“This outcome should serve as a warning to all employers to pay their workers correctly.”

“We encourage any employees with concerns about their pay or entitlements to speak up and contact the Fair Work Ombudsman.”

The court accepted the respondents failed to pay minimum wages, overtime, penalty rates for weekends and public holidays and to keep records and provide payslips.

Judge Grant Riethmuller said a “large proportion” of the restaurant staff were visa holders who spoke Mandarin as their primary language.

“Employees with these backgrounds are in a particularly vulnerable position, and that is a factor to which I give significant weight,” she said.

The underpayments were rectified before the proceedings began ●

CBD LOCAL

City folk return to the arcades

The grace of the CBD is undeniably in its arcades but these grand urban spaces from the days of polite society are usually too full of tourists to be that attractive to local city folk.

Collins St residents Robyn and Phillip have been loyally passing through the arcades during the lockdown.

“We live in the city and we’ve been waiting for it to open,” Robyn said.

Table service was reintroduced in June and the couple had a list of places they wanted to visit for their first historic sit-down coffee.

1932 Café in the art deco Manchester Unity building was on their list but the cafe wasn’t open when they arrived.

“Poppy and I were there on the last day and we were so well looked after,” Robyn said.

They decided instead on a gracious table at La Crêperie Saint-Germain in the Block Arcade and there they were in prime position at 11am, dressed immaculately, sipping on their morning coffee.

With them was Poppy, a well-behaved dog from New York who knows how to handle polite society without being on a lead.

Poppy can do a few tricks, such as stand on her hind legs, and her miraculous arrival has given the couple solace during the hard times.

“We walk her here,” Robyn said. “We’ve been coming through the whole lockdown.”

Robyn has a picture of the arcade on her phone with not a soul in sight.

“The city has been really sad. I took a photo

of the Block Arcade walking through. It was still open. It was so depressing, especially the last couple of weeks.”

The couple has had some social contact with neighbours and talking on the phone to friends but like many who choose to live in the CBD, their family is far-flung.

Their son was in Australia earlier in the year for a wedding. His dog Poppy was sent out ahead and put in quarantine. She stayed while he returned to Switzerland.

“It was a godsend we had Poppy,” Robyn said. She likes to read *Pet’s Corner* in the *CBD News* and is interested in details about other pet-lovers. Poppy spent the first six years of her life in New York and is a city dweller as well.

Melbourne’s CBD is not as established as Manhattan, but it is home to 20,000 residents and their pets.

As a group, CBD dwellers have endured three months of isolation in the most hard-hit suburb in Melbourne in terms of sociability, with spaces during the pandemic nearly devoid of human life.

“Because we’ve been here the whole time, we’re used to it now,” Robyn said, but she missed seeing “lots of nicely dressed young girls” on the streets.

“We had a routine. It went down to nothing.”

▼ Robyn, Phillip and Poppy bring life back to the Block Arcade.



They got by on takeaway coffee, reading and dog walks. They saw their grandchild at the end of May.

Some of their favourite takeaway places during the lockdown were Elements on Collins St and 120 Russell Street behind St Michael’s church.

“We’re purely city folk,” Phillip said. “Robyn worked in the city. We’ve been here 10 years. I don’t think it will ever get back to the way it was.” ●



Rhonda Dredge
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TRADER PROFILE



Folia House returns after QVM reopens for specialty traders

WORDS BY Katie Johnson

For a long 11 weeks, Queen Victoria Market’s (QVM’s) beloved plant store, Folia House, was forced to keep its doors shut due to coronavirus restrictions.

But on June 12, owner Quynh Phan was overjoyed to re-open to customers after QVM allowed specialty traders to return to the market.

“We were surprised when we opened because in one week everything went back to normal,” Ms Phan said.

“A lot of people came back to the store, we have regular customers coming back as well so it was really good.”

Since re-opening, Folia House has enjoyed a steady stream of customers who have been keen to step back into QVM’s green wonderland—buying up Quynh’s collection of seasonal plants and boutique vases.

“Small indoor plants which are easy to take care of have been very popular with customers lately, especially devil’s ivy and peace lilies,” Ms Phan said.

Although the market closure has been difficult, Folia House was able to stay afloat through their online orders and a new warehouse they opened in West Footscray last month.

“We’ve actually had a lot of online orders from our new website and still do. People were buying plants like crazy. We’re able to offer a good delivery fee because our warehouse is close to the city,” Ms Phan said.

Ms Phan also said QVM’s three months of rental relief for traders had been critical for her business.

“The three months of free rent was really good news for us. It made it much easier for us to focus on our online store,” she said.

Ms Phan has been a familiar face at QVM for some time. For years she had a flower shop on Franklin St, but after customer demand increased, she was prompted to open up Folia House in 2016 with a small team of three people.

“Now, with people locked inside their homes, Ms Phan said that demand is higher than ever—as many discover the power of plants for the first time.”

“Plants have been popular with people in isolation, especially in the city because people are looking for some green in their house because they don’t have a backyard,” Ms Phan said.

“Many people are buying plants for the first time, as the greenery brings them happiness while they’re stuck at home.”

Folia House is now open from Tuesday to Sunday at Victoria St ●

For more visit:
foliahouse.com.au

METRO TUNNEL



Getting creative with jobs support

The Metro Tunnel Project will provide a huge boost to the Victorian arts community in the coming months, with more than \$150,000 of new commissions announced for local artists.

The funding package offered over the next few months will help local artists and other creative professionals affected by the coronavirus pandemic by providing additional opportunities for work.

The largest commission is to design and paint two walls of the City Square acoustic shed, facing Swanston St and Flinders Lane, in the heart of the CBD. The 90-metre long and over 20-metre wide temporary acoustic shed is minimising noise, light and dust created during the 24-hour construction works as the new Town Hall Station is built.

Arts industry workers including artists, poets, writers, musicians and performers and more have been invited to register for an artist pool. Artists will then be selected from the pool to apply for the commissions.

The works will be displayed on the Metro Tunnel's construction hoardings and other structures later this year, bringing colour and life to Melbourne's streets as the community and economy recovers from the coronavirus disruption.

The new artwork commissions are part of the Metro Tunnel Creative Program, which offers opportunities for local artists and creative practitioners to keep Melbourne vibrant and attractive while major construction is underway.

Professional creatives can visit metrotunnel.vic.gov.au to find out how to apply.

