

# CBD NEWS

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**A tomato-led recovery!**  
Photo by John Tadigiri

John Pontelandolfo's family business Tomato City has operated through thick and thin for 75 years at Queen Victoria Market and COVID-19 is again proving no match for quality! Read more in this month's *Trader Profile* on page 16.

## Lord Mayor calls for urgent help amid "extremely worrying" report into the city's ailing economy

WORDS BY *David Schout*  
ECONOMY

Lord Mayor Sally Capp will meet with federal and state treasurers to urge targeted city support beyond March after a council report outlined a devastating economic impact of COVID-19 on Melbourne almost 12 months on.

The report concluded that while the local economy had shown signs of improvement after stage four restrictions were eased in late 2020, the recovery levels were not sustainable.

The City of Melbourne has been one of the hardest hit areas in Australia as a result of the pandemic and Cr Capp had sought an "urgent" meeting with federal treasurer Josh Frydenberg and state treasurer Tim Pallas.

Two key business support packages were due to expire at the end of March; the federal government's JobKeeper payments, and the state government's commercial tenancy relief scheme.

The council will call for "targeted" support beyond March 31.

"While we've seen areas where there's been some uplift, the fact is that these challenging circumstances and uncertainty remain for so many of our businesses and we can expect that to be the case for some time," Cr Capp said at a February 16 Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting.

"The data is compelling, and it is helping us really drill down and understand the sectors and the places around the city that have been most impacted by this pandemic."

The data, compiled by the council itself and other agencies, revealed a number of statistics that were "extremely worrying" according to Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece.

The report showed that pedestrian numbers in the CBD, and in particular Bourke Street Mall, had only shown a strong bounce-back around Christmas time.

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## Owners' corporation changes shut down

*A bid to make it easier for owners' corporations (OCs) to take legal action against corrupt developers has been shut down in the Victorian upper house.*

WORDS BY *David Schout*  
STRATA

Amendments put forward by the Victorian Greens, which also sought to impose a three-year cap on all contracts entered into by a building developer, received no support from both major parties.

Introduced by MLC for Northern Metropolitan and the leader of the Victorian Greens Dr Samantha Ratnam, The Greens argued that the 1.5 million Victorians who live in or own property within an OC setting were not adequately supported by current legislation.

They sought to reduce the threshold to trigger legal proceedings against a developer within an OC from 75 to 50 per cent.

"I've spoken to many residents in the big apartment towers and they don't feel supported by the current OC laws. This bill was the perfect opportunity to fix that," Greens Member for Melbourne Ellen Sandell said.

"The Greens' amendments would have tightened the rules on what potentially corrupt developers could do while supporting residents to take legal action against them. We will continue to advocate for those residents until the government provides them with adequate protection and support."

The amendments looked to lower the barrier for OCs seeking legal action particularly around building defects and cladding rectification, which has become a significant issue in recent years.

They also sought to protect building occupants against long-term con-

tracts entered into by the developer at the completion of a building's construction, in which subsequent owners are then forced to foot the bill.

Reports suggested some of these were uncompetitive "multi-decade contracts".

Strata Title Lawyers CEO Tom Bacon said he was disappointed by the response of the major parties.

"I'd say that owners' corporations all throughout Victoria will be dismayed by how out of touch both the Labor and Liberal parties are with their constituents," Mr Bacon said.

"Both major parties defeated the Greens' sensible amendments to limit all management and facilities contracts to three years, and to permit owners' corporations to sue developers and builders for defects and flammable cladding by ordinary resolution. We see now where the favouritism lies. It's not with owners and investors and everyday folk. It's with the developers and construction companies, and with election donors."

Mr Bacon said the result did not bode well for OCs going forward.

"We can no longer expect any consumer protection from the government for the apartment sector. Frankly, apartments do not represent a good investment in Melbourne anymore."

The Labor government defended the bill — titled *Owners' Corporations and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2019* — after rejecting the amendments.

"This bill delivers a package of 36 substantive reforms that streamline and modernise the regulation of the Victorian owners' corporations while enhancing protections for lot

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# Parkhill

APARTMENTS

LAUNCH EVENT 6th to 21st MARCH  
parkhillmelb.com

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

**EDITOR**  
Sean Car

**PUBLISHER**  
Hyperlocal News Pty Ltd  
ABN: 57 623 558 725

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admin@hyperlocalnews.com.au



## Owners' corporation changes shut down

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owners," Minister for Local Government and Suburban Development Shaun Leane said in the Legislative Council on February 16.

"This is done by improving the quality of owners' corporation managers, expanding and improving developers' duties to the owners' corporations they create, improving governance and financial administration and internal relations of owners' corporations, and improving the regulations of owners' corporations in retirement villages."

Minister Leane argued that the potential impacts of limiting service contracts to a maximum of three years could be "severe".

"The consequence could be severe, particularly for utility providers, who require certainty beyond three years for the viability of their businesses. It could result in owners' corporations struggling to find businesses willing to provide the most basic services – that is, water and electricity – given that the contracts would be for a maximum of three years," Mr Leane said.

Barbara Francis of resident lobby group We Live Here criticised both the government and opposition in failing to properly address issues raised by The Greens.

"They're [The Greens] the only ones that have any real handle on what's going on," she said.

The Greens also sought to lower the barrier for owners to install solar panels on a building's roof from a "special resolution" (75 per cent OC vote) to an "ordinary resolution" (50 per cent), but this too received little support.

While all three amendments were all rejected by the government, Samantha Ratnam used the opportunity to press the government on the delayed review of the *Short-stay (Accommodation) Act 2018*, which was earmarked for 2020.

"The short-stay industry has largely been left to set its own rules, with the government only intervening to implement a complaints process and avoiding implementing any real regulation of the industry," Dr Ratnam said.

"Now we are facing the need to reinvent our



*We see now where the favouritism lies. It's not with owners and investors and everyday folk. It's with the developers and construction companies, and with election donors.*



cities in light of the havoc wreaked by COVID, this is a perfect time to be looking at how we make our cities more liveable."

Minister Leane said the review would "start this year."

The passing of the Amendment Bill was celebrated by the short-stay accommodation industry, with The Hotel Conversation reporting that accommodation industry agency ResortBrokers had led a campaign to amend the proposal which would have limited service contracts to three years.

"The company [ResortBrokers] engaged with the key ministers including the Victorian Treasurer, Minister for Tourism and the Minister for Consumer Affairs and successfully achieved an amendment to the Bill which effectively protected contracts that facilitated hotel and serviced apartment operations from the restrictions of Section 67B," the report stated.



David Schout

JOURNALIST

DAVID@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

## Moomba saved!

WORDS BY Micaela Togher  
EVENTS

Melbourne's 2021 Moomba festival will still go ahead after initially being cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions and a recent five-day lockdown.

Announcing the news 24 hours after the event was cancelled, Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the decision to cancel was a mistake and the community had made it clear they wanted Moomba to proceed.

"We have been working closely overnight with the events industry and the Victorian Government to ensure we can deliver a reimaged Moomba 2.0," she said.

Adjustments will be made to ensure the event will meet COVID-19 safety requirements.

The traditional festival format will be amended and won't feature a parade, water skiing or the Birdman Rally.

The revised program will include the Moomba Carnival at Alexandra Gardens, pop-up music performances, street art installations and concerts at Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

Roving performers, a busking competition in the city centre and Kids at the Bowl will also feature. The Cat Empire, Spiderbait, Jebediah and Bodyjar are set to headline the event.

Chair of the council's City Reactivation portfolio Cr Roshena Campbell emphasised the importance of the festival in supporting local industry and small businesses in the CBD.

"Traditionally, the event had contributed more than \$32 million to the city's economy each year. While the numbers have been lower this year, it is more important than ever to help support our tourism, creative and events industries," she said.

Moomba 2.0 will run from March 5 to 8

**For more information:**  
[moomba.melbourne.vic.gov.au](http://moomba.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

## LAUNCH EVENT 6th to 21st MARCH

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## Lord Mayor calls for urgent help amid “extremely worrying” report into the city’s ailing economy

*Continued from page 1.*

“In the period leading up to Christmas we had a few days that were even better than last year. But that was brief, and following Christmas, pedestrian numbers declined again,” the council’s director of economic development Andrew Wear said.

Council staff also assessed hundreds of shop-fronts within the CBD, and found that 28 per cent had either closed or were vacant.

The report found that small, independent retailers within the CBD were heavily reliant on foot traffic, and had been “less able to pivot to online” compared with larger retailers.

Mr Wear said February’s five-day lockdown revealed pedestrian numbers had returned to “the darkest days” of the 2020 stage four restrictions.

The report also revealed that while CBD workers had begun returning to offices, Melbourne lagged well behind other states.

In January, CBD office occupancy was at just 31 per cent which compared poorly with other capital cities around the country, with Sydney at 45 per cent and all other states above 60 per cent.

