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Hands off the roundabout!

Local residents living near the Queen Victoria Market (QVM) have sent a direct message to Lord Mayor Sally Capp and the City of Melbourne to retain the Queen St roundabout as part of its upheaval of traffic arrangements in the precinct.

WORDS BY Sean Car
PHOTOGRAPHY BY John Tadigiri
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The council intends to demolish the roundabout and remove mature trees as part of its ongoing push to renew QVM later this year. But residents have urged it to “stop” and reconsider those plans, which they argue won’t solve any traffic issues in the area.

And in a last-ditch effort to save the roundabout, a large group of residents gathered at the site on January 22 to send a direct message to Lord Mayor Sally Capp holding signs that read: “Wrong way Sally, go back”.

The plea from local residents comes after Heritage Victoria approved “critical” market infrastructure as part of the council’s \$250 million incremental renewal program

in December, of which traffic reconfiguration will form a key component.

In December 2019, the council endorsed the discontinuance of sections of Queen and Franklin streets to facilitate the southern development site along Franklin St – a parcel of land transferred from the state government in 2014 to help fund the market’s renewal.

While the state government’s condition of the land transfer was to rezone QVM’s current car park as a public open space (Market Square), the council intends to sell the southern site off for private development in the process.

In doing so, Franklin St will be converted into a one-way street to traffic travelling from Queen St to William St, while traffic lights at a new-look intersection will replace the current roundabout – a move residents say will be detrimental to the area.

Continued on page 2.

Uncertainty over future of Job Warehouse “eyesore”

WORDS BY David Schout
PLANNING

The redevelopment of the CBD’s “most high-profile eyesore” into a large-scale bar and restaurant is up in the air after its developers threatened to pull the pin in the wake of an unfavourable City of Melbourne decision.

The O’Brien Group, which acquired a long-term lease to the 1840s-built Job Warehouse on Bourke St in 2019, said the council’s move to push a proposed 3am licence back to 1am and cut patrons by almost 300 would see them “hand back the keys”.

The O’Brien’s Group’s proposal would “unreasonably impact upon the amenity and character of the area” according to the council, particularly on long-term Liverpool St residents.

The council determined that some nearby residents’ balconies would sit just eight metres from the proposed venue and said proposed operating hours were “an incompatible outcome”.

Councillors voted unanimously to grant a planning permit for a 1am closing time (rather than 3am) and for a maximum patron number of 673, rather than a proposed 957.

O’Brien Group CEO Michael O’Brien said the huge costs involved with the project meant it would require a favourable liquor licence to lock in the venue’s future.

“Due to the age of the building and its heritage status, the care, time and skill needed to restore this building is three times what it would normally be. To make it viable, we need a 3am licence,” he said.

The heritage-listed Bourke St site in the CBD’s east end, most recently a haberdashery business, has sat derelict since 2012.

“We are extremely close to making this happen, we are literally in the final hour. The reality is, without the support of the Melbourne City Council

for a 3am licence, it will not proceed, and we’ll have no other choice but to hand back the keys to (owners) the Zeimer family ... otherwise, Job Warehouse will not be restored.”

Since the December decision, it is not known whether the Group planned to discontinue its plans.

Mr O’Brien has not responded to inquiries from CBD News about the its next move.

Council planning chair Cr Nicholas Reece agreed that the building was in desperate need of restoration.

“I think Michael O’Brien was right when he said Job Warehouse is probably the most high-profile eyesore in Melbourne,” he said.

Cr Reece said that while there were “a large number of positive dimensions” to the proposal, the number of objectors – which exceeded 100 to both the initial and amended proposal – represented a “significant community campaign of opposition”.

He said the community was united in hopes for a refurbished Job Warehouse building, but it was also incumbent on the councillors to protect the livelihoods of long-term residents.

“This is a really difficult application,” he said.

“It’s one of those balancing acts where on the one hand, the city is very, very keen to see a vibrant nighttime economy and is very, very keen to see investment in its nighttime economy and that’s what the O’Briens are offering. On the other hand, I think concerns that have been raised by large numbers of residents are very legitimate as well. It is notable to me that the apartment buildings on Liverpool [St] Lane are not new – they have been there for 30-plus years, and many of the residents have lived along the laneway for 30 years, or certainly well over a decade.”

Cr Reece said this distinguished this case from others within the CBD, but he has left the door open to extending the license for specific evenings throughout the year ●

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Hands off the roundabout!

Continued from page 1.

The council argues that removing the roundabout will improve safety. But CBD resident Bob Evans, who lives a stone's throw from the market, said the move represented nothing more than a "land grab" by the council in a bid to maximise yield on its southern development site.

"There have been two accidents in the 20 years I've lived here," he said. "The way the roundabout functions at the moment is very smooth. It slows traffic down."

"It's not a danger to pedestrians, cars or cyclists that we can see. And what we're losing is a purposefully-designed streetscape which is the entryway to the market that's got mature trees and a sculpture."

"We're appealing to the council to stop the destruction of the roundabout, take a deep breath because no one knows what's going on with the property market, what they may or may not be able to do or sell to developers in the wake of COVID-19."

"Having inherited the previous plans from council, this council seems hellbent on driving a bulldozer through this and knocking the trees down as fast as possible with the aim of selling the land to a developer. It doesn't solve the traffic problems - it's going to be a road to nowhere and that's our great concern."

But in a statement to *CBD News*, the council said that planning for the realignment of Franklin and Queen streets was continuing with the removal of the roundabout expected to take place later this year.

It added that its urban forest team was planning to replace the trees at the roundabout with a greater diversity of species, which would be more resilient to climate change, as well as delivering more trees in the new 1.75-hectare Market Square.

But Mr Evans and other residents argue that the traffic plans don't consider the 1000-plus apartments still mooted in various developments in the area, nor the market's 1000 new car parks inside the Munro and southern



▲ A render of the new Trader Shed at QVM.

development sites. "It will become a bottleneck," he said.

In December, a significant milestone in the market's ongoing renewal saga was reached after Heritage Victoria approved the council's plans for a new "Trader Shed" and a new "Northern Shed" at Queen St.

While the heritage permits were issued with many conditions, as well as a rejection of the Northern Shed's canopy structure designed to cover a new loading area, Lord Mayor Sally Capp said she was "very pleased" with the outcome.

"Now, more than ever, we need to deliver this significant project that will protect this important National Heritage-listed site and ensure Melbourne's top visitor attraction is ready to welcome visitors back," she said.

The new Trader Shed will replace the current meat and seafood delivery dock built in the 1980s, with loading docks, a four-level basement with climate-controlled storage, improved waste and recycling facilities and 32 underground customer toilets.

The Northern Shed basement at the northern end of Queen St will house centralised waste

and recycling facilities for the entire market, along with segregated loading facilities at ground level and streetscape improvements.

In its approvals, Heritage Victoria issued a number of conditions associated with the design of the Northern Shed's mechanical vent, and its placement in a "pedestrian thoroughfare". Archaeological investigations are also required to take place underneath both the sites before works can begin.

But while the council said the infrastructure emanated from the Lord Mayor's People's Panel process in 2018, many traders continue to raise concerns around loading, large vehicle access and moving waste management facilities and public toilets underground.

Chair of the market's Trader Representative Committee (TRC) Jenny Pyke said, "How is the central waste management system to work, considering Queen St is to be a major pedestrianised area? Where are the physical models to explain how this is to work, and if there is a model why has this not been presented to the TRC so we can have input?"

President of lobby group Friends of Queen Victoria Market Mary-Lou Howie argued that the People's Panel's first recommendation to review storage and amenities for traders found new amenities were unwanted and unnecessary.

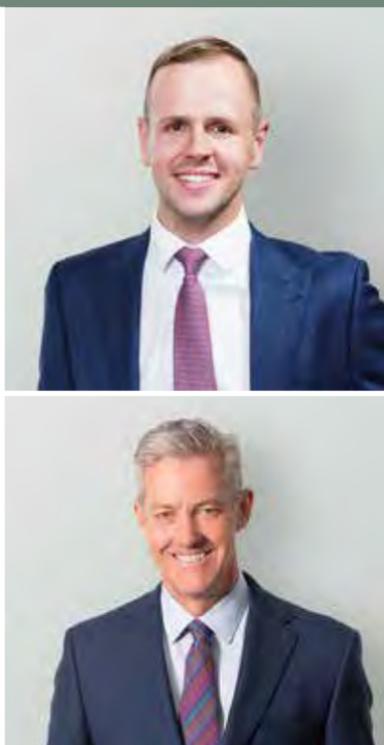
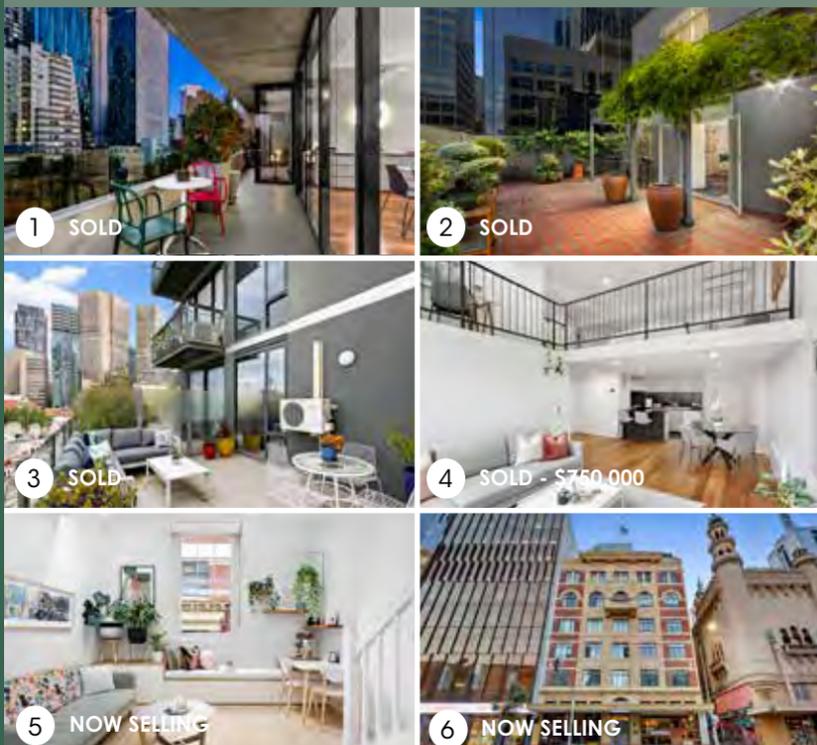
"Traders were adamant that they did not want gold plating," she said. "The two existing showers are never used."

"What is the council's entire vision for the market? The untested, extremely expensive and unwarranted waste management system will now form the centrepiece between the two halves of the market under Queen St."

Planning applications for the new facilities have been lodged with City of Melbourne as the responsible authority, with plans set to be considered at a Future Melbourne Committee meeting early this year.

Subject to approvals, the council said further work would be undertaken with traders on detailed design and operations, with staged works expected to commence next year and facilities to be operational in 2024 ●

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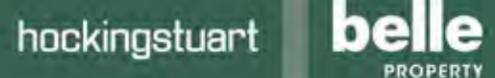
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Theosophical demolition prompts fight over notice rights

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
HERITAGE

Demolition of the almost-century-old former Theosophical Society building has been approved twice, first in 2018 and then again last year. Neighbouring residents are still fighting to save it, and they want to change planning protocol in the CBD while they're at it.

Dozens of people living next door to the building, which has narrowly missed out on heritage protection, have objected to plans for demolition to build a hotel on the site.

The 1923 building was put forward for heritage protection as part of the council's Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, which began in 2017 and presented its recommendations last August.

But heritage protection for the building did not proceed, as an application for demolition had been approved in the meantime, The City of Melbourne issued a permit in August 2018 for a development on the site.

Developer Triple MMM Holdings issued a new application for a bigger development with revised designs in December 2019 and a second permit was issued in September 2020.

Residents of the Hero Apartment building – which was also included in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review – said it was unacceptable that demolition could go ahead despite the heritage recommendations.

"I have lived in the Hero Apartment building for more than 16 years and have seen dynamic changed in the CBD during this time, especially the huge increase in permanent residents in our great city," Jill Luttin, chair of the Hero Apartment building owners' corporation (OC) said.

"To cater for this increased population, commercialisation and tourism, we obviously require more new buildings."

"This does not mean demolishing the heritage areas as recently updated by the City of Melbourne."

The Hero Apartment building also



▲ Hero Apartment residents Tricia Caswell, Jill Luttin and Rowland Ball in front of the former Theosophical Society building.

neighbours the former Methodist Church Centre on Little Collins St, which was also recommended for protection by the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review but which will be demolished to build a new office tower.

Public notice rights

The Hero Apartment residents said their experience with the former Theosophical Society building also alerted them to a wider problem with planning in the city.

Despite the fact that many residents have lived in their apartments for well over a decade, it was the first time many of them had learned about the lack of public notice rights in the Capital City Zone.

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* mandates notice requirements for planning applications that seek to demolish and/or construct a building.

But the Capital City Zone was exempted from these requirements in 1993 through the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

Tricia Caswell is the convenor of the Hero Apartment building OC heritage subcommittee. She has lived in the building for 20 years.

She said it was only by luck that residents came across the applications for demolition of their neighbouring buildings.

"When you have public notice rights people get notified, you can't miss it. With the situation at the moment, you only know if you happen to stumble upon it," she said.

"It used to be axiomatic in a democracy that if you were going to be impacted by a development, you got to have a say. It gives people in a democracy a right to say something about what's going to happen in their day to day lives."

She pointed to the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review as a positive example.

"With the review, we all got a letter in the mail addressed to us," she said.

The City of Melbourne's Future Melbourne Committee considered reinstating public notice rights in 2014 but decided against it.

"To reintroduce public notification will

“

When you have public notice rights people get notified.

”

result in increased costs and delays to permit applicants and will require additional staff in the planning department to manage the increased workload. The Act specifically requires a responsible authority, council, committee and officers to act promptly so that loss or damage from unreasonable or unnecessary delay is avoided," a 2014 report from council management read.

A statement from a City of Melbourne spokesperson said the former Theosophical Society building was not heritage-listed and complaints lacked legal status – but did not address the question of whether the Melbourne Planning Scheme should be amended.

"The former Theosophical Society building is not listed on the Heritage Register and has not been awarded interim heritage protection," the spokesperson said.

"Applications for demolition- and construction-related works within the Capital City Zone are exempt from public comment and third-party appeals, as outlined in the Melbourne Planning Scheme."

"Objections were received and considered during the assessment of this application; however, the objections lack legal status due to the requirements outlined in the Capital City Zone."

"Market conditions are not considered as a factor when assessing planning applications. Construction Management Plans are used to manage potential impacts of construction on amenity." ●

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Here are just seven of the more than 1100 businesses that have received funding.

- 1 **New Guernica** received a grant to partner with two other restaurants to introduce a shared outdoor dining area.
- 2 Retail, apparel and giftware store **Monsterthreads** received a grant to offer new products and upgrade to COVID-safe equipment.
- 3 **Section 8 Bar** received a grant to expand into Stevenson Lane to increase its trading space and reactivate the area.