Tunnelling in full swing

All four of the Metro Tunnel Project's tunnel boring machines (TBMs) are now building the project's twin nine-kilometre rail tunnels across Melbourne, as tunnelling kicks into full gear.

From the site of the new Anzac Station, 22 metres below St Kilda Rd, two TBMs named *Millie* and *Alice* are now tunnelling 1.7km towards the eastern tunnel entrance in South Yarra.

At North Melbourne, TBMs *Joan* and *Meg* have also been launched from the site of the new Arden Station to carve out the 1.4km twin tunnels towards Parkville. This is the first time all four TBMs have been operating at the same time.

TBMs *Joan* and *Meg* completed the first 1.2km section of tunnels from Arden to the western tunnel entrance in Kensington earlier this year ●

For more information:
metrotunnel.vic.gov.au

SALVOS

Homelessness

It only happens to the lazy. It only happens to the drug addled. It only happens to those that can only be described as a burden on society.

For many years, these views were held by many that I know, ashamedly, I admit, by myself.

It wasn't until I stopped passing judgement on people that were rough sleeping that my attitudes started to change.

It wasn't until I ceased attempting to do things for rough sleepers and I started to do life with them that I moved from being a person who judged those that were homeless and I started to become filled with awe.

Yes, you read that correctly. It was when I started to spend time with people that were homeless and genuinely listened to their stories that I became repeatedly staggered by their amazing resilience.

There was the elderly woman, hardened by the streets, but who retained an exquisitely well-developed upper-class English accent.

As my wife, Sandra, and I sat with her and listened to her recount her story we both realised that this woman had experienced horrific abuse as a child. Remarkably, she had not only survived this unspeakable pain, but she had retained a rather tender and deeply compassionate heart for the most vulnerable. As Sandra and I sat with this woman in a fast food outlet, enjoying some lunch, what could only be described as a "bag lady" strolled into the store with her shopping trolley overladen with her life's belongings.

As people in the store, including myself, lowered our eyes and protected our meals, our friend not only invited the "bag lady" to join us, but she had the audacity to pluck food from each of our plates and created a lovely little feast for the woman who was clearly famished. To my deep shame, it was this woman who I was meant to be helping and demonstrating a so-called better way of life that taught me a life lesson about not simply doing occasional nice things for people, but to genuinely do life with them. It's that ongoing interface where significant transformation occurs - not just for the receiver of a kind action but for all involved.

During COVID-19, our team has worked incredibly hard with people sleeping on the streets to encourage them to take up the generous offer provided by the Victorian Government to stay in free hotel accommodation and be provided with meals that are delivered to their rooms.

216 people have taken up the offer but, amazingly, 25 to 30 have refused the offer and have remained on the streets. This is a shocking story to me, particularly as COVID-19 and a very cold Melbourne winter have been descending on the city.

But again, as I sit and listen to this group's stories, I am reminded that they do not deserve my judgement but rather my compassion and care.

You see, they articulated to me, in varying ways, a very similar story.

Their primary issue is not homelessness but rather very complex mental health issues often triggered by horrific events that occurred many years ago when they were children. But the trauma has not been diagnosed or treated. They have attempted to ease their emotional pain by accessing illicit or prescription drugs. From there, they have encountered a very slippery slope that has led to life on the streets.

As we stood before this group and offered them hotel accommodation, many of them responded with "Thank you, but I can't stay inside. If I do, I may well harm myself or others."

A few years ago, a man in his 40s was sleeping behind Parliament House. We were heading into winter, so I worked hard to get him accommodated. Surprisingly, the man insisted that he was fine, but I thought I knew what was best for him.

I was quite proud of myself for getting the man housed.

After about 10 days, I saw the man walking along Bourke St near Spring St. He had a cord tied around his neck. On seeing me he lifted his shirt and revealed a gaping wound on his stomach. He said, "You did this to me. You did this to me." I was shocked and responded with, "But I have never, ever harmed you." The man shouted back with tears in his eyes, "But I told you I didn't want to go indoors and you didn't listen."

As you read this article, I implore you to remember two things. Firstly, homelessness can happen to anyone and secondly, those that are homeless deserve our compassion and care, not our judgement ●



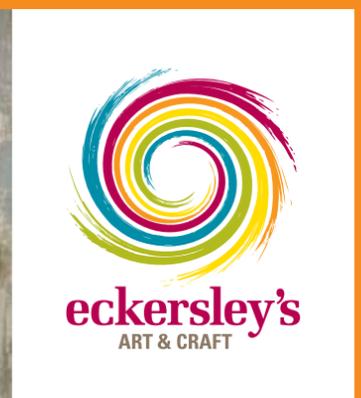
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**More trains,
more often**



HISTORY

A winter's walk in Fitzroy Gardens, 1913

It's a stark but beautiful winter scene in one of Melbourne's oldest parks, a landscape laid bare. The skeletal elm trees stand like proud sculptures extending skywards, their shadows creating faint stripes of light and shade along the pathway in the silvery sunlight.

This is Melbourne in winter at its best. You can imagine the bracing cold. The silence and serenity of the surrounds are palpable. There are no crowds, and apart from the man walking with his children on the left of the image, there is a stillness that embraces the onlooker. Even that group proceeds at a sedate pace, the children holding hands with each other and with their father.

This was once swampy land with a creek draining into the nearby Yarra River. There is no evidence now of that. By the 1860s the development of this 26-hectare site on the south-eastern fringe of the CBD had begun. The paths were fenced and lined with statues. Many of the trees at that time were conifers, although some were the iconic elms that are visible throughout the CBD. There were fountains, a rotunda, and a bandstand where concerts were held on Sunday afternoons – sacred music only, though.

It took some years for flowers and lawns to enter the landscape of the gardens. By the time this photo was taken, the fences and statuary had disappeared. People were allowed off the paths and onto the lawns and the gardens felt more like a park than the formal, constrained place it had been in the 19th century.

In 1913, when this winter scene was captured by photographer Robert Law, some of the biggest drawcards of the Fitzroy Gardens were still

20 years into the future. One of these, Cook's Cottage, was moved from England in 253 crates in 1933 (complete with an ivy cutting from its original setting) then reconstructed in the gardens. As a very young child I thought that Cook had lived in this cottage in the gardens and was captivated by its smallness – just perfect for the young child I imagined Captain Cook to be when he lived there. I was very disappointed to discover some years later that it was his parents' home and he'd never lived there.