Cr Capp made no secret of the council’s wish before meeting with key figures in upper levels of government.

“Melbourne’s businesses need certainty and confidence. We’re going to keep saying it over and over again,” she said.

“We would like the state and federal government to be considering, particularly as we head into budget time, extra direct financial assistance for businesses here in the City of Melbourne that have borne the brunt of the economic fallout of this pandemic.”

Assistance needed to be “targeted” to reach “the hardest hit”.

Cr Capp said while the vaccine provided longer term hope for an end to the pandemic, businesses needed more urgent support.

“We are all excited at contemplating the



▲ Visitors and workers are slowly returning to the city.

rollout of the vaccine, but there’s still some time for that to happen,” she said.

“Melbourne is the engine room of the Victorian economy, it is a major driver of the nation’s GDP. I’m looking forward to working closely – we all are – with our state and federal counterparts to reboot and sustain our economic recovery.”

The report provided an “evidence-based platform” for discussion, according to the Lord Mayor, while Cr Reece said it revealed the “dire state of the Melbourne economy”.

“We need to see JobKeeper continue in a geographically targeted way,” he said.

Cr Davydd Griffiths said that beyond the numbers, each of the municipality’s 20,632 businesses currently receiving JobKeeper had their own story to tell.

“We can look at data about businesses, but of course each of those businesses represent real human beings; owners, workers and the communities that interact with those businesses daily.”

On February 21 the state government revealed its latest round of business support, which would assist local tourism, hospitality and events businesses.

“This funding package will help Melbourne businesses but there’s no doubt business owners are considering their future and whether they can remain open. Many have already made the decision to close,” Cr Capp said ●

## \$183m legal district tower to go before Minister for Planning

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*  
PLANNING

A proposed \$183 million, 23-storey building for Melbourne’s legal district was endorsed by the City of Melbourne on February 16.

If approved by Minister for Planning Richard Wynne, the development will demolish an existing office building on Lonsdale St and eight storeys of above ground car parking – the “Flagstaff Carpark” – on Little Lonsdale St.

The proposed building would have street frontage at 550 Lonsdale St and 535 Little Lonsdale St, with underground car parking and ground level retail topped with 22 storeys of office space.

In endorsing the application, the City of Melbourne has advised the Minister for Planning to require the ground floor of the building to be set back two metres along Healeys Lane – the main connection between Lonsdale and Little Lonsdale streets.

The applicant – Lonsdale Investment – had requested the proposed condition be dropped. Jamie Govenlock, a town planner at Urbis, spoke on behalf of the applicant at a Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meeting on February 16.

“We think that will be a significant impediment to attracting appropriate retail and food and beverage clients and tenancies along Healeys Lane,” he said.

Mr Govenlock said the current COVID environment made it difficult to secure tenancies and, as the retail spaces proposed on the ground floor of the development along Healeys Lane were restaurants, the loss of space would be a further barrier.

But the council’s chair of planning Cr Nicholas Reece said the importance of Healey Lane and the nature of development surrounding the site made the setback a safety issue.



“Healeys Lane is a narrow laneway. It’s situated between a recently completed very large Central Equity building and then you’ll have this hopefully terrific new Bates Smart building up on the other side of the lane so it is going to be a very heavily used laneway by pedestrians, it also is a laneway that is accessible to cars and because of the number of people in the precinct there will be quite a bit of traffic going up and down,” he said.

Cr Rohan Leppert said the building would be an important addition to the area but agreed the setback should be included as a requirement.

“While I understand the argument that’s been made, what we can’t do as a result of COVID and the economic conditions that COVID has induced is make the public realm less safe and this is a pretty fundamental safety issue,” Cr Leppert said.

“Healeys Lane is a really important through block link between Lonsdale and Little Lonsdale [streets], it’s the main way to get through the public realm between the two streets if you’re not going around the block and there is currently a meagre footpath there that we can’t lose.” ●

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Tres a Cinco's outdoor dining pop-up

## IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

# LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

**Tres a Cinco, a new Mexican diner and bar in Hosier Lane from the people behind MoVida, is one of many local business innovations prompted by COVID-19.**

During last year's lockdowns, the team at MoVida began offering 'Comida Corrida' meal packs created by the restaurant's star Mexican chef Sarai Castillo.

The venture helped keep staff employed, and it was so successful that a whole new bricks-and-mortar eatery was born.

MoVida is among more than 1100 businesses that received a City of Melbourne small business reactivation grant to support the COVID-safe reopening of our city.

If you own a business, visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/business](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/business) to subscribe to the Business in Melbourne newsletter and explore the support on offer, including grants and outdoor dining permits.

For one-on-one advice, you can also call our dedicated Business

Concierge Service on 9658 9658 (press 1 for business), or enquire online at the above website.

To find out more about how local eateries and retailers are responding to COVID-19, and how to support them, visit [whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au](https://whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

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

## THREE WAYS TO HELP SHAPE MELBOURNE'S FUTURE

**Join conversations to influence the City of Melbourne's long-term vision for the municipality through community engagement platform, Participate Melbourne.**

As 2021 takes shape, there are a number of projects on-the-go and we are seeking feedback from people of all ages and backgrounds during March:

### 1 Community vision

Help shape a bright future for Melbourne by taking part in a local community vision survey or workshop.

Your thoughts are important to us as we evolve our aspirations for the city and look to update Future Melbourne 2026, our 10-year plan for the city that was released in 2016.

### 2 Health and wellbeing

What can we do to help Melburnians lead happy and healthy lives? Share your feedback to help identify priorities for our Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and guide our work for the next four years. Some of the key areas are food security, climate change and mental health.

### 3 Towards a smoke-free Melbourne

Did you know that the City of Melbourne already has 12 smoke-free areas, and a vision to make Melbourne a smoke-free city by 2025? Share your feedback by registering for our community panel or via our quick online survey.

For more information, visit [participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au](https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au) and sign up to receive updates.



## IN-BRIEF

### NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The City of Melbourne is creating a new advisory committee that will advise Council on the growth and sustainability of social, cultural and economic activities that happen between 6pm and 6am. The group will include retail, hospitality and creative industry leaders.

### MARITIME HERITAGE

Melbourne has a rich seafaring history and the City of Melbourne is exploring ways to celebrate this, together with the Victorian Government. This includes exploring possible uses for the Mission to Seafarers building in Docklands. Have your say by 15 March at [participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au](https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

### RAINBOW CARERS

Do you provide unpaid care to an older person, or someone living with a physical or mental health condition or disability? The City of Melbourne offers supportive programs for carers, including a dedicated group for LGBTIQ+ carers, in partnership with Queerspace. Find out more at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/carers](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/carers)

### ELIZABETH STREET

Works are underway to create more space for people and a more appealing streetscape on Elizabeth Street. Due for completion in May, the transformation between Flinders Street and Flinders Lane will add 400 square metres of pedestrianised space. Learn more at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/cityprojects](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/cityprojects)

### GRAFFITI REMOVAL

Eyesore graffiti and tagging is being removed from high areas like building facades and bridges in a city cleaning blitz. This project will create jobs and a welcoming environment as people return to the city.

### COUNCIL MEETINGS

Watch meetings live from wherever you are thanks to our live-streaming capability. Tune in live or catch up later.

Find all the details about Council and committee meetings at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/aboutcouncil](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/aboutcouncil)

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# More city heritage under threat

WORDS BY *Jess Carrascalao Heard*  
HERITAGE

The heritage-graded Kilkenny Inn building at the corner of King and Lonsdale streets is the latest historic CBD building under threat of development.

Heritage lobby group Melbourne Heritage Action (MHA) has called on the local community to send objections to state and local governments after an amended proposal for a \$110 million 21-storey office tower on the site of the former pub was submitted by developer Charter Hall late last year.

MHA president Tristan Davies said the Kilkenny Inn, which was built in 1915, was graded as a “significant” building.

“It’s one of the few pubs standing intact in the CBD ... it does retain its interiors as well,” he said.

The plans show that the Kilkenny Inn would be largely demolished, with only the facade remaining around the bottom of the 21-storey tower.

The historic bluestone Gough Alley, which runs behind the Kilkenny Inn and serves as a back entrance to the site, is also set to go as part of the plans.

Under the proposal, the neighbouring former Paramount House at 256-260 King St, built in 1929 as Paramount Films’ Melbourne distribution centre, would also be demolished.

While the building current carries no heritage grading, it was recommended for both permanent and interim heritage protection in the City of Melbourne’s Hoddle Grid Heritage Review last year.

“The former Paramount House is a rare example of an interwar building associated with the film industry in the City of Melbourne, particularly in terms of it being purpose-built as a film distribution centre with exclusive long-term use (from 1930 to 1989) as the headquarters for a number of prominent international film distribution companies,” the council’s heritage review stated.

MHA described the plans for the Kilkenny Inn as “yet another example of facadism”.