- 4 Production studio and creator of the Queen Victoria Women's Centre podcast **Futureology Studios** received a grant to invest in COVID-safe remodeling and equipment.
- 5 **Tiny Bar Americano** received a grant to introduce laneway dining.
- 6 **Queens of the Damned Theatre Restaurant** received a grant to deliver a themed show outdoors at the Old Melbourne Gaol.
- 7 **Simply Spanish** received a grant to commence outdoor dining and run pop-up events in its courtyard.

We encourage you to get out and support Melbourne's diverse small businesses this summer.

To find out more, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/business

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For one-on-one advice, call our dedicated Business Concierge Service on 9658 9658 (press 1 for business), or enquire online at the above website.

Information and events in this publication are current at the time of printing. Subsequent changes may occur.

IN-BRIEF

HAVE YOUR SAY

Making our city and our neighbourhoods the best they can be is something we all want. If you live, work, study, or play in the city of Melbourne, we want to hear from you. Have your say on our new Community Engagement Policy by 3 February at **participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au**

YOUR COUNCIL

The City of Melbourne has welcomed its newly-elected Council. Visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/aboutcouncil to find biographies and contact details for the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and councillors, as well as details of upcoming meetings. Did you know you can watch meetings live from wherever you are thanks to our live-streaming capability? Tune in live or catch up later.

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SECRET SPACES

Feast your eyes on photographs of iconic and never-before-seen Melbourne locations captured during lockdown, including amazing city views from deserted hotel rooms and new street art. Discover our Melbourne Digital Time Capsule images at magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au or in-person at the Melbourne Visitor Hub at Town Hall.

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Monsterthreads



Section 8 Bar

Outdoor dining a ray of sunshine over a quiet holiday break

WORDS BY *Jess Carrascalao Heard*
BUSINESS

Sunshine stretching over empty streets: a bizarre sight for the holiday period in Melbourne's CBD.

With tourism hindered, offices still not at full capacity, and even many Melburnians staying away, low foot traffic post-COVID has made trade difficult.

"It's been very, very flat," Tim Davey, manager of Self Preservation café on Bourke St told *CBD News* on Friday, January 15. "I mean, looking out there now, it feels like a Sunday morning."

But even through this otherwise bleak trading landscape, there has been one ray of warmth for Melbourne's hospitality venues: the pleasant, new reality of extended outdoor dining.

Since the beginning of October last year, hospitality venues have been able to apply for free extended dining permits to help them keep trading in a COVID-safe manner.

Mr Davey loves it. "Shame the sun's not out today," he said. "Yesterday was lovely sitting out there. And people constantly say, 'Oh, it feels as though I'm in Europe.'"

The permits have allowed hospitality venues to use on-street parking immediately outside their businesses as dining areas or "parklets".

On-street parking is raised to curb height, covered over and fenced in with planter boxes, giving diners the opportunity to have their meal in a picturesque, open-air setting.

"It's the barrier it creates between us and the street, I think is one of the major things. And obviously, space," Mr Davey said.

Venues can also join up with neighbouring businesses to take over on-street parking, footpaths and street space, and even adjacent laneways.

Self Preservation is one of a string of cafés to take advantage of extended dining between Exhibition and Crossley streets, stretching from Florentino to Pellegrini's.

Mr Davey thinks this link, along with the



▲ Self Preservation manager Tim Davey loves the space and light outdoor dining has given the strip.

location, is one of the reasons why the scheme has worked so well for his café.

"We've got the width of Bourke St. We get the afternoon sun here. It's fantastic. It just feels good, doesn't it?" he said.

For other venues, the low foot traffic has even made taking advantage of extended dining more difficult.

According to Danny Doon, President of the Chinatown Precinct Association inc., larger restaurants in that area have not taken the opportunity to expand into nearby laneways.

He said this was because restaurants were not able to get enough patrons seated inside, despite the limitation on numbers due to COVID restrictions.

"That is why some of the laneways, they didn't use outdoor dining, because not enough customers inside," he said.

But he thought that for smaller venues which were easier to fill, having the option of customers spilling out on to the parklets worked well.

Fonda Mexican, in Flinders Lane, has also has a parklet on the street, and Natasha Jackson, a



▲ Fonda Mexican in Flinders Lane has taken advantage of extended outdoor dining.

team leader at the restaurant, said it's not only during the day that customers love dining outdoors.

"It's good at night-time, when it's sort of warm, and everyone's drinking cocktails and they just want to stay outside," she said.

For Fonda Mexican, the pinnacle of outdoor dining happened over New Year's Eve and Day.

With large outdoor gatherings banned and no planned fireworks display, the City of Melbourne, with the Victorian Government and Melbourne Food and Wine Festival instead ran Street Feasts, which ran over two days.

European-style piazzas were created in Melbourne's laneways, and New Year revellers had to book a table to ring in 2021, dining outdoors at some of Melbourne's best and most exciting venues.

As a participating restaurant, Fonda Mexican had a busy night and according to Ms Jackson, served more than 300 people.

"People just want to go out and have a bit of fun," Ms Jackson said. "The city was really trying to keep people on the inside, so that's why

they did the festival where everyone booked tables."

But it wasn't long before Fonda Mexican went from being busy over the New Year to being empty. In early January, the restaurant was identified by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) as a COVID exposure site.

According to Ms Jackson, the first the restaurant heard about the listing was via a screenshot a colleague had sent of the DHHS website.

"We were so confused. We didn't know what was going on," Ms Jackson said.

They shut down the restaurant, and after a call from the DHHS, the venue underwent a deep clean.

"We were only closed for 24 hours. But one problem was half the staff had to isolate for 14 days," Ms Jackson said.

But the news about the exposure site meant that understaffing at the time was not a problem.

With more office workers set to return to the CBD, traders hope there will be a pick-up in business.

Ms Jackson welcomed their return.

"It's really good to see the office people coming back slowly," she said. "It makes us really excited to have them back, because they come in big groups usually."

As well as the return of office workers, Mr Davey is keen to see theatres re-open.

Having shrunk the business to four days per week, he said the plan was to gradually expand the business out again.

"It's going to be bit by bit," he said.

The beginning of January carried with it an eerie tranquillity, but as the month progressed and people trickled back to the city, the hum of conversation and the clink of cutlery returned to the city streets.

The extended outdoor dining permits are currently temporary, but Mr Davey hopes that will change.

"I've just spoken to the City of Melbourne, actually," he said. "I said, 'I love it. I want it to stay.'" ●

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MELBOURNE CHINATOWN 11-14 FEB 2021

CHINESE NEW YEAR DECORATIONS

January 2021

Chinatown Square, Cohen Place (off Lt. Bourke Street)

CHINESE NEW YEAR SPECIAL LIGHTING

Friday, 29 January 2021

Little Bourke Street

CHINESE NEW YEAR DECORATION COMPETITION

Monday, 1 February 2021 – 27 February 2021

Chinatown Traders

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Wednesday, 10 February 2021

Chinatown, Myer, Emporium Melbourne, Shopping Arcades in Lt. Bourke Street

2021 CHINESE NEW YEAR EVE

Thursday, 11 February 2021 11.00 a.m. to 12.15 a.m.

Chinatown Square, Cohen Place; Little Bourke Street

11.00 a.m. to 12.15 a.m. (Continues to Big Sunday, 14 February 2021)

CHINESE LIONS – Chinese Masonic Society & Chinese Youth Society of Melb

5.00 p.m. to 12.00 a.m.

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES, MAGIC SHOWS, SINGING

1.00 p.m. to late

FO GUANG SHAN TEMPLE

138 Little Bourke Street

4.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.

TRADITIONAL CULTURAL CRAFT ARTISAN, INCLUDING CALLIGRAPHY

5.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.

A NIGHT ON THE TILES: MAH JONG & CHINESE CHESS UNDER THE TWILIGHT STARS

7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

OUTDOOR CINEMA

9.00 p.m. (for Early Diners and Children)

COUNTDOWN

11.55 p.m. to 12.05 a.m.

COUNTDOWN

ALL THINGS "MOO"

As the song goes, join in the celebrations with our MCs as they sing along the nursery rhythm of "Ee-Ya Ee-Ya O", and have fun in the Milk Drinking Competition, Wheat Grass Drinking Competition, Chilli Beef Jerky Eating Competition (Chilli Beef Jerky to "spice" things up!), Beef in Black Bean Eating Competition, Best Dressed Cow Herds. Join in the competitions and as the Commonwealth Bank Australia slogan goes, see who "CAN" finish the Cheeses and the Jerky Beef Eating Competitions.

2021 CHINESE NEW YEAR FESTIVAL DAY

Friday, 12 February 2021 1.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Chinatown Square, Cohen Place; off Little Bourke Street

1.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

PR ASIA'S AIR BADMINTON

10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

TEA CULTURE – Chinese Museum

1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

TRADITIONAL CULTURAL CRAFT ARTISAN, INCLUDING CALLIGRAPHY

2021 CHINESE NEW YEAR GET TOGETHER DAY

Saturday, 13 February 2021 1.00 p.m. to 11.00 p.m.

Chinatown Square, Cohen Place; Little Bourke Street

12.00 p.m. to 11.00 p.m.

"GET TOGETHER GATHERING"

1.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

PR ASIA'S AIR BADMINTON

10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

TEA CULTURE – Chinese Museum

1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

TRADITIONAL CULTURAL CRAFT ARTISAN, INCLUDING CALLIGRAPHY

2021 CHINESE NEW YEAR BIG SUNDAY

Sunday, 14 February 2021 1.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Chinatown Square, Cohen Place; off Little Bourke Street

1.30 p.m.

2021 MELBOURNE CHINATOWN CHINESE NEW YEAR OFFICIAL OPENING

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Leadership roles assigned as council revamps meetings

WORDS BY *David Schout*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Key portfolios for the next four years have been assigned to recently-elected City of Melbourne councillors, who have endorsed a new way to conduct meetings.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp will take over transport chair duties, an important portfolio in the next four years as the council looks to implement its Transport Strategy 2030.

Since entering Town Hall in 2018, Cr Capp has been a strong proponent of redistributing CBD space to both pedestrians and cyclists, who make the vast majority of trips within the Hoddle Grid.

The Lord Mayor will also become the Aboriginal Melbourne chair.

Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece has retained the planning portfolio, a role he held in the previous council term (2016-2020).

Rohan Leppert will remain as his deputy, while also taking on the role of environment chair after fellow Greens councillor Cathy Oke stood down last year after 12 years in the chamber.

Cr Leppert holds his role as heritage chair but relinquishes the arts portfolio after eight years.

Town Hall's current longest-serving councillor, Kevin Louey, has been assigned the Business and Global Opportunities portfolio.

Once the chief of staff to former Lord Mayor John So, Cr Louey has entered his 13th year in the council chamber in 2021.

Second term councillor Philip Le Liu has been assigned as finance chair, taking over from former Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood, who in October ran unsuccessfully against Cr Capp in the 2020 City of Melbourne election.

Cr Leppert said given its scope of responsibilities, councillors decided a portfolio structure was again the most efficient way to conduct business.

He added that the process was a harmonious one.

"At this point in the electoral cycle some councils are tearing themselves apart deciding who gets which position. We don't do that," he said

Remaining portfolios were largely assigned to recently-elected councillors.

Dr Olivia Ball, the second Greens councillor alongside Cr Leppert, will chair the Health, Wellbeing and Belonging portfolio.

Roshena Campbell, who in her short time on council has been a strong advocate of a voucher program to kick-start the local economy in 2021, will lead City Activation.

Jason Chang will take the lead on Small Business, Elizabeth Doidge has been handed responsibility for Sustainable Building, Jamal Hakim will become Creative Melbourne chair, and Davydd Griffiths will lead the Education and Innovation portfolio.

At the December 15 council meeting, councillors also announced a shakeup to its decision-making framework for the next four years.

From now, Future Melbourne Committee meetings — which represent around two-thirds

Lord Mayor Sally Capp will take over transport chair duties, an important portfolio in the next four years as the council looks to implement its Transport Strategy 2030.



of all council meetings and where key decisions impacting the city are typically made — will no longer be structured in portfolio segments as featured during the previous term.

Instead, the Lord Mayor will take on the role of committee chair of all but one portfolio.

That remaining portfolio, Planning, will continue to be chaired by the Deputy Lord Mayor.

Cr Leppert said the new system eliminated an overly-centralised decision-making process. "I am actually quite glad that we've done away with what I thought was becoming a little bit of a problematic conflict, where the portfolio holder was also the chair of the committee, the proponent of the motion before the committee, the media spokesperson and becoming a bit of a policy lead," he said.

"We have to be conscious that all councillors have equal decision-making authority and responsibility. I think this model brings us back to that in two key ways; it doesn't make the portfolio lead the chair — the Lord Mayor will be the chair."

"Secondly, we're seeking to a brief a whole lot of portfolios together in a way that's going to make life as efficient as possible for the administration."

In what was the final meeting of 2020, councillors also endorsed its latest code of conduct.

"This code of conduct represents our commitment to respectful behaviour, to setting an appropriate tone and example for the rest of the organisation, and certainly reflecting our culture," Cr Capp said ●

Injecting room report delayed

WORDS BY *David Schout*
HEALTH

A key report that could determine the future of a proposed second injecting room near the Queen Victoria Market has been delayed.

The state government announced that former Victoria Police commissioner Ken Lay had not finished his consultation period with key stakeholders and required more time.

The report's findings could play a significant role in whether the Andrews government proceeds with its preferred location of cohealth on Victoria St that is currently opposed by the City of Melbourne, many local residents and market traders.

As late as November 20, the state government confirmed with *CBD News* that the report would be finalised "by the end of the year", after which the government would make a decision on its plans.

But it has since said that more time was required.

"While significant headway has been made to date, the government has accepted a request by Mr Lay to extend the consultation into the New Year, when face-to-face engagement is less restricted and key voices are more able to have their say," Health Minister Martin Foley said.



▲ A syringe on the ground at QVM.

"While we remain determined to see this important and lifesaving service up and running as soon as possible, we also want to give Mr Lay the time he needs to work through the complex issues in a thorough manner."

The next phase of the Mr Lay-led consultation is believed to include local businesses and people with lived experience of addiction.

Consultation has already taken place with health and drug reform experts, plus market traders and Drill Hall residents who remain

opposed to the new facility being housed next door at cohealth.

Drill Hall, a pre-war army officer training facility, was refurbished in 2011 whereby seven levels of affordable housing were built atop the original building, and residents now occupy the 56 apartments inside.

There are particular concerns, including from the City of Melbourne, regarding the impact of a safe injecting facility on vulnerable residents at this location.

How did we get here?

In June last year, the findings of an independent report found Victoria's one and only safe injecting facility in North Richmond had saved at least 21 lives in 18 months, and required help dealing with demand.

The City of Melbourne, which recorded 51 overdose deaths between 2015 and 2019 — second only in the state to the City of Yarra — was nominated in the report as the preferred municipality to house Victoria's second medically-supervised injecting room.

But the government went a step further and nominated 53 Victoria St in a move that incensed the council which had not been briefed.

While the government has maintained for some time that it remained open to "suitable" alternative sites, in December *CBD News* reported that no other site had been considered and that

the Victoria St site remained the government preferred (and only) current option.

Where to from here?

A stoush between the council and government could eventuate.

And while that is a battle usually won by the latter, the council has a long-term lease control of the site, which could complicate matters.

The council has said it "accepts the evidence that medically supervised injecting rooms save lives", but "does not believe that the cohealth site opposite the Queen Vic Market is the appropriate location".