Another favourite childhood place, created in the early 1930s, is the Fairies Tree, created by children's author and sculptor Ola Cohn. Located at the base of an amazingly old red gum, it depicts a wonderful array of fairies, gnomes, koalas, flying foxes and various other Australian animals and birds. Generations of children have fallen in love with the Fairies Tree that Cohn dedicated to "fairies and those who believe in them". It is the believers, she wrote, who will "understand how necessary it is to have a fairy sanctuary – a place that is sacred and safe as a home should be to all living creatures."

Then there is the Spanish Mission style Conservatory, opened in the 1930s and known for its marvellous floral displays. And the 1947 model Tudor village, created by an elderly Englishman and sent to the City of Melbourne as a thank you gift in appreciation of the food parcels Melburnians sent to Britain during World War II.

There are so many places to visit in the Fitzroy Gardens, but my preference is for a walk along one of the tree-lined avenues such as the one you see here.

▼ Photo by Robert Law, Fitzroy Gardens, c1913. RHSV GS-G-18.



Postsript to last month's article "And there she was, just riding down the street" ...

Shortly after the publication of my last article about an unnamed horsewoman riding along Exhibition St, the Royal Historical Society was contacted by a reader who had an almost identical image in her collection of family photos. She was able to tell us that our previously unidentified rider was almost certainly Isa Taylor, then in her 20s. She was the daughter of Joe Taylor, who traded in the CBD from around 1906 as Joe Taylor The Tailor. The photo was probably taken in the early 1920s, rather than 1929 as

we had thought. A well-known businessman and master of self-promotion, Joe Taylor had businesses in Bourke and Swanston streets with branches in Brunswick, Footscray, North Melbourne and Richmond until the mid-1920s. Isa Taylor, we were told, would often ride into town. Those were the days ... ●



Dr. Cheryl Griffin
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
VICTORIA

WE LIVE HERE

Short-stays in the aftermath of COVID-19

An open Letter to the Premier of Victoria and the Lord Mayor of Melbourne ...

For years we have lobbied for the regulation of the short-stay industry, especially in high-rise residential strata buildings not designed for hotel-type accommodation.

Our pleas have mostly fallen on deaf ears and the current changes to the legislation are proving to be unworkable.

However, a microorganism in the form of a coronavirus, devastating in so many ways, appears to have intervened to bring the short-stay juggernaut to a crisis point.

Once the COVID-19 pandemic took hold and lockdowns commenced around the world, including in Melbourne, it quickly became apparent there was no place for short-stay operations in non-commercial high-rise buildings.

The problem is fundamental: there is no means to limit the spread of the virus or to enforce social distancing rules in the short-stay environment.

In a very brief period, many of the commercial short-stay operators have abandoned our buildings and a number have gone out of business altogether.

Former short-stay apartments are now being rented out long-term and owners are discovering – what we have known for a long time – that investors can earn more from long-term renting than from short-term.

Now that restrictions are gradually being lifted, we must not allow a return to the bad old days where greedy commercial operators don't contribute to wear and tear, security is compromised and the amenity we have rediscovered, disappears again.

We must emphasise that we have no problem with individual owners renting out a room in the apartment they are occupying, which was what short-term letting was all about in the first place.

So, please Mr Premier and Lord Mayor, listen to our pleas and work with us to create a long-term solution beyond lockdown.

The current decimation of the short-stay industry is but a grimly fortuitous artefact of COVID-19.

The short-stay industry needs to be properly regulated – we cannot rely on a deadly virus to protect residents' rights to security and quiet enjoyment of their homes.

There must be a level playing field for all.

Yours sincerely,

We Live Here, on behalf of the countless residents affected by unregulated short stays over the past few years.

What if you are not on the VBA list?

What happens if your building has non-compliant cladding and you are not on the Victorian Building Authority's (VBA) list? We Live Here has been contacted by one such building.

Case Study

The owners' corporation (OC) for a medium density building in suburban Melbourne was requested by its insurance company to confirm its cladding status.

The OC arranged for core samples to be taken from the cladding surrounding the building and the façade at the front entrance, and all were found to be non-compliant. Fire services engineers were engaged and deemed the whole building to be high risk, with the facade (the escape route) most urgently in need of replacement.

Quotes have been obtained to replace the facade, but no decision has yet been made on how this would be paid for - from the OC's maintenance fund or from owners directly via a levy. This work has not yet commenced.

For the remainder of the building, which would be considerably more expensive, the OC was hoping to tap into the \$600 million fund announced by the state government.

The difficulty was - how?

The building has not received a Building Notice or Building Order, or any notice from the VBA or the local council that the building was at risk. It was only through the insurance company that they had learned about their issue.

A phone call from We Live Here to Cladding Safety Victoria (CSV) confirmed this building was not on their cladding list nor on the VBA's cladding list.

The OC was then advised to contact CSV and request help to work through the process of finding out if they could be eligible for funding. We shall provide an update in our next column.

Our advice if you are in a similar position with non-compliant cladding and not in the system is to contact CSV and request assistance from a CSV customer liaison officer.

Email support@claddingsafetyvic.gov.au or phone 1300 456 542.

How many buildings have been approved by VBA for funding?

We have asked CSV how many buildings have already been approved for funding and we are yet to receive an answer. What we do know is that at least 487 buildings been referred to the CSV. These buildings are now being "prioritised" by CSV. CSV says that it is reviewing 60 buildings a month.

Municipal Building Surveyor - clarification

We have received clarification from Cladding Safety Victoria (CSV) regarding CSV information in our previous column.

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) has been appointed as the Municipal Building Surveyor (MBS) for buildings outside the City of Melbourne.

Affected buildings within the City of Melbourne will continue dealing with the Melbourne City Council's MBS.

Request for information

Please let us know if commercial short-stay operations have continued in your building during the COVID-19 pandemic and what steps, if any, have been taken to curb their activity.

Campaign donations

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



Barbara Francis &
Rus Littleton

EMAIL:
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LEARN MORE AT WELIVEHERE.NET





Living food boxes for those in need

“

If this pandemic is teaching us anything, it is demonstrating the importance of relationships – to each other, to place and neighbour, and to food and plants.