Facadism is when the front shell of a building with a heritage overlay is retained while the remainder of the structure is demolished. It’s a strategy that has been widely adopted by developers of heritage sites across the central city.

New heritage policies developed by the City of Melbourne and approved by the Minister for Planning last year discourage facadism by enforcing greater internal setbacks and Mr Davies said the Kilkenny Inn plans were not consistent with heritage guidelines.

The City of Melbourne’s heritage portfolio chair Cr Rohan Leppert said that to have a true understanding about Melbourne’s history, one needed to see what buildings were like in their three-dimensional form.

“If you’ve only got a shell of a building with no life behind the windows and an obvious modern form immediately behind that wall, you’ve lost so much of what heritage is about,” he said.

Mr Davies agreed, and said that it was



▲ The Kilkenny Inn building as it stands.

important to keep these significant buildings as buildings, and retaining just the facade of a building was like having “a Hollywood set piece”.

He also said that heritage was not just about what a building was, but what it could be as a part of social heritage.

“[Facadism] really hollows out the city and the way that we use buildings. So many of these older buildings can have so many uses behind them, even if their interiors aren’t perfect,” Mr Davies said.

The news follows confirmation by the owner of the nearby heritage Metropolitan Hotel building at 263 William St that it was proceeding with approved plans for a \$70 million 20-storey office tower at the site.

The Metropolitan Hotel was also considered for protection as part of the council’s Hoddle Grid Heritage Review as a site of “social significance”.

In February, Minister for Planning Richard Wynne introduced the *Planning and Environment Amendment Bill 2021* to state parliament, which partly seeks to prohibit the development of land for up to 10 years where a heritage building has been unlawfully demolished.

The new provisions under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* will prevent developers from benefiting from the unlawful demolition or neglect of our precious heritage, enabling existing permits to be revoked and allow for new permits to be issued for specific purposes – such as building a park or reconstruction or repair of the heritage building.

The Bill comes in the wake of the illegal demolition by developers of the Corkman Irish Pub in Carlton and Minister Wynne said the “tough” new laws would strengthen Victoria’s building system and provide greater protection for heritage-listed places.

“These new laws remove the financial incentive to illegally demolish by stopping development on the land for up to 10 years,” he said.

“We’re sending a clear message to those developers who do the wrong thing – there are real consequences for willfully destroying our precious heritage.”

“Fines shouldn’t just be the cost of doing business. Preventing those who illegally demolish



▲ A render of the proposal for the Kilkenny Inn site.

our heritage from redeveloping means they can no longer reap windfall gains from selling or rebuilding on their land.”

The Bill will also improve the efficiency and operation of Victoria’s planning system, in relation to the publication of notices, the inspection of documents and for panel hearings.

Cr Leppert said he looked forward to parliament debating the detail.

“Previously there has not been enough of a deterrent in our law to demolish heritage buildings or degrade by neglect,” he said.

Mr Davies said in the past, heritage had only been about the bigger, grander buildings, and viewed social changes as being negative.

“I think people are starting to wake up to the fact that we’ve got so much of the city that is unrecognised,” he said.

Cr Leppert said that despite much of the city’s heritage being lost, Melbourne still retained a “fascinating mix of architecture and design change at its heart.”

“This is Melbourne’s story, and we need to be able to keep telling it,” he said ●



Jess Carrascalao Heard  
JOURNALIST  
JESS@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU



## Tracking high-risk COVID locations

HEALTH

During the recent hotel quarantine outbreaks, a new team of COVID rapid responders from Cohealth worked swiftly to identify hundreds of high-risk accommodation locations in the vicinity of exposure sites.

Cohealth’s high-risk accommodation response program works with the owners and proprietors of rooming houses, community housing, supported accommodation and hostels to protect vulnerable residents.

Many of them are located in and around the CBD, close to recent exposure sites and sites of quarantine breaches.

The team was established to provide health support, mobile COVID testing squads, COVID audits and deep cleaning to 845 high-risk, high-density accommodation properties.

The 845 properties are deemed high-risk based on two areas of assessment:

- The nature of the housing (high-density, shared facilities, single entry/exits etc.); and
- The age, income, social situations, language barriers and health issues of the people who live in the accommodation.

Cohealth chief executive Nicole Bartholomeusz said COVID would spread quickly if it was brought into the properties.

“We know how quickly infection can spread in high-density and shared accommodation, so a COVID outbreak in one of these 845 properties could be catastrophic,” she said.

In early February, when a worker at the Grand Hyatt hotel tested positive to COVID-19, the team sprang into action.

“Within hours of the news about the CBD hotel quarantine worker we had identified 140 high-risk properties within a 2.5km radius of the CBD hotel, and the kebab shop exposure site, and plans were in motion to support the residents,” Ms Bartholomeusz said.

“Our workers were on the phones to the owners and proprietors and attending the properties to answer questions, connect people to testing, provide care packs and new masks and work out who may have been in contact with the exposure site.”

“These are often vulnerable people who aren’t connected with daily news and government information or may not understand the implications of a new exposure site emerging.”

Ms Bartholomeusz said the quick actions were a result of months of planning.

“The program has been successful because we’ve spent months building relationships and earning the trust of the owners and managers of the 845 sites,” she said ●




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# “Lessons have been learned”: Fourth time lucky for bike share?

WORDS BY *David Schout*  
TRANSPORT

In the past three years, three share bike operators have packed up and left Melbourne. Will the newest company to take the plunge prove more successful?

Melbourne and share bikes haven't had the most compatible relationship in recent years.

In fact, most operators have upped and left.

Many will remember oBikes, whose fleet of yellow bikes were more likely to be found in trees and rivers than paths and roads during a calamitous period in 2018.

The Singaporean-based company quickly abandoned their Melbourne program amid the threat of huge fines from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

From there, the only casual cycling options Melburnians and tourists could utilise were the state government's "blue bikes".

But they too were on their way soon after, departing in November 2019.

While these sturdier "docked" blue bikes had not experienced the same dumping issues as oBikes, uptake was low.

This was blamed on a number of things, but a small network of bikes and docking stations — especially when compared with other successful programs around the world — was perhaps the most obvious.

The government tried to spin the failed program as a positive when roads minister Jaala Pulford argued it would "create more space on our footpaths for pedestrians and bike parking".

But that conflicted with the City of Melbourne, who at the same time held a press conference urging operators to give Melbourne a try.

Electric share bikes, in particular, were "part of the future" according to the council's then transport chair Nic Frances Gilley.

The council got its wish when Uber subsidiary Jump announced it would deploy 400 red bikes onto Melbourne's streets in March 2020 to fill the void.

Within weeks, however, COVID-19 lockdowns ensured share bikes quickly became redundant.

And soon after, Jump became the third company in short time to abandon its share bike plans in the city.

But, it's not all bad news.

The red bikes have returned to the streets of Melbourne after Jump was acquired by Lime.

For some time now, the San Francisco-based company has attempted to crack the Melbourne market with their primary product — electric scooters — but restrictive local laws have ensured that (as it stands) cannot happen.

By acquiring the Jump brand, however, they finally have a presence here in Melbourne with the re-badged bikes.

So, will they work?

Lime believes previous failures gives it strong intel on what *not* to do.

"I think we've come a long way from those times," public affairs manager for Lime Australia and New Zealand Lauren Mentjox recently told 3AW.



▲ Melbourne's latest share bike experiment - Jump operated by Lime.

"Lime has been operating bikes for about three years now, and we've certainly learned a lot about shared bikes, and we think they are the way of the future. We think that some of those bikes potentially didn't have the oversight that Lime has. We have strong teams on the ground ... and we're certainly making sure that we don't make any of the mistakes that were done before."

Eight hundred e-bikes are being rolled out and, according to Lord Mayor Sally Capp, there had been very few complaints to date.

"Lessons have been learned from previous share bike schemes," Cr Capp said.

"These e-bikes incorporate GPS tracking and geo-fencing capabilities, for example, which allow the bikes to be managed more easily and efficiently."

The bikes cost \$1 to unlock, and 45 cents per minute to ride.

The rate is already a 50 per cent increase on the cost compared with Jump (which was 30 cents per minute), despite being the identical bike.

The Lord Mayor did not respond to whether she believed the cost hike might impact uptake.

A day pass can be purchased for \$16.99.

Lime e-bikes: How do they work?

The bikes combine good old-fashioned pedal power and electric power, for help getting up those tricky inclines.

They are designed to travel up to 25 kilometres per hour.

Users can borrow them by using either the Uber or Lime app, where a map reveals the nearest bike to your location.

Each bike has a QR code to scan before use, which takes users through the booking and instruction process.

Helmets are provided.

After a ride is completed, users can park them on public bike racks or, if unavailable, on the kerbside provided it is more than 1.5 metres from any building.

Lime has entered a one-year trial period with the Melbourne, Yarra and Port Phillip councils, and the bikes can only be ridden and parked within these areas, which are defined within the app.