Late last year, a spokesperson outlined the council's opposition to the site: "It is one of the most densely populated areas in the City of Melbourne; opposite the QVM which is the city's most significant tourist attraction, a transport interchange, child care services and vulnerable residents all within hundreds of metres ... we have provided factual information to Ken Lay to demonstrate why this location is not the right choice."

Ambulance Victoria data showed that opioid-related ambulance attendances in the City of Melbourne were up 49 per cent in the five years to 2019 and have doubled in the CBD over the same period.

The government has not set a new date it expects Mr Lay's final report to be tabled ●



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Chinese New Year!

EVENTS

Chinatown will celebrate the Year of the Ox in COVID-safe style with Chinese New Year festivities in February.

Chinese New Year will take place on February 12. Premier Daniel Andrews and Lord Mayor Sally Capp will officially launch the festivities on February 11 at Chinatown Square in Cohen Place.

Miss Eng Lim, President of the Melbourne Dai Loong Association, said two changes had been made to ensure celebrations are COVID-safe.

The Lion dancers will be blessing businesses throughout the festival as usual, but for the first time in decades, there will be no dragon parade.

Miss Lim said health and safety came first. "When you think about the dragon coming out, the volunteers are under the dragon ... [they're in] close proximity, and all it takes is just one person," she said.

Food and merchandise stalls will also not feature at this year's festivities, but Miss Lim encourages visitors to book a table and enjoy outdoor dining.

"Sit out and enjoy the special Chinese banquet to celebrate Chinese New Year," she said.

On Chinese New Year's Eve, the family-friendly fun will include two countdowns: one for the adults at midnight, as well as an earlier countdown for children.

"We'll do a small, little countdown at 9pm so that they have a bit of fun, and then go home... have their milk and go to bed!" Miss Lim said.

Activities for visitors include traditional events, such as cultural arts and crafts, alongside other less traditional activities, which include a milk-drinking competition and cowboy films at an outdoor cinema ●

CBD suffering from lack of international students

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*
EDUCATION

Despite the City of Melbourne's (CoM) efforts to bring international students back to the city, the state government doesn't seem to be budging.

Premier Daniel Andrews said this month that bringing back international students in 2021 was "impossible", despite it being Victoria's largest service export.

"Tens of thousands of international students coming back here is going to be incredibly challenging, if not impossible, this year," Premier Andrews said.

"We want to get it back as fast as we can, but the government is not spending hours and hours to try and make something I frankly think is not possible, possible."

Pre-COVID there were 200,000 international students from 170 countries living in Melbourne, bringing in \$13.7 billion in export revenue for the state.

But with student arrivals now at half, CoM has estimated Melbourne's education sector will lose more than \$1.5 billion in revenue and there will be 6800 fewer jobs.

During the last Future Melbourne Committee of 2020, Cr Phillip Le Liu said welcoming international students back to Melbourne was a major priority for council.

"Melbourne is the third best student city in the world, and I think we should aim to be number one because it's going to be a very competitive market in a post-COVID world," Cr Le Liu said.

The council also unanimously passed a motion that would see Lord Mayor Sally Capp write to the state and federal governments to urge them to put measures in place to return international students to Melbourne in 2021.

But with Premier Andrews' latest comments, the prospect of students returning in time for the academic year seems unlikely.

An RMIT spokesperson said that as of January, international student applications

With student arrivals now at half, the City of Melbourne has estimated Melbourne's education sector will lose more than \$1.5 billion in revenue and there will be 6800 fewer jobs.



were down by around 25 per cent compared to the same time last year.

"We know many of our international students are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to come back to Melbourne to complete their education and graduate," the spokesperson said.

"RMIT is working closely with the Victorian Government and other Victorian universities on a state-wide approach that will allow international students to enter Victoria."

A Melbourne University spokesperson said that they are still in talks with the government about how to facilitate a safe return of students.

"We recognise the challenges involved and look forward to being able to welcome all students, including our international students, back onto campus as soon as safely possible," the spokesperson said.

With the once-booming market of international students ground to a halt, Melbourne's mass of student accommodation is also lying empty.

Carlton is now predicted to have the highest vacancy rate in the country after lockdown decimated the university sector and more students were staying home.

Carlton Residents Association president Antoinette Sagaria said that the vacancy rate was one of the biggest issues facing the suburb.

"There is a grave concern that the use of these properties would change over time and it would be inappropriate use such as short-term accommodation," Ms Sagaria said.

"We would rather have permanent residents." Scape owner Jenna Weber told the ABC that their empty accommodation would be best used as a quarantine facility if the government would consider it.

"A lot of our buildings have single studio apartments — they're perfect to be used as quarantine," Ms Weber said.

"If international students could quarantine with us, it won't bottleneck those Australian residents coming back."

Other countries such as the UK and Canada are already facilitating a staged return of international students.

CoM's director of economic development and international Andrew Wear said that it put Melbourne at risk of being left behind economically.

"If international education is unable to return to Australia in 2021, Australia risks losing market share to other countries, with severe long-term consequences," Mr Wear said ●



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Is Campbell Arcade saved?

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
HERITAGE

Rail Projects Victoria (RPV) is revising plans for a controversial underground pedestrian link that planned to demolish part of the heritage-listed Campbell Arcade.

Tenants in the arcade were told in 2017 that their leases would end in 2019 to facilitate the work which would also prohibit some long-term tenants from returning.

Heritage advocates were joined in opposing the plans by others who were concerned about parts of the plan that would turn the now publicly accessible space into a ticketed area.

Years of uncertainty over the plans and timeline of work have ensued since.

But in January a RPV spokesperson told *CBD News* the plans were being revised, although details could not yet be announced.

"We are working closely with Heritage Victoria, local business and community on revised plans for Campbell Arcade as part of the future underground pedestrian link between Flinders Street Station and the new Town Hall Station," the spokesperson said.

"We expect to submit the plans for the arcade to Heritage Victoria mid-year, and they will take the arcade's important heritage elements and plans for long-term tenants into account."

Long-term tenants in the arcade have been told they can remain in the arcade until at least September 2021.

The underground connection will connect the future Town Hall Station to Flinders Street Station.

RPV has leased vacant spaces in the arcade to short-term and pop-up tenancies and is planning to run COVID-safe promotional programs for Campbell Arcade in the coming months.

CBD News understands this will include a second Flinders Quarter Art Walk planned for mid-2021 ●



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▲ Michael Memegazzo keeping the menu simple at Klik.

Redefining the CBD lunch

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
BUSINESS

Food courts are reporting some good customer numbers with the much-publicised return of office workers to the CBD in the third week of January.

But on the Monday the 50 per cent return of workers began, it was clear that there'd be some changes to the CBD lunch.

Regulars were still ordering up their favourite dishes at the Paramount Food Court in Bourke St. "Today we had 50 to 60 customers," Chandana Jayasuriya of the Ceylon Wok said. "That's the best since the lockdown. Something is better than nothing."

But, he said, custom was down to about 20 per cent of a normal CBD weekday.

The Paramount Food Court serves nearby government offices on Exhibition St and offers a range of cuisines.

Just two of the 10 stalls remained open during the lockdown. Ceylon Wok was one of them.

The husband-and-wife team has increased their range of dishes to 15 to attract customers, including six kinds of rice and nine curries.

Some of the trays in their bain Marie were nearly empty after their first "return to office" lunch.

"We make smaller amounts," chef Aruni said. "But we still had to throw out food."

Cafés and food outlets are forced to be more frugal in the new normal and to be strict on wastage, proprietors say.

"We never did before," said the manager of Klik in La Trobe St, which catered for Telstra workers in the office tower above, "but we have to in order to survive. Things are tight."

The café opens at 6am, closes at



▲ Chandana and Aruni Jayasuriya.



▲ Harry Tsindos.

1.30 pm and has simplified its menu to cater for nearby construction workers who want fast food such as egg and bacon rolls, pork crackling rolls, hot chips and veg or meat sandwiches.

"You have to serve your customer base," Michael Menegazzo told *CBD News*. "We had 3000 people last year. About 100 have come back."

A return to what they do best is keeping these CBD businesses going and for those sick of the generic, over-the-top focaccias, laden down with all kinds of extras, the cleansing of the CBD palette may be a godsend.

Tsindos café in the Greek quarter in Lonsdale St had only four customers for lunch on the day of the return, proprietor Harry Tsindos said.

"November and December were brilliant," he said. "We close the lane on Friday and Saturday nights and have live Greek music."

He has footage of the dancing on his phone. You can get the CBD's "best souvlaki" from a small window off Heffernan Lane, but like a Greek village, the café comes alive at night ●

Protestors silenced by council laws

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge
PROTEST

The release of 26 refugees from detention in the Park Hotel in Swanston St is a victory for their supporters and a strong campaign over the Christmas period.

Instead of celebrating, protestors were back again outside Dan Andrews' office on January 20 in a silent vigil.

The protestors were wearing crosses over their masks to signify the silencing of their campaign.

"The silent aspect of today's action is a critique of last week's treatment by Victoria Police and the City of Melbourne," protestors claimed in a written message.

In a surprising move, council officers threatened protestors with prosecution under a little-known by-law that restricts noise by buskers.

The Melbourne Activist Legal Support has condemned the action, comparing it to the use of a by-law prohibiting the distribution of leaflets during protests against the Vietnam War.

A spokesperson for the City of Melbourne said, "if the use of megaphones or amplifiers at protests creates excessive noise and becomes a public amenity issue, our officers can issue verbal and written warnings, and as a last resort, an infringement."

"We give a number of verbal warnings before any infringements are issued. Issuing fines at demonstrations is not a regular occurrence and we respect the right to protest."

"The matter will be reviewed internally before any fine is issued."

Two protestors were served with notices to comply at a rally on January 13 outside the Premier's office for using a public address system. They have refused to pay the fine.

One protestor was Greta Gillies, a member of Stand Together for Justice, who organised the second rally a week later at the Premier's office.

"Using busking legislation on protestors is a bit heavy-handed," she told *CBD News*. "We were using a PA system. It's normally what we use."

"The point is that protestors use them all the time. When we used them on this issue, they applied the legislation inappropriately."

The two protestors were threatened with \$500 fines but say they have received no further notifications from the City of Melbourne.

The Age reported that the council has discretion over whether to proceed with the prosecution, but the question remains as to why the legislation was enacted in this particular case.

The City of Melbourne is a Refugee Welcome Zone and the protestors were delivering a petition to the Premier's office containing almost 40,000 signatures calling for the release of the refugees, who were transferred into the municipality in December.



▲ Greta Gillies outside the Premier's office.

According to the Melbourne Activist Legal Support, police have used these council local laws in similar ways against various protest events over recent years.

"Megaphones and small portable speakers are regular features of protest event throughout Victoria. They provide the means for voices, political demands, arguments and protest music to be heard by large groups of participants and the public at large. The ability to amplify voices and political messaging is fundamental to protest."

Protestors also called on the Premier to speak up on behalf of refugee cruelty. "We're calling him to comment," Ms Gillies said. "He is able to speak up. He has some influence over the police and he has OK'd them [the refugees] coming to Victoria."

The men were transferred from Manus Island and Nauru on medical evacuation grounds. They spent a year in a hotel in Preston before being moved to the Park Hotel where supporters rally at 5 pm each day to support them. Twenty-six were issued with bridging visas on January 20.

"It's great to hear about the men being released," Ms Gillies told reporters at the rally. "There are 60 men in that hotel. There are concerns about them being locked up. They're in buildings they can't get out of. We want them all released." ●



▲ A protest at the Park Hotel.



▲ Police outside the hotel as refugees are taken onto buses for release.



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“Bitter disappointment” over Treasury Square deal

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*
PLANNING

The Treasury Square Gardens deal that will see developers build residential and office towers on prime public land has locals up in arms.

After buying the land in May last year, Cbus and Mirvac plan to build three towers on the 1.4-hectare slice of land spanning the Flinders St railyard to Wellington Parade South.

East Melbourne Group planning and heritage convenor Greg Bisinella said the decision to sell the land to private developers put “Melbourne’s backyard” at risk.

“It’s a very significant, open site that requires careful planning and we’re bitterly disappointed with the outcome,” Mr Bisinella said.

“There was a lack of consultation with the community for such an important piece of land which is part of the railway grid from Fed Square to the MCG.”

Developer Mirvac and superfund Cbus property won the bid for the land in May last year after the state government’s VicTrack put it up for sale.

There was huge interest from national and international organisations as the site was marketed as an opportunity to own up-market real estate with a value of more than \$2 billion.

Prior to the deal, the City of Melbourne also voted to subdivide the site and rezone the land as Capital City to allow building to occur.

Mr Bisinella said that this decision wrongly “extended CBD planning laws into East Melbourne”.

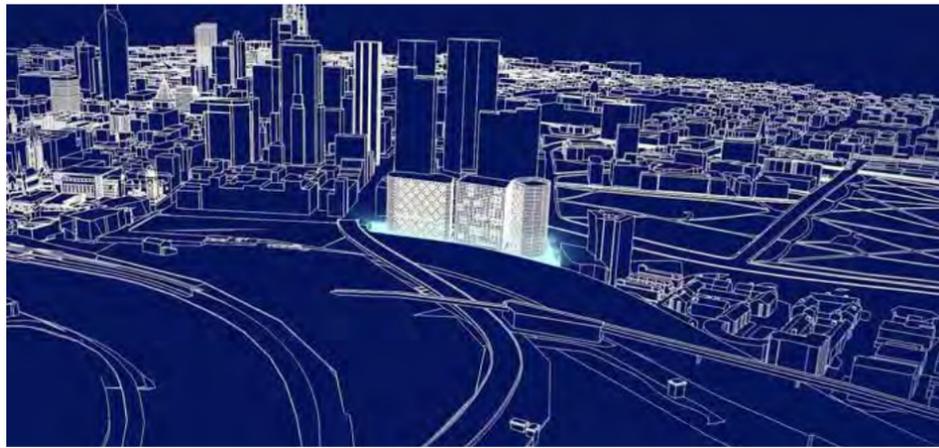
“That hard edge is designed for a purpose, it provides beautiful views over the Yarra, and now you’ll have an ugly building blocking the view and overshadowing Birrarung Marr park,” Mr Bisinella said.

“Public open spaces are very scarce in Melbourne and the Treasury Square Gardens could have been great opportunity to create a new public space.”

Residents 3000 president Rafael Camillo also



▲ An image highlighting the location of the Treasury Square Gardens site.



▲ Artist render of the proposed development.

said that council should be more focused on protecting and creating public space.

“The perspective of residents is that it could be better used as a public space and for the

long-term future of Melbourne it’s important to protect open land,” Mr Camillo said.

“If we start getting massive towers all around the park it will overshadow the space that

“

Treasury Square Gardens could have been great opportunity to create a new public space.

”

makes Melbourne special.”

In the long term, rail lines east of the Russell St extension to Batman Avenue will be decked over to form what could be Federation Square East.

A new pedestrian and cycle link between the city, parks and Yarra River has also been proposed.

In the original submission to parliament the City of Melbourne said the possibility of this connection made the site “very significant and strategic.”

“A generous pedestrian connection north-south from Flinders St through the site would connect the southeastern end of the central city to the Yarra River corridor, and link Treasury Gardens and Birrarung Marr,” it said.

Although there is pressure for the developers to obey local planning guidelines, Mirvac and Cbus have complete freedom when it comes to what to build.