”

WORDS BY *Sherry Maddock*
COMMITTEE MEMBER OF RESIDENTS 3000 MELBOURNE

It turns out that despite drastic measures of social distancing and circumstances of scarcity, goodness emerges in unexpected ways.

Funded by a City of Melbourne COVID-19 response grant, Cultivating Community and Planted Places are partnering to plant and distribute 50 “Living Food Boxes” for city residents experiencing hardship. This project brings two organisations together around a common cause – to build connections between people and plants.

These not-for-profit groups intersect with a love of plants. Cultivating Community’s (cultivatingcommunity.org.au) mission is to work with diverse and low-income communities to create fair, secure and resilient food systems. By improving access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food, Cultivating Community nurtures well-being and belonging in shared outdoor garden spaces.

Planted Places (plantedplaces.org) cultivates relationships between people, plants and place, with a specific focus on the transformative power of indoor houseplants and their companionship for people seeking asylum. Housed at the end of a laneway at the centre of the

CBD, Planted Places operates the Green Room, a dense interior green space where plants are propagated, and friendships formed.

In an effort to think outside the box, the edible garden project puts green life in a box and grows gardeners. With community gardens currently closed and access to outdoor shared spaces restricted, Cultivating Community had the idea to bring gardens inside to people.

With a short, one-month timeline, project participants will create and deliver 50 garden boxes around the City of Melbourne. Portable grow beds will provide vulnerable people with healthy food for months and enable them to continue growing food across all seasons. Versatile and sustainable, mini gardens can be set up indoors with ample light, on a balcony or patio.

The garden boxes, supplied by Greensmart, come as a complete growing system with a self-watering function that hold 40 litres of potting mix. The first patch of seasonal plants includes winter vegetables and herbs such as lettuce, tatsoi, silverbeet, rocket, parsley, thyme and oregano, among others.

As a volunteer member of the committee for Residents 3000 and the director of Planted Places, I am thrilled to see this innovative, plant-powered response at a time of significant challenge. I’m grateful to live and work in a neighbourhood where city resources and community members create life-giving projects like this one.

Emerging from extraordinarily trying times, it is clear that our relationships to food and plants have ascended to top priority. This is good - we need one another. Together we can celebrate the reality that homes need gardens, both indoors and outside, and gardens are always looking for homes ●

For anyone who is interested, here’s the link for registration to be part of the project:
airtable.com/shr15QAPtrwBksLBk

SKYPAD LIVING

Coming out of COVID-19 with a silver lining

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions there may be a greater recognition of vertical living challenges!

In this column I previously wrote about the particular challenges faced by vertical villages dealing with COVID-19, chief among which were:

- Interpreting public health orders: whose responsibility is it to enforce?
- Promoting safety and cleanliness: determining closure criteria and exceptions;
- Managing Building Security: negotiating and monitoring access channels;
- Disclosure: determining legal requirements in terms of health and privacy;

The pressure of needing to act quickly, combined with a lack of established connections between our vertical villages, saw each having to develop their own approach to dealing with COVID-19. This has resulted in great variation in the procedures and protocols implemented within our residential buildings – some of which are now beginning to be questioned!

However, dark clouds sometimes have silver

linings and there appears the glint of one for our vertical villages.

This takes the form of recognition of our sector – specifically, that high-rise residential living is now mainstream but is also a different way of living and needs to be recognised and supported as such.

This glimmer of light (to continue the cliché) was seen at last month’s Future Melbourne Committee meeting on June 2 when the Lord Mayor Sally Capp proposed a motion on apartment living. This motion noted that “apartment living has for many years been a fast growing part of the City of Melbourne delivering lifestyle, social, environmental and economic benefits for Melbourne”. The motion went on to note some distinct challenges for those living in close proximity and proposed several actions including a forthcoming “Virtual Support Workshop for the Strata Community” - an undertaking being progressed by Cr Nicholas Reece.

The proposed motion drew interesting comments from some councillors, revealing that some might not be as au fait with our way of living as we might expect. However, the motion was carried unanimously, and we now await the virtual workshop.

What has also occurred this month was a community led event entitled “Coming Out of

COVID19 – for Owners’ Corporations (OCs)” hosted by the Docklands Representative Group (DRG) – of which I am a member!

On the evening of June 18, the DRG hosted a webinar featuring *Docklands News* and *Southbank News* columnist Tom Bacon (CEO of Strata Title Lawyers), along with representatives from the Department of Justice and Community Safety (the entity responsible for our *Owners’ Corporation Act 2006*).

Around 90 webinar attendees listened to the discussion on two pressing issues:

- Reopening common property – what powers and responsibilities do OCs have?
- OC funding stress - waiving, delaying or reducing OC fees and interest – what can be legally done?

While emphasising the point that the event offered only general information and not legal advice, these two issues were considered in relation to the actual legal authority of OCs: what powers do OCs have when reopening common property? Must they reopen closed facilities? Can OCs restrict access to common property?

In relation to OC funding, it was noted that COVID-19 has brought significant financial hardship to owners through possible job loss or, if an investor, decreased rental income. At the same time, there are additional building

expenses related to COVID-19, such as increased cleaning costs, increased security costs and new expenses for hygiene and safety resources. As OC fees are the key source of funding for the operation of vertical villages, the impact will be severe if many owners fail (or are late) to pay. The webinar considered the powers which OCs have (or do not have) in relation to setting and changing fees, penalties, and budgets and also discussed strategies such as billing individuals for use of specific amenities.

For those interested, a recording of this webinar is available at docklands.org.au.

Feedback from webinar attendees indicated a great interest in future sessions focussed on the needs of OCs. And this is timely input for the forthcoming City of Melbourne’s virtual workshop – which I will report on in my next column! ●



Janette Corcoran

JANETTE CORCORAN IS
AN APARTMENT LIVING EXPERT.

LEARN MORE ON [FACEBOOK.COM/](https://facebook.com/skypadliving/)
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Pet's Corner

Bertie the "buffoon"

“

Eight-year-old Bertie is “chubby, gorgeous and a mummy’s boy” according to his owner Helen.

”



WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*

Named after the P.G. Wodehouse character Bertie Wooster, the rambunctious French bulldog lives up to his literary reputation of being a lovable goofball.

“The character is a bit of a buffoon, so I thought the name was fitting,” Helen said as Bertie ran around her legs at Flagstaff Gardens in June.