Users that stray outside the three local government areas will not be able to lock the bike after a ride, and will continue to be charged.

Further, there are designated no-park zones (usually busy pedestrian areas) where users will similarly be charged penalties for non-compliance.

As for ending up in waterways or toilet blocks, Lime is confident the weight of the bikes (over 30kgs) makes it difficult to move and vandalise them, and that users are traceable through their app bookings ●

*"Lessons have been learned from previous share bike schemes. These e-bikes incorporate GPS tracking and geo-fencing capabilities, for example, which allow the bikes to be managed more easily and efficiently."*



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## Councillors endorse new community engagement policy

WORDS BY *Jess Carrascalao Heard*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Locals in the City of Melbourne are expected to have a stronger voice in some council decisions, after councillors endorsed a new Community Engagement Policy in February.

The new policy, which was eventually adopted at a council meeting on February 23, was initially given unanimous support from councillors at the Future Melbourne Committee meeting on February 16.

Chair of the council's health, wellbeing and belonging portfolio Cr Olivia Ball, who moved the motion at the meeting, said everyone had a right to be involved in decisions that affected where and how they lived.

"We have developed principles of engagement that will deliver sustainable outcomes for our city through shared problem-solving, open dialogue," she said.

A Community Engagement Policy is a requirement under the new *Local Government Act 2020*, and applies to all councils in Victoria.

In a bid to improve transparency in decision-making, the Act requires councils to involve the community by adopting "deliberative engagement practices".

According to the Community Engagement Policy, council activities which will trigger community engagement include long term strategic council planning and budgeting, local law making, electoral reviews and some road changes.

Development of public health and wellbeing plans, amendments to the planning scheme and

land acquisition and sales are also included.

Dr Stan Capp, president of CBD resident group EastEnders, said the new policy would adequately satisfy the Act's requirements, but added that there were a number of missed opportunities.

In a written submission he suggested that along with the policy areas stipulated in the Act, that the council could use identical processes in "any area where councillors would benefit from community input."

Speaking at the FMC meeting on February 16, he said that an important omission from the draft policy was a section which specified how community engagement would be activated.

Methods of community engagement for councils are not defined by the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The new policy follows a month of extensive community consultation; another requirement of the new Act.

But Dr Capp said it was unclear to him what was actually "taken up from the plethora of ideas and initiatives that through my own experience I know were submitted".

"One of the reasons people have said that they don't like community participation, is because of the fact that there's not that acknowledgement," he said.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp (no relation) said it was important that council "walk the talk", so that it respected the inputs that were received from those it served.

"Feedback that we receive is feedback that is reflected in the outcomes, or is communicated in terms of why not," she said ●

## Melbourne City Loop turns 40

WORDS BY *Micaela Togher*  
TRANSPORT

The Melbourne City Loop celebrated its 40th anniversary earlier this year.

Officially opened on January 24, 1981, it began serving the paying public two days later on Australia Day.

The Loop consists of four rail tunnels under Melbourne's CBD serving to connect Flagstaff, Melbourne Central, Parliament, Southern Cross and Flinders Street railway stations.

The idea for an underground railway was first raised in 1929 by the Melbourne Town Planning Commission but the planning of such a concept was still decades away.

In 1971, the *Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Act* was passed and planning began for the construction of the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop, as it was then known.

Construction began in the 1970s as a response to Melbourne's growing population and increased public transport demands.

One of the most famous aspects of the Loop is the changing direction of the trains in the middle of the day. The reason for this can be found in its design history. In the 1970s, the majority of passengers travelled to and from Parliament and Flinders Street Stations. It was therefore decided that these stations be the Loop's first stops in the morning and last stops in the afternoon.

The Loop's 40th birthday is a timely

reminder of the role major infrastructure plays in Melbourne's economy. Today, the major railway projects West Gate and Metro Tunnel are both under construction at a combined estimated cost of \$17.7 billion. Both projects are due for completion in 2023 and 2025, respectively.

Construction on a third project – the Suburban Rail Loop – will begin in 2022, with the project designed to enable easier movement among Melbourne's city suburbs and take pressure off the major networks. It is estimated to cost \$50 billion by the time of completion.

The Victorian Government pledged \$2.2 billion towards the Suburban Rail Loop at the end of last year.

It is hoped these projects will stimulate the state's economy, leading to thousands of new jobs for Victorians and negating some of the financial ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Global infrastructure firm Webuild, which led the construction of the tunnel back in the 1970s, celebrated the Loop's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday in January by pointing to the project as "a prime example of the role visionary infrastructure projects have and continued to play."

"Over the past 50 years, major infrastructure projects have redefined land markets, housing markets and labour markets and fundamentally reshaped metropolitan Melbourne, playing a crucial role in the city's transformation into a leading knowledge intensive economy," Webuild executive director Marco Assorati said ●



▲ Construction of the City Loop during the 1970s.

Photo: WeBuild.

# Connect with your local community

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

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

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

[www.facebook.com/groups/melbournecbdcommunityhub/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/melbournecbdcommunityhub/)



# Hot spot at Queen Victoria Market

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge  
BUSINESS

The crates were empty, the fruit and veg covered in hessian and the foot traffic virtually non-existent in A and B sheds at the Queen Victoria Market (QVM) on Tuesday, February 16.

Six days earlier a customer connected to the Holiday Inn COVID cluster had walked through the sheds.

No-one knows which stalls the customer visited between 8.45am and 10.10 am but she tested positive on the Sunday.

All of the workers at the 37 stalls in the sheds, as well as nine other personnel, were ordered by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHSS) to get tested and self-isolate for 14 days.

Tuesday was the first day of trading after the department declared the hotspot and it had taken everyone, including traders, customers and management, some time to work through the issues.

“To me it’s complicated,” QVM CEO Stan Liacos said. “They’re not making the rule about the market, but about the State.”

According to stall holders, the market experienced its worst day of trading on the day following the government’s announcement.

One bakery had just six customers by 10.30 am. “This is the quietest I’ve ever seen it,” Mr Liacos told *CBD News*.

QVM’s CEO confirmed the market was trading at less than 20 per cent of its pre-COVID figures but said that custom had picked up later in the day.

“We’re 80 per cent down in terms of pedestrians,” he said. “You can think about everything colliding at the same time. There are no tourists, no city workers, a five kilometre restriction and a full lockdown ... then the dilemma of a public response to a COVID case.”

He said that the sheds had been deep cleansed and that DHHS had given the go-ahead for stalls to re-open with staff who had not been working on that Thursday.

But, despite the rapid action by the market to get back into action and a message sent out to patrons, many shoppers stayed away because they thought the entire market was closed for two weeks.

The fruit and veg section next to the dairy was open but traders were not experiencing an increase in sales as a result of less competition.

“The market is quiet,” Rob Lewis of Twinkle Berry’s Organics said. “It’s had bad publicity. It seems like the government doesn’t care too much.”

Just one of the 37 produce stalls in A and B sheds had re-opened. Baji and Alyssa offered to open up Nash & Salin Fresh Fruits and they were the sole traders in a vast empty shed.

“I normally work on Sundays but the café I



▲ CBD local Afnan shopping in A shed.



▲ Nash & Salin re-open with new staff.

work in was closed today so I came to help,” Alyssa said.

Afnan, a resident of Lonsdale St, was one of their customers. He got the email to say the market was open but was shocked to find just one stall in A shed serving customers.

“I understand the staff had to quarantine,” he said. “It’s understandable. It shouldn’t stop patrons from coming.”

There were some good deals available with time to make a selection with fishmongers reducing their range but upping the quality of their cuts and butchers cutting schnitzels on the spot.

QVM management also announced in February that Tuesday trading would be temporarily suspended for general merchandise traders due to the ongoing absence of tourism and the reduction of CBD office workers ●



▲ Sheds A and B closed at QVM after virus scare.



## QVM renewal update

WORDS BY Sean Car  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne’s Queen Victoria Market (QVM) Precinct Renewal Program has passed a total project spend of \$50 million since its launch in 2013 according to the most recent quarterly report presented to councillors on February 23.

The latest report into the program noted the total project spend as of December 31, 2020, which included \$11.31 million during the current financial year.

The report follows Heritage Victoria’s approval of permits for the new Northern and Trader Sheds on Queen St, which the council described as a “key project element” delivered between October and December.

While heritage restoration of the sheds continues, the report also included news of a key milestone at the Munro development with the council’s new community hub topping out at level 10 in December.

“Construction of the hub building, and basement market car park is progressing well in preparation of the handover of the 500-space market car park and fit out of this space to be operational in the second half of 2021,” the report stated.

The report went on to state that the handover of the carpark later this year would pave the way for the first phases of the new Market Square open space to get underway.

The report also mentioned that an expression of interest process seeking parties to develop the controversial Southern Development Site was scheduled to be released by “April/May”.

“Funds secured through the development of this land will be reinvested into the renewal program,” the report stated.