Early plans outline that the development will likely take the form of residential and commercial buildings, but formal plans are yet to be released.

Mr Bisinella said that he hoped the developers would carefully consider the impact on the city as a whole before they began building.

“This project is too significant to rush,” he said ●

Long-awaited Elizabeth St works finally begin

WORDS BY *David Schout*
CAPITAL WORKS

Works on the southern end of Elizabeth St have finally begun, almost four years later than first planned.

One of the Melbourne’s busiest areas, which serves as a gateway to the CBD, Elizabeth St south has long been earmarked for upgrades and was once described by former Lord Mayor Robert Doyle as “grotty” and the “ugly duckling of Melbourne”.

But after a series of delays, Lord Mayor Sally Capp announced that works had finally begun in late January to widen pedestrian space and create a “more appealing streetscape”.

“After a number of hurdles on this project last year we are pleased to announce the start of works on the southern end of Elizabeth St,” Cr Capp said.

“We are creating an enhanced space for our city residents, workers and visitors to safely access nearby public transport and shops while maintaining physical distance. There will be new trees and greenery, new street furniture, lights and bluestone paving.

“The project team is working closely with local businesses to maintain pedestrian access and ensure access for deliveries and waste removal.”

The street’s southern end is primarily made up of fast-food outlets and convenience stores.

Before COVID-19, the intersection with Flinders St saw up to 10,000 people cross every hour during the



morning, making it one of the city’s busiest spots.

The project will expand pedestrian space by the rough size of a basketball court and to achieve this, the southbound motorist lane between Flinders St and Flinders Lane will close permanently.

A key pillar of the council’s 10-year transport strategy involves widening space for those on foot who have reported feeling “cramped” in certain areas within the Hoddle Grid, and the council has long forecast a revamp of Elizabeth St south area.

The beginning of works marks the end of an extended period of delays.

The project was first flagged to begin in June 2017 but was pushed back to 2019 due to construction at 276 Flinders St.

In mid-2019 the council again pushed it back to “early 2020”, which was eventually delayed to late 2020.

But as of late January, works were finally underway.

Workers have already begun removing street furniture to make way for construction and, as part of the project, fences will be installed on the eastern side of the street’s southern end ●

Controversial Christmas parking a “success”: Lord Mayor

WORDS BY *David Schout*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

A third of all cars parked in inner-Melbourne throughout the Christmas and New Year period used a “free parking” voucher, a level of uptake Lord Mayor Sally Capp said justified its contentious introduction.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the vouchers, which were downloaded 157,000 times, successfully encouraged people back into the city during the usually busy period.

Late last year, councillors voted nine to two to introduce free on-street parking from December 1 to January 3 as a way to lure shoppers, especially those wary of using public transport, back into the city to spend their Christmas cash.

Councillors in support of the scheme felt that lingering pandemic anxiety might prevent would-be shoppers from using public transport into the city, and the promise of free parking could ensure those trips were still made.

But the scheme came under fire from some councillors, who said it was completely at odds with council policy.

For several years, the council had looked to push non-essential car trips away from the CBD in a bid to free up space for pedestrians and cyclists.

Town Hall’s 10-year transport strategy, released in 2019, is underpinned by a goal to redistribute space to pedestrians, who make up nine in 10 trips within the Hoddle Grid.

When the free parking move was endorsed in November, councillor Rohan Leppert said it was “hard not to feel like years of hard-won policy is unravelling”.

“I am very concerned that the COVID-induced recession is being used as an argument that the economics of the city have fundamentally changed since the adoption of the Transport Strategy 2030, and that new times call for a temporary car-led recovery,” he said.

But Cr Capp defended the move at the time and has now said the “temporary measure” was a vital move to support struggling businesses.

“We were conscious some people might have felt less inclined to travel to the city via public transport,” she said.

“We are using every option available to help bring people back to the city. This was a successful and well-utilised

program to encourage people to return during a crucial time for central city businesses.”

The council surveyed a sample of around 25,000 parked vehicles during the period and found 32 per cent had the free parking voucher displayed.

Voucher scheme on its way

Meanwhile, the council was at work finding new ways to stimulate the central city economy in 2021 and appear set to announce a voucher scheme to drive visitors to restaurants, retail and attractions.

The move would be similar to schemes that cities around the world had already adopted, such as London’s “Eat Out to Help Out” scheme or Singapore’s \$100 tourism vouchers.

“We are working on a voucher program to provide a timely cash injection for local businesses to ensure we bring the buzz back to Melbourne,” Cr Capp said.

“We’ve been looking at local and international examples where voucher schemes have been used to encourage consumers to spend in certain industries such as hospitality to support economic recovery.”

The state government budget provided \$28 million for a voucher program to attract visitors to regional Victoria, but it does not currently have a voucher program for Melbourne.

“Establishing a voucher program for city businesses could help attract more visitors whether they be local, from regional areas or even interstate. The more people we encourage into the city to spend on dining or shopping helps to keep more Melburnians in jobs,” Cr Capp said.

Inner Melbourne has lost 13.2 per cent of jobs since the start of the pandemic compared to six per cent for the state of Victoria ●



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More than 500 student apartments approved despite community objection

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*
PLANNING

After two years of deliberation by the City of Melbourne, the inner city will be home to the first private, fully-catered student accommodation in Melbourne.

Scape plans to build a 22-storey, 533-bed student accommodation building on Victoria St, despite more than 100 community objections.

Carlton resident Andrew Richards said that with so many studio apartments the building was a “gross overdevelopment” of the site and would make it impossible to socially distance.

“There is only 3.1 sqm of communal space per student for indoor space and only three lifts proposed, which will be clearly inadequate, as up to 1066 people could reside in the building,” Mr Richards said.

“Social distancing is completely impossible as there are a multitude of shared and crowded spaces built into every part of the design.”

CBD resident Mark Furlong also said the building’s layout would not be COVID-safe.

“It would be unconscionable to permit developers to build an uber-congested ant colony comprising hundreds of contiguous units, almost none of which have private cooking facilities,” Mr Furlong said.

Scape’s plans state that the building will serve as a space for student communities to thrive, and will be equipped with “lounge areas, gym, cinema, dining room and connected terraces”.

Student meals will also be provided for students during their tenure, much like a university college would.

Daniel Soussan from Tract consultants said that Scape had gone to great lengths to ensure students had enough apartment space, with a floor to ceiling height of two point seven metres.

“In relation to student accommodation that



▲ Renders of the proposed development on Victoria Street.

[height] is acceptable as it meets building code,” Mr Soussan said.

“The student rooms will exceed the requirements of the City of Melbourne’s student housing policy, with generous indoor and outdoor communal spaces.”

The building was designed by architect Denton Corker Marshall and has a modern exterior decorated with tree plantings.

Carlton resident Ewan Ogilvy said that the new building could dominate the heritage overlay of the area.

“Why couldn’t the council have reviewed the massing of the development to ensure that important views towards the Royal Exhibition Building along Mackenzie St are retained?” Mr Ogilvy said.

Deputy Lord Mayor Nick Reece said council had carefully considered the plans since they were proposed in 2019 and were confident Scape would create a “stand-out” building for Melbourne.

“They are making a bold statement with the design of this building and it’s a real juxtaposition to Drummond St and the heritage buildings of Carlton,” Cr Reece said.

“It is one of those designs that if it is executed with quality materials and quality finishes it could be a real stand-out building for Melbourne, but if it’s not done with high-quality materials and detail it could be a real ugly duckling.”

Cr Reece also said that although the building could provide a positive addition to the suburb and benefit pedestrians, more needed to be done to improve the standards for student accommodation.

“There is a large number of people going into this building and it is a matter of great regret to me that we do not have the equivalent of the building and apartment design guidelines for student accommodation,” Cr Reece said ●

Waratah Place is open again

WORDS BY *Ellen Blake*
CAPITAL WORKS

Chinatown’s Waratah Place has reopened to the public after major electrical works closed the historic laneway for two years.

CitiPower’s head of major projects Marcus Olive said the project team had worked to maintain the Chinatown district’s traditional aspects while adding features to enhance the area. “The project team has been very careful to restore and maintain aspects such as bluestone paving and guttering, but at the same there are elements like the LED display on the façade of our building that add to the vibrant feel of Chinatown,” Mr Olive said.

Mr Olive thanked the Chinatown business community who had been “nothing short of sensational” through the laneway’s closure.

The timing of the reopening of Waratah Place means Chinatown restaurants can use the laneway for seating diners as part of the City

of Melbourne and state government outdoor dining COVID-19 recovery initiative.

“We are pleased we were able to reopen the laneway to the public and so local businesses can use it for outdoor dining,” Mr Olive said.

The laneway was closed to allow for an electrical zone substation to be demolished and rebuilt as part of a \$250 million Melbourne CBD security of supply project which provides a backup for the city’s power supply.

The project protects against unexpected events, such as extreme weather or infrastructure failures, which impact the city’s major power outages.

Once the project is completed, it would allow power to be diverted around Melbourne’s electrical grid to ensure power outages will last less than 30 minutes.

Mr Olive said the Waratah Place project, which was one of Citipower’s largest ever, was “complex and challenging”.

Further work will take place on the substation throughout the year ●



▲ Chinatown Precinct Association President Danny Doon and Vice President Eng Lim help reopen Waratah Place.

“

We are pleased we were able to reopen the laneway to the public and so local businesses can use it for outdoor dining.

”

For more information:
powercor.com.au/major-projects/metro-and-cbd/

ELLEN SANDELL

STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE

Hi, I’m Ellen. I’m passionate about a fair and liveable Melbourne. Tell me what’s important to you.

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ADVERTISEMENT
Your City of Melbourne community update



Lord Mayor Sally Capp with artists Henry Wagons and Katie Pearson at the launch of Melbourne Music Week-Extended

REDISCOVER YOUR CITY AS MELBOURNE REOPENS

Melbourne is open for business, shopping, dining, exploration and, of course, coffee.

We've missed you, and while you've been staying safe at home, we've been supporting local businesses and creating a captivating Melbourne for residents to enjoy and visitors to return to.

Whether it's picnicking in our heritage parks, criss-crossing the bluestones to find the ultimate laneway restaurant, or hunting for the quintessential Melbourne-designed must-have, it's time to rediscover your city.

Here are just a few things to look forward to in summer and beyond.

1 Ride your bike in style

We're installing more than 40 kilometres of new protected bike lanes to help you get into the city quickly, safely and sustainably.

2 Explore little streets

Our iconic 'little streets' – like Little Collins and Little Bourke – are being transformed into safe and vibrant shared zones for all. Look out for bespoke stencils and colourful paint showing that pedestrians have right of way and speed limits are reduced.

3 Dine outdoors

Melbourne's beloved restaurants, cafes and bars have thrown open their doors, creating open-air dining experiences in laneways, parking spaces, footpaths and parks.

4 Wander through creative laneways

Forty of Melbourne's historic laneways are being transformed through lighting and creative installations, thanks to a team of production and graphic designers, music producers, lighting specialists, technicians and maintenance workers.

5 Attend innovative events

From Melbourne Music Week-Extended to Moomba, our artists and producers are working to deliver a calendar of events that will celebrate our city's resilience, curiosity and creativity. Find out more at whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au

6 Discover talented buskers

Our beloved Melbourne buskers are back and ready to entertain you from Bourke Street to Southbank and everywhere in between. Sing along and tip generously.

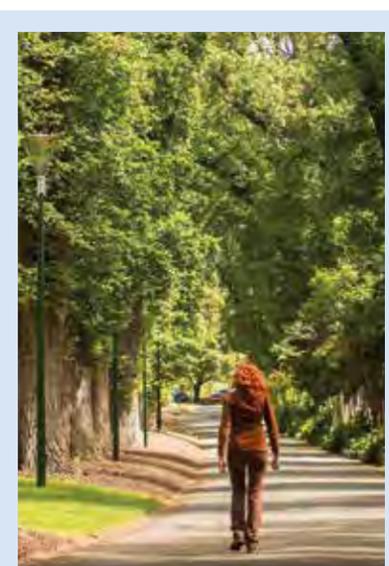
7 Watch your step

Our revamped laneways, bike lanes, shared zones and outdoor dining areas mean the landscape of the city has changed. We'll be updating our lane closure information and mobility maps, but please be mindful that traffic conditions on roads and footpaths may be different to the last time you visited the city.

To find out more, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/melbourneisopen



A busker in Bourke Street



KEEP COOL

Discover the coolest routes through the city on hot summer days by using our new Cool Routes tool.

As Melbourne experiences more frequent, extended and intense heatwaves due to climate change, this tool is designed to help you travel through the city more safely and comfortably, using a mix of city research and data from microclimate sensors.

To find out more, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/coolroutes

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Your City of Melbourne community update

15 FAST FACTS ABOUT THE YEAR THAT WAS

In a year like no other, we were particularly busy at the City of Melbourne providing essential services and responding to all the challenges of 2020.

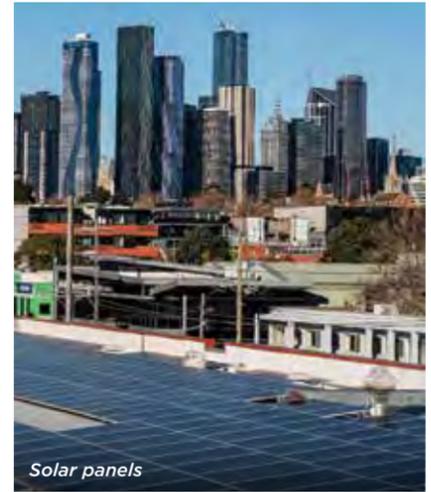
Here is a snapshot of our year in numbers:

- 1 planted 3174 trees
- 2 created more than 100 extended alfresco dining parklets
- 3 processed more than 1242 birth notices
- 4 recorded more than 6000 registered pets for the first time, including 2316 cats and 3747 dogs
- 5 supported a group of seven large energy users to purchase 110 gigawatt hours of renewable electricity through the second Melbourne Renewable Energy Project
- 6 provided more than \$17 million in funding to 2988 businesses
- 7 completed 4716 phone calls to check on the wellbeing of 726 isolated older people
- 8 supported 5650 artists with more than \$3.5 million in funding across 907 arts grants, including 385 artists with disability
- 9 loaned more than 220,000 physical items and more than 640,000 electronic items through our libraries
- 10 ran 200 early literacy programs, 249 English conversation clubs and 87 book clubs
- 11 provided 154 grants and sponsorships worth \$1.48 million to community organisations
- 12 delivered 551 ArtPlay creative sessions with 225 artists for 27,622 children and families
- 13 delivered 622 Signal creative art sessions with 488 artists, reaching 4056 young people
- 14 generated 862,000 kilowatt hours of clean energy from 2244 solar panels on council buildings
- 15 harvested 120,478,000 litres of stormwater

This is just a small sample of the varied work that is done by local councils.

To find out more about what we do and how to get involved in city life, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au

Information and events in this publication are current at the time of printing. Subsequent changes may occur.