Helen and Bertie moved to the CBD from New Zealand in 2015. And although Bertie sometimes misses the beautiful beaches of Wellington, he’s grown to love the sloping hills of Flagstaff Gardens.

“He’s always doing zoomies. I take him here to throw his frisbee a few times a week and he loves it,” Helen said.

As a program coordinator at RMIT, Helen would usually be teaching in-person classes on the history of video games.

But for the past few months, coronavirus restrictions have allowed her to spend quality time with Bertie all day long while lecturing online.

“Right now, he’s living his absolute best life, he gets 24/7 company and cuddles,” Helen said.

“I don’t know how he’s going to cope when I go back into work.” ●

▼ *Helen with her French Bulldog Bertie.*



STREET ART

The stains of time

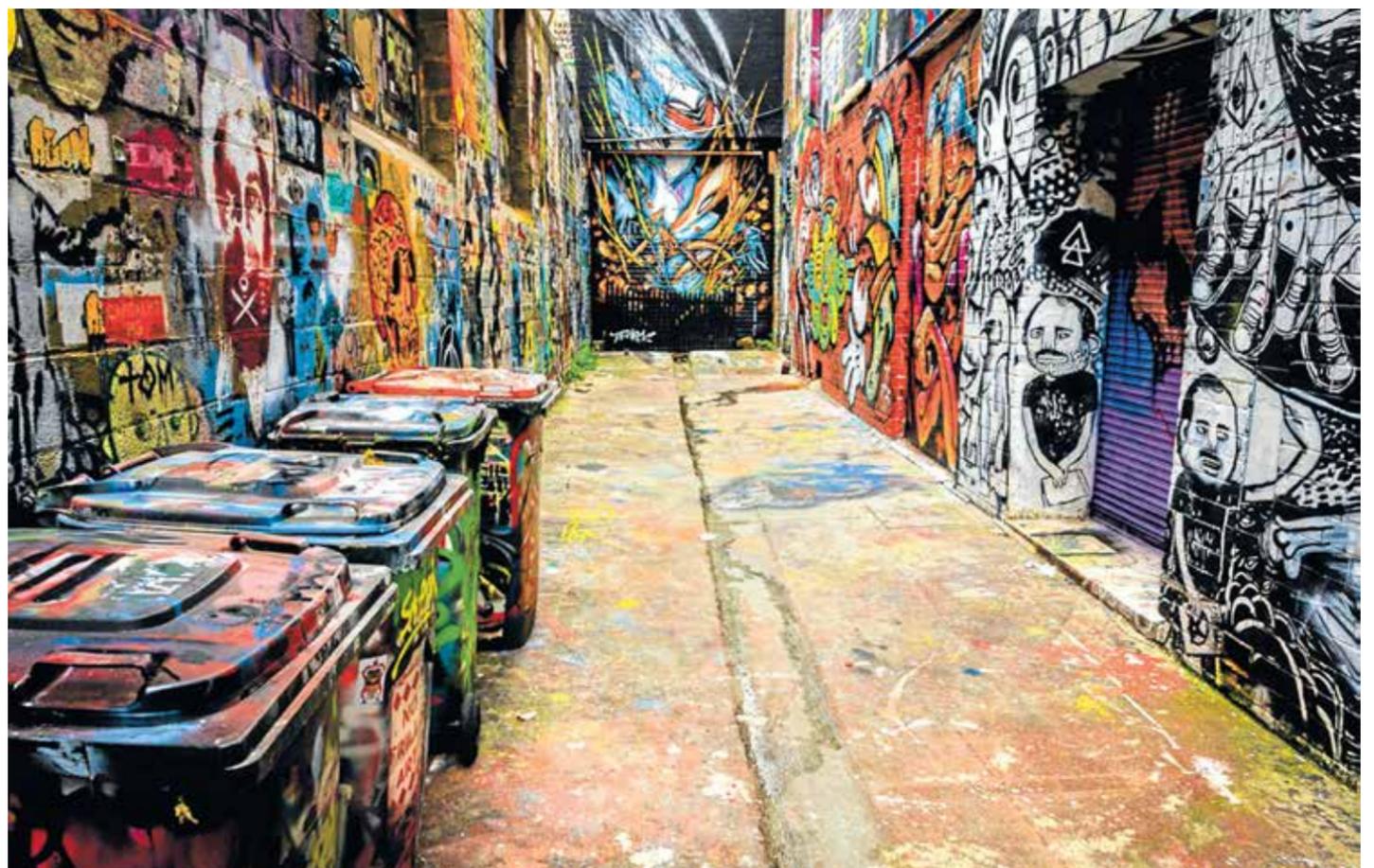
Whether it’s the sound of the trams rattling down the road or the endless rows of amazing and fascinating restaurants that both delight and challenge the taste buds, there are many things that make Melbourne great.

The way multiculturalism makes the city even greater and how Melbournians run to the park to drink with friends at the first sign of the sun, Melbourne is a unique and unusual city, a beautiful playground for the rich and not so rich.

The stains of time drip down the walls and laneways leaving evidence of generational nuisance. Over the years Melbourne’s grit and grime has given it a flavor of historical significance, with the old and the new converging or coexisting. Melbourne’s hidden myriad of marks, spots, and tags amalgamate with the wear and tear of time to create street art that often goes unnoticed.

The government spends so much time and money trying to make the city look beautiful, presentable and grime free. But this clean veneer doesn’t interest me, it’s almost a loss of identity as the homogenised parts of the city remind me of everywhere I’ve ever been. The shopping centres try hard to create a seamless and curated experience that reminds me of the shopping centres at international airports.

But walk a few metres off the main streets and away from the shopping centres, and you enter a new world, a smelly world where a mixture



of human waste, rotting food and other unidentified smells, come together and heat up to create a pungent yet sensory experience. It is in this space Melbourne is truly a living breathing beast of a city. It’s also in this space where some of the most interesting art lies. Whether is art or not, could be subjective.

When you look around, up at the walls, down on the ground, you will see the stains of time. An incidental and disregarded chewing gum that may have been dropped 50 years ago, a scuff mark on the wall from a truck that scraped

along it, the faded tags on the wall and road and the moss that grows over the drains above the bin. These are the stains of Melbourne’s history. Each mark is a story a life, evidence of the past. I can even remember a busker who used to remove bubble gum from the front of Myer.