According to the council, the overall QVM renewal program budget has been revised from \$308 million to \$268 million following \$40 million worth of “targeted savings” identified as part of the council’s 2020/21 Annual Plan.

“Costs savings have been made across the overall program to ensure delivery of the renewal against the 2015 Master Plan. An updated business case reflecting the revised budget will be presented for Council’s consideration in 2021,” the report stated ●

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# Infrastructure strategy nears

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne will soon have its say on a major state government infrastructure strategy outlining a 30-year approach to everything from climate change, affordable housing and the municipality's urban renewal areas – Arden, Macaulay and Fishermans Bend.

Infrastructure Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy was released for public consultation at the end of 2020 and will be tabled in Parliament later this year.

The council was due to consider its submission to the strategy on February 16, but councillors unanimously voted to defer consideration of the submission due to the context of the ongoing pandemic and February's snap lockdown, and include distinctions between short- and long-term goals.

"I believe that in light of the current situation, the environment that particularly our small businesses are experiencing and the hardship being felt right across our economy and community, it is important that for every report, every investment, every program being considered by council that we put that overlaying context into our thinking and our planning," the Lord Mayor Sally Capp said.

"That's why I'm moving this amended motion this evening."

Key opportunities that were proposed to be prioritised by council officers in the existing submission included:

- Recognising the role of the central city in the Victorian and national economy, and its need for sustained investment to recover from the impacts of COVID-19.
- Encouraging the Victorian Government to enable local government to deliver small scale but cumulatively significant capital infrastructure to generate a short-term economic boost when funded and delivered as a larger package. This should include public realm improvements, recreation facilities and social infrastructure.
- The development of innovation districts including the Melbourne Innovation District (MID) in the City

North precinct, Arden urban renewal precinct and the former GMH site in Fishermans Bend Employment Precinct, which will grow the economies of the future.

- Immediate investment in foundational and catalytic infrastructure in the urban renewal areas of Arden, Macaulay and Fishermans Bend to unlock the development potential of these areas with the view to shape them as attractive places for community development and corresponding further investment attraction. The investment needs to address: flood mitigation, integrated water management, open space acquisition, and key transport connections like the tram extension to Fishermans Bend.
  - Encouraging a bolder approach to address the clear demand for affordable housing across metropolitan Melbourne, including mandating and incentivising affordable housing as part of the planning process and recognising it as essential infrastructure.
  - Embedding expert Aboriginal knowledge on sustainable land management practices into the contemporary management, planning and development of Melbourne's land and water.
- "The draft strategy is a significant step towards planning for Victoria's future in uncertain times. We acknowledge that the draft strategy aims to balance the complexity of longer-term infrastructure planning with the need for the Victorian Government to act now," the report said.

"We agree with the draft strategy's position, that there will be significant increases in population and the demand for infrastructure in the period to 2050 and support the proposed investment in transport, rapidly growing suburbs and social infrastructure to address predicted future demand." ●



*Meg Hill*  
JOURNALIST  
MEG@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

# On-street dining extended

WORDS BY *Jack Alfonso*  
BUSINESS

The city's hospitality venues can now operate outdoors until June 30 after City of Melbourne councillors voted unanimously in favour of extending its outdoor program this month.

The move comes after another lockdown triggered a weekend of huge losses for small hospitality businesses over the Valentine's Day weekend in February.

Cr Roshena Campbell, who moved the motion, said there was "no doubt" that the hospitality industry was "particularly affected by restrictions".

"So many of our hospitality businesses are hanging on by a thread," she said. "Just as we started to see signs of economic recovery with the return of city workers, we were plunged into another lockdown."

Administrative procedures such as receiving extensions to permits will also be left in the hands of the council in order to reduce the amount of bureaucracy small business owners need to deal with.

Additionally, assessments of parklets in loading zones, those who are yet to utilise their on-street dining area, and the safety or amenity of the parklets will be undertaken to ensure the program does not adversely affect the functionality of the city.

In moving the notion, Cr Campbell noted the "cost of the initiative", but said the council was in a "position to offer this support" due to "prudent financial management".

Infrastructure costs to implement the outdoor dining program until the end of March are anticipated to total around \$5.5 million, with the

extension to June adding an estimated \$2.2 million in costs.

The council also estimates that \$444,000 will be lost due to a lack of parking revenue, which does not account for additional revenue obtained from parking fines.

The program is being run by the City of Melbourne and funded the Melbourne City Recovery Fund (MCRF), a \$100 million initiative launched in partnership with the State Government, which Cr Philip Le Liu called on to cooperate with the council more in the event of future lockdowns.

"We can do all the initiatives and everything, but if the state government goes for a snap lockdown, there's not a lot we can do," he said.

"For us, it's about holding the state government to account, and for us to ensure that they understand the devastation that is faced by small businesses within the City of Melbourne."

The extension follows a survey recently conducted by the council regarding the level of satisfaction among hospitality business owners with the on-street dining program.

The survey pertained to 150 businesses with parklet infrastructure, and found the initiative has assisted 81 per cent of businesses to reopen and 76 per cent of businesses to maintain seating capacity through the density restrictions.

The council also moved to evaluate and discuss any future extensions and considerations to the outdoor dining program on March 30, factoring in overall economic benefits and potential changes ●

# Campaign launched to rethink separated bike lanes

WORDS BY *Sean Car*  
TRANSPORT

A group of Peel St residents and business owners have come together to oppose the way in which the City of Melbourne's new separated bike lanes are being implemented in the central city.

The "Save Peel Street" campaign was launched late last year by Peel St resident and business owner Sam White and his neighbour David Kerr, after they and other locals discovered council plans to replace car parking with two-metre-wide bike lanes.

While the council is understood to have issued a letter to locals in the area in September last year, many residents and business owners claimed they never received the notice of the council's plan to implement the bike lanes 28 days from the letter's issue.

Gathering the support of some 100 residents and business owners in Peel St, the group wrote to Lord Mayor Sally Capp on numerous occasions requesting a meeting to address issues around a loss of car parking, congestion, safety and the bike lane designs.

And in a letter addressed to the group on December 17 last year, the council's acting general manager of capital works and infrastructure Joanne Wandel said that following consultation with the group, the council had agreed to retain 36 off-peak car parks.

A council spokesperson told *CBD News* that while 43 existing on-street car parking spaces would be removed, there would only be a net loss of 20 car parking spaces in the vicinity of Peel St and an overall net increase of full-time resident priority spaces.

"Following consultation, many modifications have been made to the designs so that an additional 47 parking spaces could be retained or added in the vicinity of Peel St compared to the original designs," a council spokesperson said. "The car parking spaces outlined in the final designs allow for as many resident parking

spaces to be retained as possible, balancing the need to provide a variety of parking options such as loading zones and short-term parking spaces for local businesses, mobility impaired residents and for drop-offs." "The width of the bike lanes will reduce during off-peak periods to accommodate part-time parking spaces being retained on Peel St. The final designs include the minimum width required for the bike lanes."

While the changes along Peel St were due to be implemented late last year, the council said works between Haymarket Roundabout and Victoria St would now begin next month, followed by works opposite Victoria St.

But while the changes represent a small win for the local community from what was originally proposed by the council, residents and businesses say the new off-peak parking restrictions will still impact deliveries and residents with mobility issues.

With priority now given to cyclists during peak times before 10am and between 3pm and 6pm, the council's new widened bike lanes have been designed to encourage more cyclists to the city and allow for riders to overtake.

A retail business owner on Peel St told the council that the 3pm to 6pm no stopping restrictions represented a "huge blow" to what was a peak trading time for customers and deliveries.

While Peel St is identified in the Melbourne bicycle network as a "critical route" by the City of Melbourne and the Victorian Government, Mr White and Mr Kerr argue wider bike lanes at the expense of vehicle access is not an equitable solution.

"Nowhere can you say that this is an equitable outcome for a street that has had parking for 60-plus years and that actually has a working and existing bike lane already," Mr Kerr said.

"What they're trying to do in a way is create an entirely separate road network to our roads. It's like saying a motorcycle can go on the road but a motorcycle can't go on this designated road, yet cyclists pay nothing for registration."



▲ The current lane configuration along Peel St, which will see new separated bike lanes installed in March.

The City of Melbourne is installing protected bike lanes across the central city and surrounds as part of a program to deliver 40 kilometres of new bike lanes in partnership with the Victorian Government.

While the Save Peel Street campaign was launched off the back of immediate issues along Peel St, Sam White said the group would soon be turning its attention to safety and congestion issues caused by the new bike lanes across the city.

With his business providing services to buildings throughout the CBD, Mr White said there were numerous instances where the

implementation of the bike lanes had not been properly thought out.

One example is the intersection at William and Latrobe streets, where he argued new designated bike lanes had made it difficult for vehicles to move at all, with new wide bike lanes inhibiting vehicles travelling in all directions and making hook turns.