Solar panels



Pet registrations



Business funding



Arts grants

COMMUNITY FOOD GUIDE

The proportion of Melbourne residents who reported experiencing food insecurity increased from 25.8 per cent in 2019 to 32.9 per cent in 2020, according to data from our latest Health and Wellbeing Profile. To find out how to access affordable, fresh and healthy food, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/communityfoodguide



A new outdoor dining area at Bar Lourinha



KEEP IN TOUCH

To stay connected with all the latest news from the City of Melbourne, follow us on social media and subscribe to *Melbourne* magazine online at magazine.melbourne.vic.gov.au

You can also join conversations to influence plans for your neighbourhood through Participate Melbourne at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au

Connect with us

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- [@cityofmelbourne](https://www.instagram.com/cityofmelbourne)
- [@cityofmelbourne](https://www.twitter.com/cityofmelbourne)



CBD LOCAL

The “people’s” Australian Open

Two resilient locals talk to CBD News about their views on the Australian Open (AO).

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge

In years gone by, the CBD was flocked by visitors attending the Australian Open with many locals content to hang out on Birrarung Marr catching the action from a distance.

Tennis Australia sets up large screens and “the people” watch from the top of the hill with refreshments from nearby stalls.

“Melbourne is known for the Australian Open,” Bree Thomas, a resident of Elizabeth St, said.

“Every January and February people flock to Melbourne. It’s important they still make it a moment.”

She hopes there won’t be many changes to the AO Festival but there is no mention on the Tennis Australia website nor in the press of what will be happening on Birrarung Marr.

Publicity appears to be reserved for ticketing agencies and arguments over who is going to pay for the quarantine of high-flying players.

In the past some CBD locals have not exactly been welcome at the tennis. In 2017, police removed rough sleepers from the Yarra to make way for visitors.

This year we appear to be more chilled. One rough sleeper, Liz, was getting ready in her own way for the AO, taking a rest by the river, enjoying the breeze. She wasn’t moving on in a hurry.

Birrarung Marr is one of the most beautiful

parks in the City of Melbourne with a row of fig trees edging the bank and a view of Princes Bridge in the distance.

The park is one of the main venues for both passive and active recreation in the CBD.

Even though cyclone fences have already gone up, reserving most of it for the Australian Open, how do more laidback locals feel about the noisy preparations for the first main event in the park since COVID restrictions were eased?

“It doesn’t bother me,” Liz said. She recently ended her residence in the Somerset Hotel on Elizabeth St and has developed a fondness for Birrarung Marr over the city.

“I never knew it existed,” she said. “I started coming here recently to walk around. I use it for nature therapy. I’ve been on the street for a year and five months. When I was on Bourke and Flinders it was too busy. It was more overwhelming.”

According to park rangers for the City of Melbourne, passive recreation is good for mental health. Even someone lying on a picnic blanket benefits, the experts say.

“I’m trying to be a minimalist,” Liz said. “I’m just a beginner. I’ve come a long way. Being next to the water is relaxing. You get a lot of sleep deprivation when you’re on the street. You’re at war with yourself at night. Who’s around? What’s that noise?”

Bree prefers her recreation with a view of the tennis and a drink in her hand and she hasn’t been letting COVID ruin her social life either.

The enterprising New Zealander has just flown back to Melbourne in time to start work. Six weeks ago, she was in quarantine in Auckland and one week ago on a flight from Sydney to Melbourne.

The two weeks’ quarantine in an Auckland hotel could cost her \$3500 but she’s not complaining.

“I loved it,” she said. “Smokers were allowed out every two hours. We had a terrace outside our rooms. I met some great people.” ●



▲ Rough sleeper Liz prefers the river to the hype.



▲ Bree Thomas looking forward to the Australian Open festival.

COUNCILLOR PROFILE

A true community councillor

When *CBD News's* sister publication *Docklands News* ran Jamal Hakim’s image on the front page of its September 2020 edition ahead of last year’s City of Melbourne council elections, he really would have liked his chances!

And sure enough, the long-term Docklands resident, multicultural campaigner and managing director of a national health not-for-profit defied the odds and snuck into one of the nine coveted councillor positions ... not that we’re suggesting our help had anything to do with his success!

Off the back of some clever preferences with other like-minded resident candidates and an “open and honest” dialogue with the rest of the field, Mr Hakim said he had always remained optimistic about his chances.

“I take things in my stride, I guess,” he said. “I’m the kind of person that leaves myself open to all possibilities. So, part of me did feel optimistic. But at the same time, I was realistic that it’s the first time I’m running and I’m an unknown character.”

“I went into the preference discussions the same way I would any other negotiation, which is to align from a values perspective. Have those conversations, be really honest and look at the policies of the other candidates.”

“My goal was to work with the other resident candidates to say, let’s get an independent resident on council. It doesn’t matter who it is.”

Mr Hakim is one of six new faces on the council and his election to the City of Melbourne should come as welcome news to local residents throughout the municipality, given his pledge to carry his own lived experience into the role.

Not only has he lived in Docklands for more than 10 years, his professional experience working with Democracy in Colour, Marie Stopes and previously with Midsumma Festival means community will be central to his approach as a councillor.



▲ Newly-elected councillor and long-time Docklands resident Jamal Hakim.

Having been assigned the Creative Melbourne portfolio and deputy lead on the Health, Wellbeing and Belonging portfolio, he told *CBD News* that he was passionate about promoting multiculturalism, safety and deliberative government in our city.

“I think safety in the city is a really big issue because it underpins everything,” he said.

“People feel less safe in the City of Melbourne year on year and that’s probably because we’re not understanding what safety encompasses – it’s emotional, psychological, cultural, accessibility, environmental and all sorts of things.”

“Deliberative government is also something that I’m really interested in. We really need to create a way of collaboration that takes into account our community in all of its forms.”

“About 70 per cent of the recommendations from deliberative processes in Scotland are enacted. I think when you have that you have a more engaged community. You have to represent community realistically and be able to show representation within council.”

While Jamal’s life is about to get a whole lot busier as a councillor, he is no stranger to a full workload having only recently completed his

Juris Doctor (JD) at RMIT University so expect him to take the juggle in his stride!

He said that the combined fresh talent of fellow new councillors Jason Chang, Olivia Ball, Elizabeth Doidge, Davydd Griffiths and Roshena Campbell, with the experience of Lord Mayor Sally Capp, Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece and councillors Kevin Louey, Rohan Leppert and Phil Le Liu placed the group in good stead for a productive and pragmatic council term.

“What’s really terrific about this council, and I can say this confidently, after meeting and sitting down with everyone individually is that we really got to know each other and we all set some ground rules around our behaviours and how we want to engage together,” he said.

“What came from that was that we have a bunch of councillors who don’t necessarily agree on everything, but they agree on the way we want to interact. Everyone wants to go into this in a way that is positive and be soft on people and hard on issues.”

“All eyes will be on council post-pandemic and I think everyone is conscious of that fact in that whatever we do in this term will have implications for years and years to come – similar to what happened with Postcode 3000 and some of the other major changes in Melbourne.”

“What we do with a city that is really changing in terms of how communities and businesses interact and how people’s livelihoods are going to be impacted is going to be a challenge, but an opportunity to do things better.” ●

Sean Car
EDITOR

SEAN@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU



Investing in social housing, in the era of working from home

“

Welcome to the sixth of our 12-part series which will attempt to explore the role that housing can and should play within Australian society and why it is important to our economy that we house all Australians.

”

This series intends to draw on a range of perspectives centred around housing and homelessness. We will hear a range of views from business, the not-for-profit sector and hopefully government, as to why they believe housing is an important social and economic building block for Australia's future prosperity.

This month we have asked Peter Colacino, Chief of Policy & Research, at Infrastructure Australia to share his thoughts around why the objective around housing all Australians, and in particular investing in social housing in the era of working from home, should be considered an economic imperative for Australia ...

As Australians continue to feel the impacts of COVID-19 and the rolling series of lockdowns, adequate housing for many members of the community is a barrier to maintaining productivity and avoiding social isolation.

With one in three workers still based at home as a result of the pandemic, and 10 per cent of the total workforce intending to continue working remotely into the future, the measure of adequacy for housing has shifted. So too, the importance of suitable and affordable broadband has grown.

This shift has created, for many workers, a new hurdle for accessing work. The home internet connection becomes the link to economic and social opportunity, the living room the office as well as the place for family and the costs of utilities have shifted from employer to employee.

As we spend more time working from home, the pressure on those in an unstable or unsatisfactory housing situation has intensified. This risks further detaching those who are already

vulnerable from economic and social opportunities, and risks pronouncing isolation.

Infrastructure Australia's recent report *Infrastructure beyond COVID-19* anticipates the value of face-to-face contact and agglomeration in CBDs is such that two-thirds of those working remotely will return to the office and CBDs.

However, for those remaining at home, and those with reduced frequency in the office, optimising their productivity while working remotely is critical both to the economic performance of the nation and to avoid entrenching of financial disadvantage for individuals.

The pandemic, and the new needs of our workforce, should serve as a catalyst for the owners of housing for those on the fringe, including public, community and affordable housing, to rethink the economic value fit-for-purpose housing offers through enabling participation.

It is already widely understood that social housing is an economic enabler. As noted by KPMG in its evaluation of post-GFC investment in housing, social housing provides on average multiplier boost to the economy of \$1.30 for every \$1 spent.

However, just as the Commonwealth Treasury has noted, economic infrastructure provides an estimated four dollar return for every one dollar spent, although the impact of each project varies and the benefits of good projects can be many times higher.

Defining housing quality and pinpointing its incremental benefits remains a key challenge. To secure appropriate prioritisation of housing it will be necessary to turn the focus from considerations of the macro impacts of housing, to gaining a deeper understanding of the specific benefits of tangible housing projects and interventions. It is now paramount to consider the role that investment in fit-for-purpose housing plays in connecting its residents to the workforce.

While it's clear that many frontline roles cannot be undertaken remotely, research from the University of Sydney in September 2020 found the diversity of people working remotely is relatively high, both during and before the pandemic. While the transition to working from home has been most substantive in white collar roles, it extends beyond that. Clerical and administration roles shifted from 20 per cent to more than 56 per cent remote, while sales staff working remotely shifted from 22 per cent to 30 per cent of the workforce and more than 10 per cent of the labourer and machine operator/driver workforce is also remote.

Analysis from McKinsey across nine

countries has shown that many activities such as information gathering and processing, communicating with others, teaching and counselling, and coding data can theoretically be done remotely.

With much of the workforce operating at least intermittently from home, the challenge of meeting people's housing needs has been complicated by the suitability of a person's housing to allow them to work from home. Housing now has a resounding impact on the kind of employment people can access as a result of its location, physical and digital connectivity and configuration.

The challenge of housing inequity, with social housing failing to meet the modern needs of the community, was highlighted in the 2019 Australian Infrastructure Audit. In particular, social housing faces the dual challenges of ageing, inappropriate assets and long waiting lists. This is exemplified by many multi-bedroom dwellings remaining under-occupied, while there is overcrowding elsewhere.

While this inequity in access is not new, the pandemic has thrust it into the spotlight. The acceleration of the move of the workplace online has also accelerated the move of social housing from social policy to a paramount economic issue that could directly impact our economic recovery. If we are to hasten the economic recovery, address workforce constraints and boost workforce productivity, it is critical that every individual has the opportunity to participate. With as many as one in 10 Australians now living in social housing, and two-thirds of that group employed, it is critical this substantial cohort is provided the opportunity to engage in the workforce.

Social housing tenants in the workforce are both more likely to exit social housing, and more likely to have access to higher incomes. The opportunity to achieve these two outcomes is now more closely tied to the nature of the property.

To encourage investment, we need more data and robust analysis of how public, community or affordable housing infrastructure interventions have improved outcomes for individuals. It is well known that investing in social housing has benefits for residents and our national economy, but we understand less about how these benefits are impacted by the type of housing we invest in. We need to better define fit-for-purpose housing and the economic case for enabling interventions.

The other side of the coin from Australia's property boom has been pronounced challenges in the delivery of affordable housing. While

existing community housing appreciates in financial value, locking up the balance sheets of owners, these assets age, deteriorate and their service value erodes as they no longer meet the needs of residents. The costs of minor maintenance, the costs to heat, cool and digitally connect, all grow.

While there is an established and growing need to refresh existing social housing assets, the opportunity to use the sale of existing houses to fund new, higher-quality dwellings strengthens.

Despite the opportunity, well-intentioned community attitudes to maintain the level of publicly-supported housing can compound the challenges associated with inadequate housing stock. Perceived friction associated with recycling or transitioning of housing stock to private ownership to create a stream of revenue for investment in new housing assets is a major hindrance. It is incumbent on the owners of existing public housing to educate the community on the shortcomings of existing assets.

If we are to address the challenges of economic and social isolation that impact those in publicly supported housing, it is critical that we can support an informed public discussion about the contribution of housing and digital connectivity to our communities. COVID-19 provides a catalyst for this discussion, and a burning platform to build the data and knowledge to support modern, right-sized assets to meet the needs of the post-pandemic home-based workforce.

I hope you found the above perspective by Peter interesting and insightful. While what was said may not align with our view of the world, we all need to listen and digest what is said by others in order to find common ground. This is why we are focusing on the fact that the provision of shelter is a fundamental human need (not human right) and without that need being met, we have unintended social and economic consequences that will span generations.

Doing nothing is NOT AN OPTION! We need to act, and we need to act now. All of us need to be part of the solution so please feel free to write to me with your thoughts: info@housingallaustralians.com.au



Rob Pradolin

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ABORIGINAL MELBOURNE

Landfill tops Koorie Art Show

"I've always used art in a political way," artist Clinton Naina told CBD News. In December, Clinton was awarded the Koorie Art Show's top prize for his work Landfill.

WORDS BY Meg Hill

The work is on exhibition at the Koorie Heritage Trust until February 21.

"It's a way of telling a story or exposing things that need to be thought about. Art can tell a political story as well as being political in and of itself," Clinton continued.

Clinton made *Landfill* out of domestic bleach and cotton. The artwork, a depiction of and commentary on societal waste, was made during Melbourne's lockdown. Surgical masks are depicted alongside a plastic bag.

"It's commenting on the waste that society uses that is filling our land. There's better ways of using or reusing these materials and we should be looking at ways to recycle and making sure we're not polluting the land because it's all we have," he said.

Reflecting on societal waste during the pandemic, Clinton said he saw the two phenomena as connected: there is sickness and illness all around the world, and we're chopping down the

forests that protect us from germs and disease.

"I think every time we chop down a tree or a forest or another creature dies, we're getting closer to destroying ourselves," he said.

He's been exhibiting his art since he was a teenager, but he's been politically active even longer.

"My mother was Eleanor Harding, a political activist and community service worker. She was from the Torres Strait Islands, her lineage descends from Meriam Mer people of the Eastern Torres Strait and the Ku-Ku people of north-west Cape York," he said.

"I was taken as a newborn to my first Aboriginal land rights protest when I was one month old – to the first Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra on Australia Day 1972."

"That was the start of my political awareness of my people's ongoing struggle to survive."

He said art was a way of exposing things that needed to be thought about.

"I've particularly always looked at the politics of the environment, animal welfare, the Torres

Strait Islander people, land, mining – land is entwined with everything else in Torres Strait Island culture, it's not separate like in Western culture," he said.

In a way, Clinton said he felt responsibility to depict those things in his art: "We're not the only ones here anymore, so we have to teach the people living on the land how to look after it," he said.

"So, it was my responsibility in a way not just to be an artist but to do work that can shed light on those things and help the situations that we're in."