As the city gentrifies and much of the city is changing, it’s important to make sure you engage with your city in new and interesting ways. Look down at the marks, the randomness of an evolving living city, walk off the main streets and enjoy the hidden and often smelly

streets that reveal an artform that tells the story of Melbourne ●



Adrian Doyle
BLENDER STUDIOS
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CRITIC

▼ Alex Walker back in a real office.

Made for the home office

There's an old adage bandied around among gallerists that when times are difficult you show difficult art.

Neon Parc has opened up, the first gallery in the CBD, with a difficult show.

It's not easy to connect with the exhibition called *House Arrest*.

Ho Ho Ho Chinese Scroll, for example, seems particularly irrelevant (or is that irreverent?) when you're looking for comfort.

And *HEIMAT*, an installation of small, hard-edged paintings in between two vases of artificial flowers, seems to be a piss-take of our newly treasured domestic life.

The first piece is from 1999 and the second 1991. Perhaps the '90s and its glib cleverness doesn't suit our more solemn times!

Some galleries have been delving into their stockrooms to find work that resonates with buyers.

Difficult work can be off-putting because of its subject matter or it can be troublesome because it has been passed over in the past but might gel now.

Alex Walker, an artist in her own right, was setting the gallery and she is into site-conditional work.

With so many people working from home, the objects on show seemed targeted for domestic spaces, easy pieces lifted off the wall and transported.

Site-conditional art is made predominantly in and for a particular space but perhaps the domestic is not quite what it used to be. Has the time we've spent looking at the hard, plastic



surface of a screen changed our aesthetic?

"During the COVID crisis we've been so reliant on screens and technology to communicate and engage with the world," Alex said. "These types of works offer a reprieve to use all our senses."

Behind her in the office is a wall hanging made by Teelah George out of thread on cloth in 2019 that fits this description.

It is comfortingly textured and coloured, and it's easy to imagine it warming up the décor of a CBD apartment, a nice foil to all those hard surfaces.

"Maybe as well because it's an effort to see art in 3D again ... we're so used to seeing it on screens ... that Teelah George is so compelling," Alex said.

The work is contemporary and connects to the current love of texture, its name *Saffron* refers to the colour and it looks particularly stylish hanging on a wall as a backdrop to a person.

You can imagine it looking great on Zoom in

your home office and, it has to be admitted, so would the brilliant red scroll *Ho Ho Ho* by Aleks Danko and for that matter, so would the irony of *HEIMAT* by Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley.

House Arrest, Neon Parc City, until June 27. Open Fridays and Saturdays ●



Rhonda Dredge
JOURNALIST
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Coffee break

It was well-known that Michael loved a chat

Hardware Lane

HERITAGE

Save Campbell Arcade

With tunneling continuing unabated on the Metro Tunnel, Melbourne Heritage Action (MHA) is concerned that plans for demolition in one of the city's most significant arcades are still not publicly available, or seemingly open to any scrutiny or objection.

It has seemed obvious from the start of community consultation years ago that Rail Projects Victoria (RPV) has considered Campbell Arcade an afterthought when it comes to planning. Unlike other heritage sites impacted, plans for partial demolition of the arcade and removal of long term tenants were only discovered buried in tiny detail within complex planning documents.

The underground arcade, opened in 1955 in a late salmon pink art deco style, sits alongside the Block and Royal Arcades as intact architecturally significant walkways listed on our state's highest level of protection, the Victorian Heritage Register. Despite this we are still yet to see any formal plans submitted to an open review process with Heritage Victoria, meaning Metro is tunneling towards an inevitable demolition process as if that's a fait accompli despite no heritage approvals or concrete plans for what the interface between the arcade and new pedestrian tunnel to Town Hall station will look like.

If any other heritage arcade mentioned such as Block or Royal were threatened with the

same level of demolition, we would certainly see more public consultation. The lack of this may also reflect an attitude towards a space that for many decades now has been a creative hub in the city, including Sticky Institute, a not-for-profit community space and zine store, which has operated in the arcade for 20 years, as well as the similarly old Dirty Dozen art gallery lining the former department store display cases, pop up local fashion stores and a record store/performance space. With low rent creative- and artist-run space continually being gentrified or demolished in the CBD over the past decade, a space such as Campbell Arcade has become even more important for the diversity and creative energy of a city that prides itself on being a place for everyone, not just those with money and mainstream tastes.

All of this seems to have been consistently ignored by RPV, which has offered little concrete information for current tenants and the public.

While the importance of the Metro Tunnel for the future of the city is well understood, we hope the authorities behind it can also recognise the importance of underground heritage and underground creativity for the future of our city, and act more transparently and proactively to reach an open and inclusive future for the Campbell Arcade ●



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MUSIC

Higher Places

Nat Vazer's debut album *Is this Offensive And Loud* was launched during the COVID-19 era, and it is a ripper of an album.

One of the highlights is the song *Higher Places*. *Sunlight*, like the McEvoy racehorse of the same name, is brilliant. It's optimistic and bright like that of a song by Spiderbait bassist Janet English.

After a hiatus in Canada, the chameleon Vazer (she once was a lawyer) with a clutch of songs in her files and folders went above a guitar shop in Melbourne with a member of Saskwatch as a producer to help steer the project, and it is a confident delivery of some great songs.

Vazer will be performing songs from the stellar debut album, livestreaming from Rocksteady Records, Mitchell House, Lonsdale St, CBD on Friday, July 10 at 6.30pm.

During the lockdown, radio stations like 3PBS, 3RRR, 3CR and 3MBS have provided magnificent entertainment. MMM one day highlighted Midnight Oil's *Diesel and Dust* album, citing it as a career highlight with such iconic rock songs as *Beds Are Burning*, *Dead Heart* and *Put Down That Weapon*. Great radio. Many recall the inspiring performance the Oils put on at an anti-nuclear rally at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, when at a creative apogee they played songs from their classic *Place Without A Postcard* album. Songs including *Armistice Day*, *Brave Faces*, *Written In The Heart*, *Quinella Holiday*, *If Ned Kelly Was King* and *Lucky Country*. There's a bit of Patrick White in the detailed tales of living in the city. The searing guitar work of Moginie and Rotary is sensational, powered by Rob Hirst's incandescent drumming and of course Peter Garret's unique lead singing staccato style. It is a superb album well produced by Glynn John's that would set the stage for their *10 to 1* album.