"Squeezing cars out is not the issue, it's about the functionality of commuters causing congestion and disorientation," he said.

The group will soon launch an online campaign calling on the council to review its bike lane program ●

# “Watered down” refugee motion highlights council division

WORDS BY *Katie Johnson*  
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The City of Melbourne’s Future Melbourne committee has voted for a “watered down” refugee advocacy motion after heated debate over how to best support the 13 refugees still detained at Carlton’s Park Hotel.

The original motion moved by Greens Cr Rohan Leppert contained a clause that requested Lord Mayor Sally Capp to call on the federal government to immediately release the men.

But the Lord Mayor and five other councillors voted to amend the motion, removing the clause which would require her to advocate the council’s position to the Minister for Immigration Alex Hawke and Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs Jason Wood.

The Lord Mayor said while she noted the “passion and compassion” expressed by the community towards the issue, the council needed to work with other levels of government.

“We should never discount the economic and cultural contribution migrants and refugees make to our city,” the Lord Mayor said.

“We should find ways to work with other levels of government to advocate for the human rights of and the improved conditions for people who are being accommodated in the Park Hotel which is in the municipality of the City of Melbourne.”

The amended motion advocated “for the provision of medical and mental health support services” and an “explanation for the continued detention of those people” instead of requesting the men be released.

It also removed the clause, “joins the United Nations Human Rights Council and Human Rights Committee in condemning indefinite and arbitrary detention of people seeking asylum as a gross violation of human rights”.

In its place, the amended motion “notes all people within the City of Melbourne should be protected under the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece said that although he felt very strongly about the issue, he was voting for the amendment as it was an “improvement”.

“Unfortunately, this is not the Commonwealth parliament we’re sitting in tonight, I wish it was, because we could make some changes which could be very positive for Australia in this area,” Cr Reece said.

“Tonight, we get to decide what terms we advocate to the policy decision makers in this area, the Commonwealth Government, and I think the amendments that the Lord Mayor has put forward is more likely to be listened to and more likely to have an effect where policy is decided.”

Greens Cr Olivia Ball was against amending the motion, questioning why the Lord Mayor had moved to “water down” the wording and remove the call to release the men into the community.

“The amendment removes the City of Melbourne’s original commitment of a refugee welcome zone and one has to wonder why,” Cr Ball said.

“It removes from this motion any straightforward condemnation of what is happening, are we not prepared to condemn gross violations of human rights here in our neighbourhood?”

Cr Ball also said the amendment was grossly insufficient as it had no action contained within it.

“It has verbs—it advocates and it seeks—but it does not ask or direct anyone to actually do anything,” Cr Ball said.

Cr Leppert also voted against amending the original motion as replacing the “deliberately worded” condemnation of the human rights abuses of the remaining men in the Park Hotel was not sending a strong enough message.

“We’re not speculating on whether there ‘might’ be human rights abuses here, we have incontrovertible evidence that the Commonwealth Government is committing human rights abuses right smack bang in our municipality,” Cr Leppert said.

“If you water down the City of Melbourne’s position so that it no longer says anything of significance and importance, and our community and our residents can’t see what our position



is, we’ve gone far too far and miss the point of representative democracy.”

Cr Leppert also said that although it puts the Lord Mayor “in a difficult position”, the council needed to lobby the people who have power to make change.

“These men are being tortured, detained with no charge in some cases for well over seven years who are now residents of the City of Melbourne and they need people to fight for them.”

“We don’t have the regulatory power to release them but what we do have is the megaphone that comes with capital city status and the ability to advocate loudly and strongly.”

After a heated debate, the motion to amend the original advocacy policy passed with six votes in favour and five against.

The amended motion was then carried with eight votes in favour and three, Team Capp Cr Kevin Louey and Liberal Party members Cr Phil Liu and Cr Roshena Campbell, abstaining. Cr Leppert said that he would support the amended motion “through gritted teeth” but that keeping the remaining men in the Park hotel was “torture happening right in the City of Melbourne”.

“This is a hotel in the heart of our city which has become a prison overnight,” he said.

“The only opportunity for fresh air is on the roof, but after a suicide attempt by one of the men, because as we know none of them have received proper medical attention, the men don’t particularly want to exercise on a narrow part of the roof which is heavily policed by guards and is the location of attempted suicides by their friends.”

Overall there were 163 public submissions in favour of the motion with none against.

Refugee advocate Ria Pillai said the City of Melbourne had an obligation to act in accordance with the principals set out in the Victorian charter of human rights and responsibilities and release the 13 men remaining in the Park Hotel.

“The City of Melbourne purports to be a refugee welcome zone, as renewed in 2014. This is a public commitment to welcoming refugees and ensuring their human rights are upheld,” Ms Pillai said.

“The council has an opportunity to uphold its declaration as a refugee welcome zone, by internally and publicly opposing the detention of refugees in the Park Hotel and expressing its full support of their release and subsequent protection.”

CBD resident and Greens campaigner Apsara Sabaratnam said when the refugees were released, there was no reasoning to who was released and who was left behind.

“No one knows what criteria was used by this government to make the decision to release some men but not others,” Ms Sabaratnam said.

“This is the cruelty of indefinite and arbitrary detention and why I’m calling on Lord Mayor Sally Capp and the City of Melbourne councillors to speak up on behalf of the men who are still locked in the Park Hotel.”

Ms Sabaratnam and other campaigners have continued their daily vigil at the Park Hotel and, more recently, have begun doing snap protests outside the Australian Open.

“At the end of the day, the amount of actions going on are creating a lot of tensions in the police,” Ms Sabaratnam said. “They’re sick of us.”

Epidemiologist Dr Aiden Varan also urged the City of Melbourne to call on Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Home Affairs Minister

“

*These men are being tortured, detained with no charge in some cases for well over seven years who are now residents of the City of Melbourne and they need people to fight for them.*

”

Peter Dutton to release the remaining Park Hotel asylum seekers as a COVID outbreak would be devastating.

“I’ve had the privilege of speaking with a number of these men who have fled their homes after unimaginable pain and suffering, they’ve spent about a decade in arbitrary detention,” Dr Varan said.

“The men are fearful because a security guard recently reported to have symptoms of COVID 19 and all men were placed in isolation.”

In response to the amended motion, activist Lieke Janssen said CoM should “have the guts to say what they should be saying”.

“If politicians didn’t have the luxury of people being ignorant about the conditions these men live in and their stories, they wouldn’t be able to take such a soft stance,” Ms Janssen said.

Recently released refugee Thanush Selvarasa said that it was crucial the remaining men were released to put an end to their suffering.

“I was detained for eight years so I know what they are experiencing in there, there is so much hurt and pain and it’s horrible to be detained indefinitely,” Mr Thanush said.

“Some people don’t realise until they lose something in their life what it feels like. I know the pain of being separated from family and from freedom.” ●



*Katie Johnson*  
JOURNALIST  
KATIE@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU

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San Telmo is serving up Argentinian feasts in Meyers Place

# OUTDOOR DINING EXTENDED

## Dine with friends in an iconic Melbourne laneway or pop-up parklet to support local businesses as they continue to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions.

The City of Melbourne has extended its outdoor dining program until mid-2021 to provide further support to hospitality businesses. The extension will allow outdoor dining spaces to remain until Wednesday 30 June.

Nearly 1500 permits for outdoor dining have been issued across the municipality, and more than 200 outdoor dining 'parklets' have been installed, to help venues reopen and continue operating.

The City of Melbourne will invest \$2.2 million to extend the program as part of the joint \$100 million Melbourne City Recovery Fund in partnership with the Victorian Government.

This brings the total investment in outdoor dining infrastructure, maintenance and repurposing of laneways to \$7.7 million.

### What businesses are saying

The City of Melbourne surveyed 150 of the more than 180 businesses with outdoor dining 'parklets' in January to gather feedback and inform decision making on the future of extended outdoor dining.

The survey indicated that outdoor dining 'parklets' had helped 81 per cent of businesses to reopen, 76 per cent to maintain seating capacity and 72 per cent were either satisfied or very satisfied with their 'parklets'.

A comprehensive evaluation of the program will be considered by councillors later this year, including an assessment of the economic benefits and recommendations for the program beyond June 2021.

## WHAT IS A PARKLET?

The outdoor dining program has seen cafes and restaurants expand onto footpaths, laneways and on-street parking spaces. When parking spaces are used in this way, the new dining areas created are known as parklets. Keep an eye out for them in your neighbourhood and stop by for a meal to support local business.

### A word from the Lord Mayor

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said that lockdowns have had a major impact on our business community - particularly the hospitality industry - so Council is doing everything it can to provide certainty for businesses.

'The outdoor dining program has helped bring back the buzz by attracting patrons from across Melbourne and the regions,' the Lord Mayor said.

'The extended outdoor dining program has helped to provide hospitality businesses with extra capacity to seat more customers and get more revenue.'