The 8th Koorie Art Show is open to the public Sunday, February 21 at the Koorie Heritage Trust, Yarra Building, Federation Square. Entry is free ●

For more information:
korieheritagetrust.com.au

TRADER PROFILE

The new gold standard for Italian hospitality

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*

Walking into Café Gilli, customers are instantly greeted by a sun-flooded space, the smell of homecooked Italian food and a warm welcome from owners Carla Russo and Joe Vitale.

As business and life partners of more than 30 years, the pair is well versed in making sure customers leave with a full belly and a warm heart.

“All the feedback from customers we’ve received so far is that there’s nothing like it in Melbourne,” Ms Russo said.

“It’s a really nice, unusual place where you can go sit down, have breakfast, read the paper and watch the world passing by you.”

Café Gilli opened up on Therry St two days before Christmas among a flurry of activity at the market.

Ms Russo said that although the beginning was tough, it had allowed them to flourish in the new year.

“Even though it was the worst time to open and I went home crying a few times, it allowed us to see the holes, reflect, and fix them before we opened again in the new year,” Ms Russo said.

“Now everything has been running smoothly.”

Carla and Joe have been at Queen Victoria Market for decades and already have three businesses: Café Verona, Q75 and Geloso Gelateria. But Café Gili is a chance for them to move

“

It’s all about the hospitality and, as Italians, we live for that.

”

outside of the hustle of the main market and enjoy the slower-paced environment.

“I love being back in the restaurant business because you get to know the people who come in and sit down, learn their names and look after them,” Ms Russo said.

“It’s all about the hospitality and, as Italians, we live for that.”

Gilli serves a menu of mainly Italian food, including fresh lasagne, pasta and paninis, including their famous Porchetta panini.

Ms Russo said the space and the menu are both inspired by her travels to Florence where



she came across a café that she fell in love with.

“When I was there, we came across a café called Gilli that we went to everyday. It had an incredible atmosphere and delicious food so I said to Joe that if we were ever to open up another café it would be like this,” Ms Russo said.

“I wanted to do the Porchetta panini which we have been doing for the past 30 years at the night market and make that the hero.”

Based on customer feedback so far, the pair has succeeded in bringing a slice of Florence to the Queen Victoria Market and has already had a host of regulars coming in.

“It’s a great atmosphere where you can sit alone and never feel lonely because you can watch the world going on around you over a panini,” Ms Russo said.

Café Gilli is open on market days from 7am-3pm •

Follow them on Instagram:
[instagram.com/gilli.qvm](https://www.instagram.com/gilli.qvm)

RESIDENTS 3000

2021 here we come! How well do you know your city?

Residents joining together to share city delights while walking, jogging and “plogging”. Did you discover secrets that lie beyond the impressive skyline?



Possibly during lockdown, you may have been one of those persons who, for necessary exercise and relief from being cooped up at home, took to walking around the streets of our city. It is likely that you discovered places formerly taken for granted – perhaps the City Library as opposed to the big State Library - and you were surprised when you came along a statue being safe and wearing a mask.

Some years ago, Residents 3000 launched a program of walking (with some tram rides) to learn about the city’s delightful secret places. A guide would explain the history of each location and walkers would be rewarded at the end of their journey (and sometimes during the journey) with stops at a special bar or coffee shop. These tours were small groups of no more than 12 people.

The tours were known as “3000 Steps” referring to our post code 3000. Recently such discovery tours are being revived.

Urban Blooms discovery tour

Late in November, when the city was essentially COVID-free, small groups of Residents 3000 members quickly arranged several casual and impromptu walks to explore interesting places, enjoy the parks, have an old-fashioned neighbourly chat and to share city knowledge with one another.

It was such a pleasure to venture out after the long lockdown, especially when the weather was being particularly kind at the time. On one walk, members enjoyed the Urban Blooms festival admiring the beautiful floral displays.

What is “Plogging”?

If you received an email inviting you to come

“plogging”, would you know what that was?

Plogging is a Swedish idea that has become a worldwide phenomenon. Now CBD residents, through Residents 3000, can be part of it within our own neighbourhood!

Plogging involves jogging or walking to pick up litter. Our modern lifestyle generates too much plastic, cigarette butts, drink cans, bottles, coffee cups and the like. Urban waste is polluting our waterways and rivers, eventually finding its way to the oceans. In 2050, if nothing is done about the problem, scientists have estimated that there will be more plastic in ocean than fish!

What can be better than combining exercising with doing our part for the planet! You can bring your dog along and possibly your kids or grandkids. Plogging in small groups is motivating and definitely burns more calories than walking alone! (Bending, squatting, stretching – a good muscle toner.)

You may think, why pick up other people’s rubbish? But Residents 3000 ploggers can feel that they are creating visual awareness that keeping our city clean is everyone’s duty. It is a way that we can encourage people to do their part to help the environment and to keep our

Plogging involves jogging or walking to pick up litter.



city beautiful. Think about plogging our parks, our riverside, our laneways, plogging Fed Square - the list is endless.

Your committee is currently deciding on dates for many 3000 Steps and Plogging events for 2021. These will be published on Facebook, our website, Instagram and by email to members. For example, look out for Residents 3000 participating in “Australia Clean-up Day” on Sunday March 7.

Test your city knowledge

In the first week of February (Thursday, February 4 at 6pm) we are planning to hold our first live event at the Kelvin Club with the ever-popular Trivia Night. However, this event assumes that the City is free of COVID. Members are really looking forward to meeting up in person again. Watch out for this event via our media outlets.

So, here we come, 2021! The focus is on everyone’s engagement and involvement as residents and lovers of the city. We invite you to feel the energy and camaraderie of Residents 3000 by participating in our upcoming events and at the same time make a difference by helping the city thrive both economically and environmentally •



Sue Saunders
VICE PRESIDENT OF RESIDENTS 3000 MELBOURNE



PRECINCTS

Chinese New Year a beacon for Chinatown Precinct

WORDS BY Jess Carrascalao Heard

It was 11am on a Friday, and the president and vice president of the Chinatown Precinct Association, Danny Doon and Eng Lim, had just ushered me into one of the precinct's food courts to have a chat.

The year has started slowly, with a quiet post-lockdown world made even quieter during the holiday season with closed offices and state government incentives for local tourists to visit regional centres.

"Since the easing of lockdown, gradually people are coming back, but not up to the amount last year," Mr Doon said.

But despite the low foot traffic, Mr Doon and Ms Lim were feeling positive, and counting their blessings; it's almost time for the biggest cultural event on the calendar, Chinese New Year.

"It's very important," Ms Lim said. "It's the first day of the lunar month. So, you start the year well, you start the year right, you start with a celebration."

She counts herself fortunate to be in Australia, where thanks to low COVID numbers, festivities can still go ahead, albeit in a COVID-safe manner.

"We've done it smaller ... we still have got to be very safe and keep our social distancing, but it's good with a smaller event. You can still gather," she said.

Mr Doon hopes local tourists from far and wide will visit for the celebrations.

"We encourage country people to come to Melbourne and watch the Chinese New Year celebrations ... we'll still put on a show," Mr Doon said.

"We encourage country people to come to Melbourne and watch the Chinese New Year celebrations ... we'll still put on a show."



The lack of tourism has been a blow to the precinct during past months, with COVID rules curtailing large gatherings and restricting movement.

Another difficulty has been the lack of international students.

"[International students] always get their part-time jobs in all the restaurants ... there's hardly any international students to help out working in the hospitality trade," Ms Lim said.

Mr Doon added that international students brought in extra tourism for the precinct as well.

"With the international students in Australia,



▲ President of the Chinatown Precinct Association Mr Danny Doon and vice president Ms Eng Lim are excited to bring people back into the precinct for Chinese New Year.

they would bring their father, their mother, their grandparents, their brother, their friends ... the whole family will come," Mr Doon said.

But even despite low foot traffic and the difficulties of the past year, Mr Doon and Ms Lim were thankful to have so much passion and interest from council.

"We are very, very fortunate to have, by the City of Melbourne, so much passion and interest," said Ms Lim.

"Like, look at the way one minute you see there's a street for car parking, and next thing you see, it's a parklet," she said.

Mr Doon and Ms Lim are also grateful for

the support that the City of Melbourne has given them in planning the Chinese New Year festivities.

"We should all be very happy that we could at least have a mini-celebration," Ms Lim said.

"We should think positive, feel positive that at least we can still gather together." ●

For more information:
chinatownmelbourne.com.au

METRO TUNNEL



Joan meets the CBD!

The Metro Tunnel Project ended 2020 on a high note, with arrival of TBM Joan in the CBD prior to Christmas.

TBM Joan bored into State Library Station's central cavern 32 metres under Swanston St after tunnelling 1km from the Parkville Station site.

Meanwhile TBM Meg is currently carving a parallel route to the CBD and is expected to arrive at State Library Station in the coming weeks.

The two TBMs were launched from Parkville in October and November, after completing the 1.4km leg from Arden Station.

When TBM Meg breaks through in the CBD, both TBMs will have installed more than

25,530 concrete segments to line the western section of the Metro Tunnel from Kensington through to the State Library site.

In coming months both TBMs will be transferred through State Library Station's rail tunnels before being recommissioned and relaunched towards Town Hall Station later this year.

Once the TBMs depart, works underground will continue at State Library Station including construction of the platform cavern walls and commencement of the underground passenger connections.



Meanwhile TBMs Millie and Alice are tunnelling north from the Anzac Station site towards Town Hall Station ●

For more information:
metrotunnel.vic.gov.au




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HISTORY

Old Danks Store Yard, Bourke St, during demolition, 1958

As the photographer Pierre Robin stopped outside the John Danks & Co Store Yard at 409 Bourke St, it is likely he had one thing in mind; to record the site before it disappeared from view.

Robin spent many hours walking city streets in the late 1950s and early 1960s recording the changing streetscapes, and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria is fortunate to have more than 400 of his images in its collection. This image was taken in 1958, almost 100 years since the Danks company began its plumbing business in this Bourke St block between Elizabeth and Queen streets.

Its retail space was just down the street, almost out of view of the camera, but Robin's attention on the day he took this photo was the store yard where the iconic sign "Whelan the Wrecker Is Here" indicates that big changes were afoot. This was a period of transition for Danks. Its retail site (393-403 Bourke St) was later taken over by hardware retailers McEwans and later still was converted into an apartment building, The Foundry.

The demolition company Whelan the Wrecker, with its famous slogan "Whelan the Wrecker Is Here", had been a Melbourne institution since the 1890s. By the time this photograph was taken, the company's sign could be seen on many city blocks as old buildings gave way to new.

The store yard site is flanked by the Four-O-Five Milk Bar and Andrews' Jewellers and Evans House, the home of Thomas Evans

Pty Ltd who were tent, tarpaulin and flag manufacturers.

As a child of the '50s and '60s, the nostalgia evoked by the milk bar's façade drew me to the building with its imposing advertising for a long-gone ice cream and all the things that milk bars meant in the days before convenience stores and fast food took over. Milk bars appeared on the scene in the 1930s and here people could meet, have a chat and a coffee or milk shake. You'd find them in every suburb and country town. And as you see here, there were milk bars in the centre of the CBD, too.

On Saturdays, Australian children everywhere flocked to milk bars clutching their pocket money in readiness for the weekly ritual of choosing which lollies they would buy. Thinking back to the late 1950s, I'm amazed at how far I could make my threepence go. I only just remember the Sennitt's ice cream advertising, with its polar bear licking an ice cream cone. I was always a Peters ice cream fan ("the health food of a nation") and a vanilla cone was the ultimate Sunday afternoon treat in our household. The Sennitt's slogan "Bear in mind Sennitt's ice cream" disappeared along with the brand in 1961, just three years after this photograph was taken. Streets took the place of Sennitt's and the name Sennitt's slipped away



▲ Old Danks Store Yard, Bourke St 1958, Photographer: Pierre Robin, TRA-R-62 RHSV Collection.

into history.

This particular milk bar – the Four-O-Five – had not been there long when the photograph was taken. In the 1940s it had been a fruiterer's business but by the end of that decade it had transformed into the exotic sounding Tropical Coffee Lounge. By the time Pierre Robin took his photograph in 1958 it was the Four-O-Five, selling sandwiches, coffee, milkshakes and ice creams, among other things, to city workers.

If you look carefully, slightly off centre and next to the light pole, there is a milk pail, presumably empty, set out by the kerb, waiting to be collected and replaced by a full pail. No crates of milk cartons here. The pail is a reminder of a far-distant past when packaging and waste were at a minimum and the milk sold

came straight from a local dairy. The pail is a reminder, too, that this was an era when milk and bread were delivered to your doorstep every day, although this practice also disappeared in the 1960s with the establishment of more and more supermarkets.

The Four-O-Five survived into the 1960s but by the middle of that decade it had gone and, by the 1970s, milk bars began to disappear everywhere as convenience stores and fast food chains took over ●



Dr. Cheryl Griffin
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

MUSIC

Make Hay While the Sun Shines

Courtney Barnett was in Babe Ruth mode, hitting an extraordinary home run during lockdown when she recorded and filmed with her band at Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building. The incredible building was built 140 years ago by the well esteemed builder David Mitchell.

Mitchell's daughter is one of Melbourne's most famous singers Dame Nellie Melba. Melba would have approved of the chutzpah shown by Barnett, who once played for the Rockdogs at Elsternwick Oval. The highlight was the closer *Sunday Roast*, a beautiful track that has chord sequences reminiscent of Bailter Space and their phenomenal *Robot World* album.

The show was streamed into cinemas and online for a brief moment in time.

As part of Melbourne Music Week Extended Daryl Braithwaite and his brilliant band did some pop-up gigs at cafes, bars and restaurants around the CBD. He appeared out of the blue on the sidewalk at Degraives St, Melbourne's iconic Pellegrini's on Bourke St and the European around the corner. This really lifted the spirits of many people in the CBD and created a definite buzz in the city. *Love Songs* is Braithwaite's latest song recorded during lockdown – a very catchy tune.

The Melbourne Music Week (MMW) Extended posse is to be commended for having re-engineered and reimagined MMW into an extended musical festival all across the CBD during the summer months. It's managed to overcome so much to put on some great music from DJs and bands in grassroots venues to Mo'Ju performing with Orchestra Victoria at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

MMW Extended delivered the musical goods to help kick-start live music happening in the CBD. Music is a healing force for both performers and the audience. Melbourne is the live music capital of Australia and MMW is a sensational part of the music fabric of the city. Bravo MMW for helping bring back live music.

Jack Howard's book *Small Moments Of Glory* has led to greater recognition of this very talented trumpet player and multi-instrumentalist.

Dalicados, a band that is under the radar managed to launch its debut album *Nevermore*, featuring the brilliant guitar playing of James Lomas and a clutch of great musos like Fiona Lee Maynard and Jack Howard.

There are eight songs by James Lomas with *You Make Hay While The Sun Shines* being the highlight. There's also a cover of Marcos Huet Alves's *Simple As It May Sound*. There's a bit of Stan Ridgeway in Dalicados flavours. The band has got a marvellous loose yet tight feel of a classic St Kilda rock band.

On *the album* James Lomas is shredding in a fabulous Thunderbirds manner with his Fender Telecaster, with Jack Howard stepping up and matching the lines of James Lomas. A mighty feat. Check out Dalicados on its Bandcamp page.

Having dined out on a pepperoni pizza at Sals Pizza on Exhibition St, one of Melbourne's premier soul bands Fulton Street then launched into a blistering set of music that raised the roof at Cherry Bar on Little Collins St, just around the corner from Sals.