Mo'Ju has an EP out called Ghost Town that is getting great reviews. Recorded with Joelistics it is seven tracks of great soul, funk, gospel and blues. Worth considering.



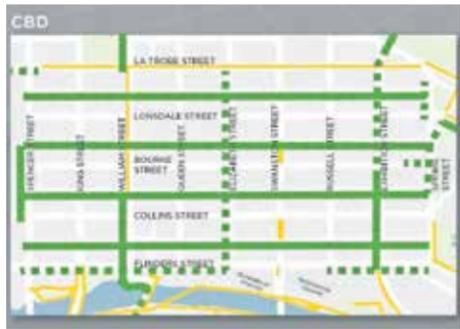
The third edition of the Avantwhatever Festival is happening from July 8 - 12 and is one of the edgiest alternative music festivals in Melbourne.

Melbourne Music Week (MMW) is now a well-established music festival on the calendar and MMW is calling for musos to send in expressions of interest for the next festival taking place from November 18-22 after the Spring Racing Carnival. Go to the City of Melbourne MMW page and send in the great ideas you have to feature.

Responding to the COVID-19 virus, MMW2020 will focus on local venues and musos. Expressions of interest are open until June 28 ●



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市政加快修建自行车道

撰稿: David Schout

随着墨尔本市政加大自行车道基础设施建设的力度,在未来的12个月内,将修建横跨中央商务区及周边地区的新自行车道。

为了进一步加快“便于骑自行车城市”的转变,市议会宣布了修建一系列专用自行车道,旨在增加骑单车的人数并保持车手的信心。

到2021年7月,骑自行车的人将在市区霍德尔网(Hoddle Grid)的整个东西方向上有四条新的自行车专用车道,包括Flinders Lane、Little Lonsdale、Little Bourke和Little Collins街道。

在Exhibition街上的“优先项目”工程已经施工,并将很快在Flinders和Bourke街道之间修建自行车道。

在可能的情况下,自行车道将有“保护”,即为骑车者提供对机动车辆的物理障碍。

去年市政在发布10年交通战略之前,作了大量的研究,许多现在和未来的骑自行车者报告说,他们在市中心道路上骑车感到害怕。



市长萨利·卡普(Sally Capp)表示:“通过在关键道路上快速跟踪自行车道的流量情况,我们正在创建让人们充满信心的街道,进而也可以释放我们的道路、公共汽车、电车和火车上的空间。”

“我们的研究表明,设立物理障碍,保护骑车者免受机动车的伤害是至关重要的,可以鼓励更多的人骑车去市中心。”

道路的修建升级,会拆除一些停车场,为新车道腾出空间,市政表示,拆除的车位不到市区总车位的1%。

在接下来的12个月中,1600万澳元的自行车道修建支出,是市议会之前在2012-13年度修建La Trobe街自行车道(500万澳元)的三倍之多。

市政在此之前已经承诺进行长期的自行车道基础设施改革,但是在COVID-19疫情封闭期间,由于骑自行车者数量的急剧增加,从而加速了这个计划。



抗议集会带来影响

撰稿: Meg Hill

经过几个月的平静,6月6日星期六,墨尔本中央商务区聚集了成千上万的抗议者,一场席卷全球的“黑人的命也是命”的抗议活动在当地重复上演。

这次抗议集会由“土著抵抗战士”(WAR)组织,名为“阻止在押黑人死亡——为乔治·弗洛伊德(George Floyd)伸张正义”。

起因是美国一名警官杀害乔治·弗洛伊德,现已臭名昭著的事件之后所发出的呼吁。抗议组织者表示,要声援美国的抗议者,并抗议在澳大利亚有类似不公正的行为。

组织者在《星期六报纸》(The Saturday Paper)上写道,“这是一项全球性的运动,澳大利亚也有同样的问题。当录像出现四名明尼阿波利斯(Minneapolis)警官谋杀乔治·弗洛伊德时,看到他拼命恳求‘我无法呼吸’,我们都感到震惊和愤怒,但并不感到惊讶。”

“我们立刻想到了Dunghutti土著居民,小大卫·邓吉(David Dungay Jr)在悉尼的长湾监狱里被警察压得喘不过气来时发出的“我无法呼吸”的哭喊声。我们想到了坦尼亚·戴(Tanya Day)阿姨、小雷·托马斯(Ray Thomas Jr)、乔伊斯·克拉克(Joyce Clarke)、杜(Dhu)女士、库曼加伊·沃克(Kumanjaji Walker)、维罗妮卡·纳尔逊(Veronica Nelson)以及还有太多其他人。”

抗议集会上有500多个志愿者分发了超过55000个防护口罩和55000瓶洗手液。抗议示威下午2点在州议会大厦台阶上开始,然后游行至Flinders街十字路口,成千上万人的示威一直持续到天黑。

抗议活动的举行使社区对于州政府的COVID-19封锁措施持以不同意见。在《CBD新闻》7月版印刷之际,州卫生和公共服务部(DHHS)报告称,目前仅有三例新冠病例与该抗议活动有关,并且有证据表明,这是近期维州疫情飙升的原因。

布雷特·萨顿(Brett Sutton)教授说:“如果你参加了6月6日星期六本市的“黑人的命也是命”的抗议活动,如果没有任何症状,目前不需要进行隔离或测试。”“然而,如果你出现任何症状,不管有多少轻微,都要进行测试,这一点至关重要。”

废物回收利用太阳能

撰稿: Marco Holden Jeffery

墨尔本市政提出,在全市范围内投资2470万澳元修建废物管理基础设施,包括两个新的废物回收中心和51个太阳能回收箱。

墨尔本市政环境部门主管凯西·奥克(Cathy Oke)表示,该项目表明了市政致力于减少垃圾产生,并鼓励回收利用,这座城市每年产生4万吨路边垃圾。

她说:“这两项举措都将支持我们向循环经济迈进,在循环经济中,我们将最大程度地重复使用、循环利用和回收,并最大程度地减少垃圾填埋。”

新的太阳能压实回收箱将补充该市在2018年安装的396个太阳能压实垃圾箱。

太阳能压实垃圾箱初期也存在一些问题,本报2019年4月曾报道,由于缺乏阳光直射,造成多次断电故障,市政只得将其中一些垃圾箱搬迁移位。

一位市政发言人表示,新的回收箱将放置在太阳能垃圾箱旁边,这些太阳能垃圾箱“都正常运转,位置合适,能接收充足的阳光”。

奥克议员说,新的回收箱也将有助于减少全市垃圾车的数量,减少市区噪音和污染。

她说:“太阳能压实垃圾箱已经帮助我们减少垃圾车的数量从每月9万辆减少到每月1.2万辆。”