'Businesses can have confidence that outdoor dining will continue in the City of Melbourne until winter. We're looking into additional features to support outdoor dining during the cooler months such as weather protection.'

'We want to reduce the administrative burden on businesses so will be directly contacting each business and have a simplified process to extend permits for those who wish to continue their outdoor dining space.'

'All City of Melbourne councillors are committed to ensuring our organisation is focused on assisting local businesses that have been battling some of the toughest trading conditions in living memory.'

For more information, visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/outdoordining](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/outdoordining)



## SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

Local businesses, services and organisations are the lifeblood of Melbourne, and our support for them is multi-layered and ongoing.

Visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/business](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/business) to subscribe to the Business in Melbourne newsletter and explore the help on offer, including grants, rate relief, marketing support and free outdoor dining permits.

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.

ADVERTISEMENT  
Your City of Melbourne community update

# SEEKING CREATIVES FOR ARTPLAY NEW IDEAS LAB

**Do you have an idea for a brand new creative project that could be co-designed with children or families? Submit your proposal to the ArtPlay New Ideas Lab by Friday 26 March.**

If you need inspiration, look no further than the current New Ideas Lab project Imagination Gamespaces, which has seen local kids creating interactive 'escape rooms' with fantastical storylines and riddles.

## ABOUT ARTPLAY

ArtPlay brings together children, families and artists to explore and create innovative arts experiences at its premises at Birrarung Marr and online.

Led by Brendan Ternus, Alia Syed Rose and Shaun Wykes from Radical Attic, Imagination Gamespaces included immersive game design, creative writing, visual art and performance-based activities.

'One of the things I've learned from this project is how powerful kids and their ideas can be,' Brendan said.

'We gave kids the agency and space to create whole new worlds, and it was clear what is on their minds: the environment, wealth, equality, conflict, peace, and heroes trying to make an impact in their communities.'

'Reflecting these values and concerns is so important, particularly in this topsy-turvy world we are living in. Art can help communities reinvent themselves. It is also a real antidote to disconnection.'

Brendan moved to Melbourne three and a half years ago after working on education projects in China, France, Japan and the United States. Melbourne's thriving youth arts scene has enriched his creative career.

'ArtPlay is one of the most supportive environments I've encountered all over the world,' Brendan said.

'The New Ideas Lab supports your process from the inception of an idea all the way through to execution and, if you aren't an established artist, the team can connect you with a mentor to help grow your ideas.'

'All the New Ideas Lab projects are very different but everyone is on the same page about the value of collaboration with kids and bringing their voices to the fore.'

'ArtPlay also helps New Ideas Lab projects find new audiences after the program is over through a showcase that connects you with industry leaders. So it's the gift that keeps on giving.'

The final showings of Imagination Gamespaces will take place in the April school holidays.

## How to apply

The 2021 ArtPlay New Ideas Lab will support four proposals for brand new work to be co-created with children or families, with each project valued from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

People working in the creative sector and artists from all disciplines and cultural backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Applicants do not necessarily need experience in working with children, but a passion and enthusiasm for involving children in the creative process is essential.

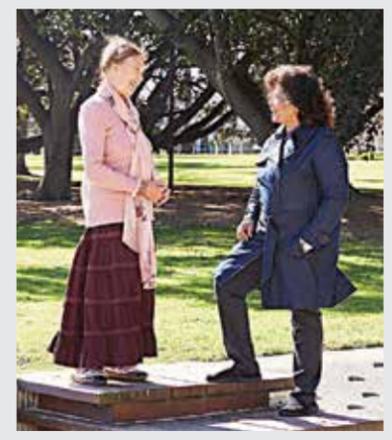
Expressions of interest are now open and close at 5pm on Friday 26 March.

For more information, visit [melbourne.vic.gov.au/artplay](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/artplay)

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

## 'YEARS OF OUR LIVES' PROJECT

Radical Attic also worked with older Melburnians during 2020's reimagined Seniors Festival to create a community timeline celebrating their unique life experiences and diversity. Explore the participants' reflections, treasured memories and adventures at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/olderpeople](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/olderpeople)



Local kids designed their own 'escape rooms' through Imagination Gamespaces

## 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](https://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](https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au)

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CBD LOCAL

# It's all about the vibe

*Independent operators are the lifeblood of the CBD as they wait and assess which way the economy is going.*

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge

Elbert Estampador has set up a unique little business in La Trobe St designed to fit into a niche.

He said he was staying but he'd gone onto a monthly renewal of his lease rather than commit for four years.

Basement Café Bar caters for office workers after dark, lawyers from the big firms nearby and locals from the building above.

No-one has a crystal ball but this small café is on the edge. Elbert's staff do not qualify for JobKeeper so the business depends on him.

"There are plenty of opportunities," he said, thinking about his future business investments, but he didn't want to benefit from others' misfortunes.

The café is beautifully designed in terms of its interface with the street, the letters of his sign in Helvetica with a faux rust coating.

Just inside in a small display area is a perfectly placed round table, a found object, and behind a stand saying "NEWS" that is empty.

"We're not sure how to go forward," Elbert said. "I'm not sure where the industry is going."

The Basement used to have live music four times a week until 2am, beer on tap, a lunch menu and an unbeatable location close to the legal district with its constant stream of clients.

The Basement still has an ace up its sleeve, though, and that's its location in an historic office building that was converted into residential.

Elbert occupies the penthouse above the cafe.



He has his face on the world downstairs and a hideaway overlooking the city upstairs. The vibe is pretty impressive on his wrap-around balcony.

Elbert has done well since immigrating from Manila 30 years ago. He has bought investment apartments in the CBD and worked as a designer for both Myer and Coles.

He still does freelance design work but, like many, is worried about the future of fashion retail in the large department stores of the CBD.

"The retail world is changing," he said. "I think Myer's and David Jones are in trouble." He's heard that Myer is downsizing its head



office and moving from Docklands into the CBD.

The last time he did a product launch was for Sensory in the Sydney Myer store.

He said the slowing down of the economy and its shifts had brought some rewards though.

"I'm learning a lot about people in the café. It's one thing I like here. I hear good, bad and tragic stories. It's something you don't find much of in the corporate world," he said.

"The corporate world changes you as a person. There's so much red tape. I've seen friends become unfriends. It's so wrong. In the café complete strangers walk out as friends." ●

STATE MP

# Changing our thinking inside the grid

*This COVID-19 pandemic has hit us all hard, but for those who spend their lives in our CBD and inner city, it's really changed things dramatically.*

Before the pandemic, inner-city Melbourne was the bustling, busy, vibrant heart of our state. But now, we are having to grapple with streets that are emptier and quieter than we're used to, and so many businesses, cafes, bars and arts venues that have fallen silent.

With the fall in tourism and international students, and the exodus of workers from office blocks, the city is a very different place than we remember.

Along with the challenges, the pandemic and lockdown have also forced us to really take notice of what we value about our local area: the little pockets of green space, the hidden delights down a laneway, our neighbours and community.

Now, as governments and councils start to grapple with how we rebuild our vibrant inner-city, it's the perfect time to think about what we actually want our CBD to be and how we make it a great place for people to live, work and play.

This is exactly what I've been doing in Parliament these past few months.

Do we have to go back to a city where so many people are forced to sleep on the streets, or do we want a city where everyone has a safe home and safe streets?

While apartment living has so many benefits, do we need to rethink how much power we

give developers to design our cities, often at the expense of the residents who actually live there? Maybe it's time to change our owners' corporation (OC) laws, remove developer donations from our politics and think about creating quality homes for people in the inner city, not just unregulated quasi-hotels or tiny shoe boxes in the sky.

Do we need to give over so much of our streets to cars, or can we do transport and outdoor living and dining better?

And maybe it's time we re-thought about how we look at work – so that casual workers and people in insecure work are better protected through the bumps and shocks our world faces.

These are the questions I've been taking to the government recently. In Parliament my colleagues and I moved for changes to the outdated OC laws to make things fairer for residents and limit developers locking in residents to long, unfair contracts, and to make it easier for residents to do things like put solar on their roofs. These are laws which haven't changed in the past 15 years!

We've also pushed again for donations reforms and for the government to break their ties with Crown Casino after the damning findings of money laundering and other illegal behaviour coming out of the NSW inquiry. We've increased our campaign for more money for

▼ Ellen Sandell MP enjoying one of Melbourne's vibrant CBD laneways (pre COVID-19).



public housing and homelessness services, and called for more support for casual workers and small businesses affected by the most recent snap lockdown.

While this pandemic isn't quite over, I sincerely hope that 2021 brings us a lot more joy (and less pain) than 2020. Our city still has some challenges ahead, but I'm confident that our CBD will bounce back. But as it does, we should also use this opportunity to fix some of the inequalities and problems we have faced for a long time. We can build back better, not just go back to the exact same way things were before.