Earlier Chris Gill (3RRR funk/soul guru) had the good fortune to talk to the lead singer of Fulton Street Shan at Northside Records about the exemplary Fulton Street sound. Expect new music from Fulton Street in 2021.

Mick Harvey played one of the first shows in Melbourne after venues started having gigs again. Mick Harvey has a superb collection of musicians playing with him, such as JP Shilo, Hugh Cran and Glenn Lewis.

At one stage of the night this quartet performed JP Shilo's *Where The Water Tastes Like Wine*. It was an absolutely compelling performance worth checking out on YouTube.

Just recently The Po-jama People Radio Show on 3PBS celebrated its 500th edition, a tremendous achievement in radio broadcasting by the show's host Chris Pearson. The 506th episode of Po-jama People is worth listening to as Chris Pearson gives you a selection of music from 20 of the best local vinyl long play records that were released in 2020.

You can find the show on the Po-jama People Radio Show page on 3PBS ●



Chris Mineral

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SALVOS

Limitations of the bureaucratic box

There have been enormous lessons for many of us during the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the big learnings for me has been how important centralised leadership is during a global health crisis. How many times did we hear the messaging, "Wash your hands regularly. Sanitise. Mask up. Socially distance. If you feel unwell get tested and isolate until you receive your results." It was messaging that we could all regurgitate because the messages were repeated ad infinitum.

Another example of useful centralised leadership was the nimble and flexible response to hundreds of thousands of Australians whose employment suddenly became uncertain or, in fact, disappeared. JobKeeper and JobSeeker were terms that did not exist 12 months ago. However, in 2020, they became a salve that soothed the jangled nerves of so many.

While centralised leadership proved, for the large part, to be highly useful and necessary, it also shone the spotlight on the fact that not all individuals and their situations perfectly fit within the bureaucratic box.

For example, in March 2020, the state government responded flexibly and nimbly to hundreds of people sleeping rough on the streets of the city and surrounding areas. They provided free, ongoing hotel accommodation to everyone that required it. It was a compassionate and thoughtful response which benefitted many in the middle of a pandemic and a very cold Melbourne winter. However, there were 35 to 40 rough sleepers who refused the offer of free hotel accommodation and they remained on the streets. Many people responded by saying, "that group clearly doesn't want to be helped". But when we took the time to engage with this group, we discovered that the vast majority of them were dealing with serious mental health issues. They recognised that going into a hotel room would have exacerbated their issues, causing them to potentially harm themselves, others or the property itself. The issue highlighted here is, they don't fit in the bureaucratic box, hence they were locked out of receiving desperately needed support.

Another example occurred on Boxing Day. We received a call from a Park Ranger from the City of Melbourne. He had found an elderly woman living in a tent in the Carlton Gardens

next to the Royal Exhibition Buildings. A terrible storm had occurred on Christmas night and the woman's tent was covered in branches. Fortunately, she was not injured but the Park Ranger indicated that it would only be a matter of time before she was injured if she remained in that location due to deteriorating weather conditions. We attempted to contact the designated homelessness entry point to arrange housing for the woman. The phone remained unanswered for 35 minutes. Two seasonal housing workers were becoming increasingly frustrated with the delay. How on earth do we expect people who are homeless, often with a multitude of other complex issues, to navigate their way into and around a bureaucratic box that even professional and experienced housing workers give up on? The frustration of the situation caused us to work outside of the system. We worked with the woman as we sat next to her tent in the Carlton Gardens. We eventually discovered that she had two children that she had not spoken with for several years. We also discovered that she and they were desperate to be reunited. She also learnt that she had six grandchildren that she didn't know existed.

We drove the woman for two and a half hours to a regional location and reunited her with family. It was emotional. It was moving and it was absolutely the right thing to do.

Does the bureaucratic box work? Yes it does. For some but definitely not for all, especially the complex cases. Surely as a society we have a responsibility to do all we can to care for all people in need, especially the most vulnerable. Indeed, it was Socrates who reminded us that societies will be judged by the way they care for the most vulnerable. May the judgement that eventually heads our way be certain proof that we all do genuinely care, especially for those that are locked out of the bureaucratic box ●



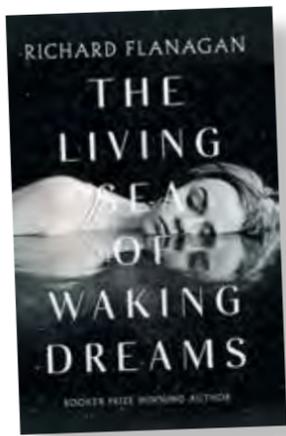
Major Brendan Nottle

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CRITIC

▼ *The Living Sea of Working Dreams*, Richard Flanagan, Penguin, 2020



Troubled novel captures a bad summer

Richard Flanagan lays it on thick in his latest novel, which is front-runner to win the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for 2021.

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge

The Living Sea of Working Dreams is told from the bedside of a dying woman in Hobart.

Francie's children don't want her to die and they approve intervention after intervention.

Her predicament has no solution because medical science has advanced to such a state that it can keep a body working.

Francie wants to go but Flanagan, making a point about our lack of respect for natural processes, needs her to feed his tragedy.

This is a polemical novel that reads as a treatise on climate change just as much, if not more, than a family drama.

The protagonist, Francie's daughter Anna, is addicted to the newsfeed on her phone and she taps into global and local disasters in moments of trouble, of which there are many.

The novel is one of four short-listed for the fiction award, which will be announced at the end of January, and for sheer mental energy, it deserves to win.

The narrative is contemporary and relevant, demonstrating how our fears dominate the discourse.

Fiction has a chance to remake the world, an opportunity Flanagan does not take. Instead the lives of Francie's children, Anna and Terzo, are successful on the surface but they have become simulations.

Terzo, a venture capitalist, is determined to use his influence to get the best possible treatment for Francie. It all depends on the funds and they're always in Switzerland.

Flanagan has a few dark jokes at the expense of Terzo and his cycling mates.

One has a face so barren of feature it reminds Anna of a hotel key card. He's able to reboot at a moment's notice as "if he had found the appropriate information in a remote cloud saver."

Mostly, however, doom prevails and death and destruction wipe out characters with little faith in our ability to fight off a major extinction event. Humans, as we know them, are disappearing. Just a few caring ones remain and they are beyond commenting on the demise of their brethren.

Flanagan has a valid point. Tasmania has been overrun by tourists. Bushfires were raging when he was writing. Smoke was hanging over the cities.

Last summer was apocalyptic and this novel, written swiftly, captures that moment in history.

The prose is hot, passionate, dystopic and unrelenting with a few warnings that should be heeded.

This summer was the opposite – mild, modest and caring – with most Australians grateful with what our country has to offer (but you can't be too careful) ●

WE LIVE HERE

OCs have "responsibility" to inform short-stay guests on cladding

Cladding Safety Victoria (CSV) is placing the onus jointly on owners' corporations (OCs) and owners to inform transient short-stay guests about flammable cladding.

In our previous column we said that CSV had not provided any advice on how OCs can deal with transient guests who are more likely to be ignorant of fire safety.

The CSV let us know that its site does in fact have a section dedicated to "owner(s) of short-stay accommodation", and it contains this:

"If the building has been found to contain combustible cladding, and it is within Cladding Safety Victoria's program, it is the responsibility of the owners' corporation and the owner to inform guests."

This might come as a shock to OCs of buildings where short-stay businesses operate.

The requirement by CSV for the OC to "inform a guest" about combustible cladding cannot be met.

Without regulation, short-stay operators will not scruple to keep OCs in the dark about all aspects of their business operations including which apartments are being let and the occupancy. Building managers or OCs simply do not have contact details for the guests.

Really, the onus should be on the short-term operators not only to know and understand what the status of the building is but to obtain a signature from each guest to show that they also know and understand the situation.

We will put more questions to CSV and update you in our next column.

Short-stay watch one: Police bashed

Before a month has passed in the new year, an all-night party at a short-stay has ended with a police officer hospitalised and four partygoers arrested.

Neighbours in the fiasco, which garnered prime-time news coverage, contacted We Live Here and said, "this out-of-control [short-stay] culminating in police assaults. Forty-plus people in attendance and a 15-hour ordeal where

we were at real risk with inadequate police response to de-escalate and owner refusing to remove renters until 2.30pm the following day."

So much for the so-called "Airbnb Party" legislation. Let's hope the sympathies of a local councillor and a federal member can convert to pressure on the Victorian Government to step up and regulate this "out-of-control" industry.

Short-stay watch two: Mail and parcels stolen

A Melbourne apartment building contacted us with a shocking report of mail theft:

"We had a short-stay guest rob our mailroom of all mail and parcels they could carry, then take them to their rented apartment. We had the whole thing on CCTV, but VicPol did not move immediately to apprehend the thief. None of the items have been recovered ..."

Compromised security is inherent to short-stay operation in apartment buildings. We will continue to lobby for regulations requiring short-stay businesses to record guest details with the building manager.

Bills, Bills, Bills: Legislative confusion reigns

This month two OC Bills will return to state parliament and nobody seems to know what's going on.

The Bills are two parts of the same act!

- *Owners' Corporation and other Acts Amendment Bill 2019* – part heard.
- *Owners' Corporation Amendment (Short-Stay Accommodation Act) 2019* for review.

Given that we have had three Consumer Affairs ministers in the past four years, it's no surprise even the government doesn't understand the convolutions.

In 2015 the Victorian Government commenced a review of the *Owners' Corporations Act 2006* and received more than 150 submissions. The *Owners' Corporation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2019* was introduced in December 2019 and had reached the Upper House for the third reading when COVID-19 closed parliament in February 2020.

The review included measures to regulate OC managers and developers and improve governance, e.g. restricting proxy farming; all long-overdue reforms.

SKYPAD LIVING

Looking back to look forward

While our high-rise precincts are new, Melbourne has a long history of apartment living.

According to Charles Pickett, Melbourne saw its first purpose-built apartment building - a "walk-up" - around 1900. This was soon followed by our first high-rise. This was The Astor and it was constructed in 1920 and was 20 storeys high.

Of course, Melbourne's apartment history pales in insignificance against that of Europe's, with claims that vertical living originated in ancient Rome around 753 BC. Called insulae (island), these apartment buildings could be up to eight stories high and were constructed from wood, mud brick or rudimentary concrete.

In relative terms, however, Melbourne can still claim a respectable pedigree, with apartments having a longer Australian history than majority home ownership.

As regards the evolution of our apartment sector, Robert Stent, architect and Former Governor of Master Builders Association Victoria Foundation, contends that the sector has been "full of turn-offs, short sprints and long runs of both type and frequency." And he sees four distinct periods that have been most influential:

- 1930s–1940s: the modernist movement which embraced the need for compact living and featured many studios and one-bed apartments;
- 1950s–1960s: relaxed planning controls permitted construction of three- and four-storey apartment buildings and also featured the "commission flats" under the Housing Commission of Victoria's Slum Reclamation Program (HCVSR);
- 1970s–1980s: an amended planning scheme stymied apartment construction in favour of detached dwellings in the city fringe;
- 1990s–2000s: inner-city Melbourne development in former industrial areas such as Southbank.

But why then is apartment living claimed as being so new for us?

Why are apartments not a prominent part of our "housing history"?

One theory for this absence has been posed by architect Peter Brew. He suggests that "flats" posed a problem for our more nationalistic historians as this style of living jarred with

our popularist view of ourselves as having of a quarter-acre block with a Hills hoist. It is also the case that purpose-built apartments were not universally supported, with their desirability debated since they first appeared here over a century ago. While proponents pointed to cities like New York and their widespread adoption of this mode of living, many Australians argued that the future of the nation was in the balance, as apartments would surely become "the slums of the future".

It is interesting to note that these same claims are still made today! However, design and construction are only part of our apartment story.

Next month's column will share the origins of the regulations that govern how we are able to live in our vertical villages ●

One glaring omission a review of Section 8 "Rules of the owners' corporation" was explained like this:

"One issue that is beyond the scope of this paper is whether owners' corporations should be able to make rules prohibiting a certain use of a lot, where that use is permitted under the applicable planning instrument ... therefore, the question of whether a particular land use is appropriate is a matter to be addressed in the planning scheme and not through rules made by an owners' corporation."

Separately Consumer Affairs introduced the *Owners' Corporation Amendment (Short-Stay Accommodation Bill) 2016*.

This is the Bill We Live Here lobbied against and had referred to a bipartisan Parliamentary Inquiry, which determined the Bill was unfair. The findings were dismissed by the government and the Bill was enacted in February 2019.

Has anyone made a successful complaint under this so-called Airbnb Party Act? We have had zero cases reported to us.

Now, in response to widespread derision, Minister for Consumer Affairs at the time, Marlene Kairouz, effectively said don't worry, we'll review the Act in two years. Well, time's up!

Rather than a confusing piecemeal approach, the government should review all aspects in concert: general improvements to the OC Act, specific provisions for short-stays and the hot potato – the role of planning regulations.

We hope the new minister for Consumer Affairs Melissa Horne understands that there are many, many major problems related to short-stays beyond violent parties.

We need a mature, open conversation between the government and stakeholders to address the short-stay issue in its entirety ●



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Dr Janette Corcoran

APARTMENT LIVING EXPERT

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Pet's Corner

Lucifer top of the morning



CBD resident Rangana's husky puppy Lucifer is only a young boy, but as he bounds through Flagstaff Gardens, you'd never guess.



WORDS BY *Ellen Blake*

"No one can tell he's only eight months old, he's so big," Rangana said.

Rananga, who lives in an apartment directly across from Flagstaff Gardens, visits the park with Lucifer twice a day to help expend some of the puppy's abundance of energy. "Huskies are one of the most active and most energetic breeds of dogs. They originated from the Arctic and used to pull sleds," Rangana said.

"His favourite hobbies are running, walking along the beach, chasing birds and possums".

Lucifer had an interesting start to life as he was the only pup to survive from his litter.

As a result, he was developmentally stunted and struggled with basic tasks as he had no brothers and sisters to learn with as a youngster.

Rananga said Lucifer "had a lot of issues" and it had been hard to train him.

But he is slowly learning and despite having few canine friends, he enjoys spending his time with Rangana and his partner.

The pair plan to move out of their Flagstaff Gardens apartment as Lucifer continues to grow.

"He's going to be massive," Rananga laughed ●

HERITAGE

A major heritage gift

If you've been following heritage news in the CBD for a while now, you may remember a brief moment in 2014 when the Bourke St Target Centre made the news, inspired by our calls to remove its cheap cladding to reveal one of Melbourne's longest hidden heritage gems.

Since 1977, the facades of the Hoyts Deluxe Cinema and Mantons Department Store have been hidden behind cheap cladding and corporate signage, only revealed briefly in 1994 and again more recently in 2014. A simple removal of the cladding and some facade restoration could give Bourke St back a significant heritage streetscape in place of a drab cheap looking wall – a win for both Melbourne's citizens and presumably any brands that call the Target Centre home.

The Hoyts Deluxe has tremendous importance to Melbourne's history as the first truly luxurious "picture palace" in Melbourne. It was also one of the last buildings designed by one of Melbourne's most renowned Boom era architects, William Pitt, opening its doors to theatre-goers in 1915.