“像太阳能垃圾箱一样,太阳能回收箱将使用适当的压实技术,将容量提高到普通回收箱的六倍左右,这意味着它们不需要经常清空。”

除了从垃圾填埋场转移过来的可回收材料外,废物回收中心预计每月将处理多达85吨废物。

附近的商企业将根据他们送到中心处

理垃圾的频率来支付费用。

奥克议员表示,市政正致力于“最终确定新处理中心的最佳位置”,并预计在2021年建成。

市长萨利·卡普说,这些处理中心将可以移除多达110个在本市的巷道中商业垃圾箱,并减少多达7000车次的垃圾收集卡车。

市民要求改变酒牌营业时间豁免

撰稿: David Schout

一个19世纪40年代建造的Job Warehouse仓库将要改建成一个可容纳约1000名顾客的酒吧,CBD市民对这一计划感到愤怒。他们要求新任的州消费事务部长梅丽莎·霍恩(Melissa Horne)更改酒牌营业至凌晨3点的豁免,该特殊豁免是由已辞职部长玛琳·凯鲁兹(Marlene Kairouz)所批准的。

今年4月,凯鲁兹女士给予O'Brien集团的酒吧经营者一项特殊豁免,允许他们提议的在Bourke街上酒吧营业到凌晨3点,因为那里被认为是一个具有“文化重要性”的场所。

在6月16日,由于她与党派盟友阿德姆·索姆尤雷克(Adem Somyurek)一起参与大规模工党当地分支机构不当招募党员的细节浮出水面,部长引咎辞职。

6月22日,当地市民珍妮·埃尔瑟姆(Jenny Eltham),她也是80多名反对者

之一,表示要求新部长取消该酒牌的豁免。

她说:“我们要质疑这个问题。”

“只要知道谁是新任部长,我们就会发电子邮件来质疑这一决定。”

当地市民普遍认为,年久失修的Job Warehouse仓库需要更新。

但是他们认为,目前所提议的远远不适合该区域。

埃尔瑟姆女士说:“这是一个不受欢迎的结果。”

“每个人都支持Job Warehouse仓库有所改变,让它看起来比现在更好。我认为人们更支持较小型的,更定制的,更符合这个区域。人们很高兴在那里能有一些什么,但并不是一个1000人的餐饮场所,而且营业至凌晨3点。旁边有些住宅公寓只相距6米之远。”

公告期于7月2日结束之后,酒牌执照听证会将在维州酒类委员会举行。

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A difficult comeback for Spring St

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
BUSINESS

Allegations of branch stacking may be dominating the powerbrokers at Spring St, but locals along this prime piece of real estate are more concerned with getting the economy going.

Restaurateurs are opening up venues and residents are hoping to see more action in their "little village".

Di Stasio Citta re-opened last month and reported that Friday lunches were booked out.

And the street's prime place for hanging out, City Wine Shop, was attracting back regulars, albeit with a minor setback.

The umbrellas were out, and the sun was shining but Yarra Trams chose last week to replace the tram lines in front of Parliament House, cutting Spring St in two.

Loyal customers, returning to re-establish patterns that defined their lives before the pandemic, were forced inside, instead of enjoying the winter sun on Melbourne's peak pavement.

"We don't seem to be able to take a trick at the moment," retail manager Jeremy Prideaux said.

The café offers one of the best settings for classy, casual pavement dining but instead of overlooking Parliament House, the tables were butted up against cyclone fences.

"It's definitely a shock to the system and difficult to work out a response," Jeremy said.

The street is one of many in the CBD gradually rediscovering its attractions and attempting to lure back locals before the workforce returns to the city.

Jeremy said, "the hospitality industry in the CBD was hit first and hardest because the corporates closed down. A lot of suburban businesses benefitted."

One nearby business told *CBD News* they would have a rent bill in the hundreds of thousands of dollars by the time the moratorium ended in October.

Despite the setback, Jeremy said they'd had



▲ Jeremy Prideaux outside Spring Street's iconic wine bar.

an "incredible" response to the re-opening of the first of their six CBD venues, which includes the Supper Club, The European and Siglo next door on Spring St and Kirk's Wine Bar and the French Saloon in Hardware Lane.

"We chose not to offer our menu take away," he said. "We chose to channel through the Spring Street Grocer. It's very important to us as a city wine shop to be present. We've been here for 20 years."

One customer who had been a regular 7am breakfaster before the lockdown, has been in four times since the place re-opened even though he is working from home in Kew. "They've got their mojo back," he said.

His zeal speaks for the attraction of this popular street among the polities, public servants and residents who are keen to see it spring back to life.

Restaurateur Ronnie Di Stasio has been sitting out the front of his eponymous restaurant with his two dogs during the past few weeks.

The restaurant was booked out for lunch but

could only take 28 diners in two sittings because of the restrictions.

With just 10 per of the workforce back in the city, locals are standing out and playing an important part in the recovery.

"I've bumped into so many people from the building," resident of 35 Spring Street, a prime residential tower opposite Treasury Gardens, Jay Bonnington said.

"It's paradise," she said. "We love it here, the position. We can walk into the park. KereKere Green is open for takeaway. People are queuing there."

Even though she and her husband are enjoying the quiet and the peace, she said that many of their favourite places had been slow to re-open because of their reliance on office workers.

"I'd like to see the commerce side resuming," she said. While she is loyal to the Chocolate Box in Collins Place, which toughed out the lockdown, she misses the variety of the Kino Centre ●



▲ Police at the crime scene. Image: David Crosling.

Market St homicide

CRIME

Homicide Squad detectives are investigating following the death of a man in the CBD on June 22.

Police were called to Market St following reports a man had been stabbed during an altercation at around 5am.

It's believed the offenders fled the scene prior to police arrival.

The victim, a 21-year-old Kurunjang man, was taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital where he later died.

Detectives are in the early stages of the investigation and are piecing together what has taken place including whether those involved are known to each other.

Anyone who witnessed the incident or with information is urged to contact Crime Stoppers ●

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