Next door is the art deco Coles Store, built in two stages. It was designed by the well-known architect Harry Norris (who also designed the iconic Nicholas Building) and was opened in 1937 as Mantons. It was extended in 1955, in a matching style, and became a Coles Store. In 1977 the cinema interior was sadly destroyed for shops and offices and both facades were covered over, where they remain until this day.

This opportunity for a major heritage gift back to the people of Melbourne has resurfaced in 2021, with a planning application currently under assessment to "construct and display internally illuminated and non-illuminated business identification signage". In other words, parts

of the cladding with briefly be removed in order to be replaced with more large-scale signage in a similar style. A better option is possible though.

The cladding could come off, and in its place again could appear some long-hidden heritage, with some sensitive signage as an addition rather than a detraction.

While the Hoyts Deluxe facade may need significant restoration and possibly reconstruction of some cornices, this should be small change compared to the yearly rental yield and value of a large Bourke St shopping complex, home to Target and a campus of Monash University, and the PR alone of such a positive reveal would be as good as any large-scale signage on cheap cladding can provide.

Chanel was able to generate great publicity for its Russell St store in 2013 due to the wonderful restoration of the dilapidated but grand 1920s bank building, chosen for its quality despite being located well off the traditional Collins St boutique strip. Heritage restoration is also a solid business choice.

Although we never received a response from Westfarmers the last time change was mooted, we are once again urging them to consult with their landlord and allow these long forgotten heritage buildings to take centre stage once again ●



Tristan Davies
PRESIDENT
MELBOURNE HERITAGE
ACTION
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BUSINESS



Central Equity wins HIA Apartment Complex of the Year 2020

Central Equity has taken out the prestigious Housing Industry Association (HIA) Victorian Apartment Complex of the Year 2020 Award, for its recently completed landmark apartment tower Melbourne Grand.

It makes the Melbourne company HIA Victoria's most awarded apartment developer, winning the award six times in the past 10 years.

Central Equity has been setting the benchmark in Melbourne inner city housing with more than 80 projects delivered more than 33 years.

Melbourne Grand Apartments was designed by long established Melbourne Architects Guilford Bell and Graham Fisher.

The 58-level tower, located at 560 Lonsdale St, has a luxurious entry foyer and approximately 1700 sqm of resort style facilities.

The resident facilities – the Lonsdale Club is home to a cinema, expansive lounge and dining areas, outdoor BBQ dining terraces, a banquet room, coffee bar, an impressive gymnasium, indoor heated swimming pool, sauna and a yoga room.

The judges praised the project as being "flawlessly appointed and combines meticulous detail with functionality and stylish design. The high level of amenity and apartment configurations are well matched to today's modern urban lifestyle, and the complex as a whole is a very worthy recipient of this accolade".

Central Equity has been credited as the pioneer of inner city living in Melbourne, developing a number of residential properties in the Southbank and the CBD.

Melbourne Grand Apartments has been very well received with many residents now occupying their new homes.

There are a limited number of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments for sale and rent at Melbourne Grand. For further information or to inspect the award winning complex and furnished display apartments, contact Central Equity on 9278 8888 or visit melbournegrand.com.au

The onsite sales office is open seven days a week at 570 Lonsdale St, Melbourne ●

BUSINESS



Design meets heritage to create the ultimate Melbourne loft

“
Every now and then a property comes along that is crafted to perfection.”



WORDS BY Sam Fenma – Belle Property

16/79-81 Franklin St is one of those rare properties and was featured in Australia’s most popular design blog, *The Design Files*.

Located in the Currie and Richards building circa 1875, the apartment is nestled away at the rear of the building, it is quiet and peaceful, yet moments from the action.

The owners have undertaken a complete renovation, painstakingly crafting a home where no detail was overlooked.

Upon entering the apartment, you are immediately taken by the natural light that fills the room. The kitchen, with custom concrete benchtops and an island bench, finished in a polished Statuario marble with a waterfall edge, the combination of materials used here works perfectly. Featuring an integrated dishwasher and an abundance of storage, you will delight in the Queen Victoria Market at the end of the street for all your fresh produce to come home and create a masterpiece.

Stepping down to the living area, glimpses of a bygone era of craftsmanship is evidenced in the windows where small bubbles on what is the original blown glass panels in the restored sash window. The outdoors has been brought in, with different plants displayed on the custom cabinetry. Relax and unwind on the cushioned bench seat, it is the perfect living room with the comforts of split system heating and cooling.

Moving upstairs, admire your artworks in the recessed wall which are complemented with lighting for the full effect. The dramatic ceiling light at the top of the staircase sets the tone for what is about to come on this floor. The installation of the central custom skylight ensures natural light streams through year-round and is solar opening with a built-in rain sensor, flyscreen, and touchscreen remote control.

The spacious master suite is a retreat from city life and easily fits a king bed. Wake up and see the sky through the openable roof window or allow the breeze to come through on a warm night, these comforts are rare in the apartment space and a great benefit of being a top-floor apartment. With wardrobes and walk-in storage that span the width of the room, LED lights that activate upon opening, built-in draws, and glass display cabinets further adding to the experience. The master is complete with split-system heating and cooling and an electric blind for the roof window.

The central bathroom is an absolute standout that rivals some of the best, with a luxurious double shower. The imported NUD pendant lights inspired by Scandinavian design tradition are a showstopper and highlight the sheer height of the ceilings here.

Rounding out the accommodation, the second bedroom is currently used as a home office. The space is versatile for those wanting to work from home or to create a second bedroom.

With the Melbourne City Baths at the end of the street, the beautifully maintained Flagstaff Gardens just a short stroll away, and everything the city is famous for all at your fingertips you will love the lifestyle on offer here.

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Chinatown has a Niübi

Walking down Little Bourke St through Melbourne’s busy Chinatown Precinct, you’d be forgiven for walking past Heffernan Lane without a second glance, but if you did, you’d be missing out on an iconic piece of Melbourne history.

WORDS BY Jack Hayes

Detached from its neighbours stands 11 Heffernan Lane; four storeys of folklore dating back to 1892 and now home to Chinatown’s newest pan-Asian restaurant, Niübi.

Stepping into the building, which lays claim to be Chinatown’s first restaurant to be frequented by Westerners, the century-old façade is immediately met by a, ultra-modern interior with hues of pastel pink and clean timber finishes, designed by T-A Square.

Niübi is the creation of emerging hospitality group, Team Rassassy, which delivers a genre bending approach to south-east Asian cooking which is both surprising and refreshing at the same time.

Dispelling with the usual constraints associated with Thai, Malaysian and Singaporean cuisines, Niübi’s relaxed and no-nonsense approach shines throughout the menu.

Whether it be their signature Curry Fish Head or lobster slow cooked in buttermilk, curry powder and condensed milk, the menu and team at Niübi, spearheaded by chef, Iven Foo, isn’t afraid to take risks in order to appeal to a broad audience.

Paying plenty of attention to the everchanging Melburnian culinary landscape, Niübi’s menu also features highlights such as spicy shredded chicken, prawn toast with salted egg yolk, roast duck with plum sauce and mud crab soup with vermicelli noodles.

As it did when run by 11 Heffernan Lane former building owner, Ah Gee, who constructed the building himself almost 130 years ago and later ran the widely popular café, Wing Ching, Niübi is a contemporary conduit between traditional south-east Asian dining and the Australian palate.

Looking out beyond Chinatown from the second-storey dining room windows, Niübi’s casual approach is joined by the cohort of professional and attentive staff to create what general manager Carr Lam describes as connections between dear friends.

“We want to create a relaxed atmosphere where customers are not only enjoying their food, but also the experience of mingling, joking with our staff through relaxed conversations and laughter,” he said.

With the CBD and Chinatown waking from a post-COVID slumber, the team at Niübi has every confidence that the venue will act as a driving force to return the cultural precinct to its former glory.

Heffernan Ln is nestled off Little Bourke St, between Russell and Swanston streets ●

For more information:
niubi.com.au

重新开放Waratah Place巷道

由于重大电气工程的施工，这条历史悠久的唐人街Waratah Place巷道，在关闭了两年之后向公众重新开放。

Ellen Blake

电力公司CitiPower的主要项目负责人马库斯·奥利夫(Marcus Olive)表示，项目团队努力保持唐人街区域的传统风貌，同时增加特色以提升该区域。

奥利夫说：“项目团队一直非常小心地修复和维护青石铺路和排水沟等方面，但与此同时，建筑正面的LED显示屏等元素也增加了唐人街的动感。”

奥利夫先生感谢唐人街的商界人士，他们在巷道关闭期间表示出“惊人的支持”。

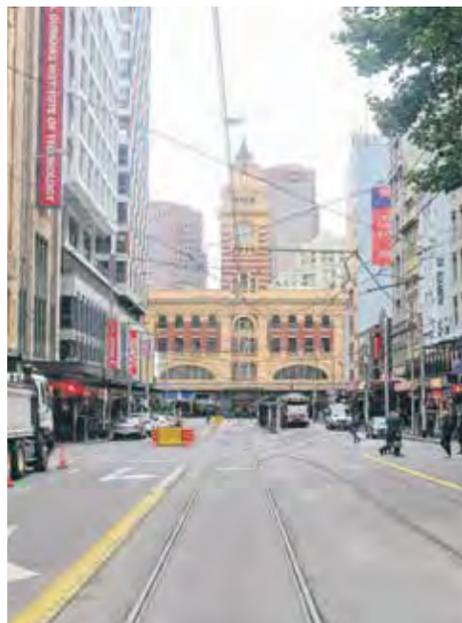
重新开放Waratah Place的时间意味着，唐人街的餐馆可以将巷道用于户外用餐，这是墨尔本市政和维州政府户外用餐COVID-19恢复计划的一部分。

奥利夫说：“我们很高兴能够重新向公众开放巷道，当地商家可以将其用于户外用餐。”

当时关闭巷道是为了拆除和重建一个电气区域变电站，作为价值2.5亿澳元的墨尔本中央商务区供电安全项目的一部分，该项目为城市供电提供后备电源。

该项目可以防止突发事件，如极端天气或基础设施故障所造成的城市主要电路停电。

一旦项目完成，将允许墨尔本电网周围的电力转移，以确保停电持续不超过30分钟。



期待已久的工程终于开工

Elizabeth街南端的工程终于开工了，比原计划晚了将近四年。

David Schout

Elizabeth街南端是墨尔本市最繁华的区域之一，是通往中央商务区的门户，长期以来一直被指定进行升级改造，前任市长罗伯特·多伊尔(Robert Doyle)曾称其为“恶心”和“墨尔本的丑小鸭”。

在一系列的延误之后，市长萨利·卡普(Sally Capp)宣布，该工程终于在1月下旬开始施工，以扩大行人空间并创造“更具吸引力的街景”。

她说：“去年这个项目遇到了许多障碍，现在我们很高兴地宣布Elizabeth街南端的工程开工。”

“我们正在为城市的居民、工作人员和访客创造一个更好的空间，让他们能够安全地使用附近的公共交通工具和商店，同时保持社交距离。这个项目工程将会带来新的树木和绿色植物、新的街道装置、灯光和青石路面。”

“项目团队正与当地企业密切合作，以维护行人通道，并确保运输和废物清除的通道。”

这条街的南端主要由快餐店和便利店组成。

在新冠疫情之前，早高峰期间与Flinders街的交叉口每小时有多达10000人穿过，使其成为本市最繁忙的景点之一。

该项目将扩大步行空间约至篮球场大小，为此，Flinders街和Flinders巷之间的南行机动车道将永久关闭。

市政10年交通战略的一个关键支柱是在Hoddle网络区域内为那些感到“拥挤”的徒步者扩大步行空间。长期以来市政一直在预测对Elizabeth街南端区域进行改造。

这项工程的开始标志着其漫长延迟期的结束。

安全注射室报告延迟

一份可能决定在维多利亚女王市场附近建立第二个安全注射室的关键报告被推迟了。

David Schout

州政府宣布，由于前警察局长肯·雷(Ken Lay)尚未完成与关键利益方的磋商，此报告需要更多时间来完成。

该报告的调查结果可能对安德鲁斯(Andrews)政府是否在Victoria街上选择其首

选的cohealth地点起着重要作用，而这个位置目前受到墨尔本市政、当地许多居民和女王市场经营商家的反对。

就在去年11月20日，州政府还向本报证实，该报告将“在2020年底前”定稿，之后州政府将根据报告的提议做出决定。

但后来又报告需要更多的时间。

州卫生部长马丁·福利(Martin Foley)表示：“尽管迄今为止取得了重大进展，但政府已接受了雷的请求，将磋商时间延长至新年，届时面对面的参与将受到较少限制，更能听到关键方面的声音。”

“我们仍然决心尽快看到这项重要的救生服务投入运营，但也希望给雷先生足够的时间，让他以更全面的方式来解决这个复杂的问题。”

雷先生领导的下一阶段咨询应该包括当地企业和有毒瘾经历的人。



留学生缺少 市中心受创

尽管墨尔本市政力求国际学生返回本市，但是州政府对此似乎并没有什么举动。

Katie Johnson

丹尼尔·安德鲁斯(Daniel Andrews)州长本月表示，2021年“不可能”让国际学生返回，虽然这是维多利亚州最大的服务出口。

安德鲁斯州长说：“如果成千上万的国际学生今年返回这里，将会带来难以置信的挑战。”

“我们是想尽快让他们回来，但是政府不会花费大量时间尝试去做那些我认为不可能的事情。”

在COVID疫情之前，墨尔本有来自170个国家的20万国际学生在此居住，为维州带来了137亿澳元的出口收入。

由于现在的国际学生人数减少了一半，市政估计墨尔本教育行业将损失超过15亿澳元的收入，并将减少6800个工作岗位。

在上届2020年未来墨尔本委员会上，菲利普·刘乐(Phillip Le Liu)议员说，欢迎国际学生回到墨尔本是市政议会的首要任务。

刘乐议员说：“墨尔本是世界第三最佳学生城市，我认为我们应该努力成为第一，因为在一个后COVID期的世界中，这将是一个竞争非常激烈的市场。”

市政议会还一致通过了一项动议，要求市长萨利·卡普(Sally Capp)致信给州政府和联邦政府，敦促他们采取措施，让国际学生在2021年返回墨尔本。

市民商家联手 重振市区活力

在COVID疫情之后，中央商务区现在处于恢复阶段，墨尔本市政的区域发展计划正把注意力转向给城市带来新的活力。

Katie Johnson

随着10万澳元的额外资金进入九个区域协会，市政希望让市民更多地参与当地商业活动。

市议员Jason Chang表示，这笔额外的资金将使区域团体能够吸引更多会员，举办活动并展示墨尔本商人所能提供的服务。

他说：“我相信市政的进一步支持将有助于鼓励区域团体内企业成员的增加。”

“这样能使社区有更多的参与度，举办更多的活动和庆典，以实现我们吸引更多人

进入市区并鼓励人们访问这些区域商业的关键目标。”

在去年12月份举行的未来墨尔本委员会(FMC)会议上，议员们对市政区域计划进行审查的一个关键是，发现区域团体与当地居民之间没有足够的融合。

在卡尔顿(Carlton)，居民和企业已经齐心协力，重振该区域。

卡尔顿居民协会主席安托瓦内特·萨加利亚(Antoinette Sagaria)也是当地商业集团卡尔顿公司(Carlton Inc)的执委会成员，他说，现在是时候弥合居民与企业之间的鸿沟，以提高社区的参与度。

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