I'd love to hear about your experiences of

lockdown in the CBD, and what you want to see for the city going forward. If you have questions or ideas, don't hesitate to get in touch at 146 Peel Street, North Melbourne by emailing [office@ellensandell.com](mailto:office@ellensandell.com) or calling us on 9328 4637 ●



Ellen Sandell  
STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE  
[OFFICE@ELLENSANDELL.COM](mailto:OFFICE@ELLENSANDELL.COM)

# How do we solve a problem like rough sleeping?



*Welcome to the seventh 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, rich or poor.*



*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 Jenny Begent, Head of Social Mission for The Salvation Army, to share her thoughts on 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...*

I am fortunate enough to live in what is considered by the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), as the most liveable city in the world. Due, in no small part I suspect, to its great coffee and café culture, but also to its healthcare, education, stability, culture, environment and infrastructure. On the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), it scored an incredible 97.5 out of 100. As a resident myself, I can attest to it being a fine place to live.

Yet, from my vantage point at The Salvation Army in the centre of the city, I am all too aware that Melbourne isn't a great place for all its residents. One of our significant challenges is the increase in the number of people sleeping rough. According to the City of Melbourne, rough sleeping has increased by 74 per cent compared to two years ago. This represents 247 individuals, most aged between 26 and 60. Most are there due to housing affordability, mental health or an addiction.

Melbourne is not unique in Victoria for its rough sleepers; rough sleepers are present in all our suburbs and in our major towns. It is unique, however, in the level of infrastructure that exists as a draw for people seeking housing and support. So, like Dick Whittington, searching for streets paved with gold, the homeless, the ill, the abused come looking for support, propelled by a spectrum of problems which includes having nowhere else to go.

This increased presence has meant increased government and media attention, which has, in some instances quite frankly, not been at all helpful when agencies such as ours have been trying to support and assist this most vulnerable group. Along with increased attention, has been a call for solutions, some excellent, others not helpful. The call for the criminalisation of rough sleepers is extremely counter-productive, leading to vulnerable people being

driven underground rather than remaining visible where support can be offered. A great majority of rough sleepers are victims of crime themselves and the calls to criminalise, further stigmatise homeless street people, and penalise them for simply being poor.

The plethora of support agencies, and council and government responses have both helped and hindered this cohort. Differing agendas, targets and attitudes have meant that many rough sleepers have failed to obtain the housing and medical support they need to help them make a sustainable return to mainstream society. Until recently there has been a lack of political appetite and bureaucratic capacity for a co-ordinated approach to tackling rough sleeping. However, the creation of the Rough Sleeping Taskforce has finally been translated into a practical approach that will work towards a state-wide solution, rather than a Melbourne city-specific approach.

Rough sleepers are one of the most disadvantaged groups in society. They deserve better than to be treated as a nuisance – they may have suffered a relationship breakdown, a bereavement or domestic abuse. Instead, people need long-term, dedicated support to move away from the streets for good. Those who sleep on the streets are extremely vulnerable and often do not know where to turn for help. These individuals need additional support to leave homelessness behind, and any move to criminalise sleeping rough could simply create additional problems to be overcome. If we are to tackle the current housing and health inequalities then we need to assess and meet their needs in new and imaginative ways. It requires a broad overarching response that considers their health needs as well as housing needs. The response needs to be undertaken with main stream providers ensuring effective partnerships across a many

and varied service response.

It also requires a response from individuals, a reminder that each one of us is just one step away from homelessness. In the literal sense, as we walk around our own towns and cities and pass rough sleepers, and in the theoretical sense, we could suffer a job loss, an illness, a financial setback or a combination of the three. We could end up sleeping rough; anyone who is on the street is certainly a lot worse off than me. I look them in the eye, I say hello. When I acknowledge them, they are no longer invisible.

*I hope you found the above perspective by Jenny 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. As I said in my first article, 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](mailto:info@housingallaustralians.com.au)*



**Rob Pradolín**

FORMER GENERAL MANAGER AT FRASERS PROPERTY AUSTRALIA AND FOUNDER OF HOUSING ALL AUSTRALIANS (HAA)

[INFO@HOUSINGALLAUSTRALIANS.COM.AU](mailto:INFO@HOUSINGALLAUSTRALIANS.COM.AU)

## COUNCILLOR PROFILE

# New councillor is a “unionist at heart”

WORDS BY *Sean Car*

Having snuck into the final councillor position at last year's local government elections, CFMEU member and new councillor Elizabeth Doidge said she was looking forward to helping shape and reactivate the city that she loves.

A proud “unionist at heart”, the 31-year-old was elected to the City of Melbourne council on Lord Mayor candidate Jennifer Yang's union-backed ticket, with the CFMEU alone providing more than \$195,000 for the campaign.

Working in policy and stakeholder engagement with the CFMEU, Ms Doidge told *CBD News* that the union's desire was just to have a place on council so it “could influence policy” and “play a part in the city that we built”.

And in what will come as music to the ears of many local residents, she said part of her ambition as a councillor and chair of the council's sustainable building portfolio was to help improve dialogue between the council, the building industry and residents.

It was a relationship tested in the CBD during the height of the pandemic when out of hours construction permits were granted by the council last year and Ms Doidge said there was a lot her union could do to help residents.

“There's never been a dialogue between the building industry and local residents, I suppose we're at loggerheads and that's something the CFMEU can do,” she said.

“It's not just because we have a lot of resident members but there can be a lot of issues resolved through collaboration – you just need those channels and I would love to be a part of that.”

In addition to her roles with the CFMEU and now as a councillor, Ms Doidge is, remarkably, also currently completing a master's degree in communications at RMIT University, where



she has been previously studying politics, international relations and media during the past 14 years.

She said the city was a “huge part” of both her own and her family's lives. Her grandfather once served as the manager of Flinders Street Station, while her grandmother was a regular shopper at Queen Victoria Market and visitor to St Patrick's Cathedral.

Having lived and worked in Melbourne her entire life, she said it was that affinity with her city that led her to the union movement, and she was looking forward to using her role as a councillor to change perceptions about the CFMEU.

She said all CFMEU members, including its controversial secretary John Setka, were far more progressive than many gave them credit

for, and had many overlapping ambitions with the council such as greening the city, sustainable development and community outreach.

“When John Setka and I were sitting down and talking about the relationships we have with council and things like that he said, ‘we need more trees, we need more green in the city ... it's getting ugly,’” she said.

“There's a lot of perceptions that the unions and the employers in our industry are always fighting with each other which is not true at all. We have fantastic relationships with builders and bosses of constructions companies, and we all work together to make sure the construction industry is healthy and safe.”

“There are jobs for our members so it's not in our interest to make building difficult it's quite the opposite – we want it to continue as much as

possible and we want jobs for our members. But we want to make sure they're good jobs, they're safe jobs and we want to see the products we're building are quality.”

With the impacts of COVID-19 sure to play out across the city for many years to come, the current council term marks as one of the most critical periods in City of Melbourne's history as it recovers from the pandemic.

In addition to the Environment and Creative Melbourne portfolios, Ms Doidge has taken on the role as deputy lead of the all-important City Activation portfolio, which is being led by fellow first-time Cr Roshena Campbell.

While she is still wrapping her head around local government processes, she said her councillor colleagues and others at the City of Melbourne had provided great support in helping her settle into the role.

It's been wonderful,” she said. “Especially now that I've been there for a while and I'm really starting to understand the role that councils play in actually shaping the city and having a really positive impact on the future of our city.”

“I pay very close attention to everything everyone says! I'm never going to walk into that room and think I'm the smartest person there or think I'm the best politician or the best councillor but that's why I love it. There's a great group of people who have very diverse political views and political backgrounds and I think we can all come together and make a big difference.”



**Sean Car**

EDITOR

[SEAN@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU](mailto:SEAN@HYPERLOCALNEWS.COM.AU)

## ABORIGINAL MELBOURNE



## Cultural competency on the rise

*Where the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift online upended many organisations last year, Koorie Heritage Trust (KHT) manager of education and visitor experience Rob Hyatt said the trust's Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency workshops had soared in popularity.*

WORDS BY *Ellen Blake*

"There's been a massive return from moving online. We now do about 25 to 30 sessions a month," Mr Hyatt told *CBD News*.

Through the workshops, the KHT works with various companies, including state governments and corporate and community organisations, to provide education on working with Aboriginal communities.

"The main thing we hear from organisations is a desire to learn more and provide workplace support," Mr Hyatt said.

"Many of the organisations we work with have implemented reconciliation strategies but need more education on certain issues."

The Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency workshop focuses on four key education blocks: concentration of Aboriginality and identity, history, understanding Aboriginal communities today, and hints and tips for effectively engaging with Aboriginal people.

"The workshop supports people to work with Aboriginal people but also stresses the social benefit of broader education about Aboriginality," Mr Hyatt said.

The workshop includes discussions on both traditional and contemporary elements of Aboriginality, an understanding of the history of what has happened to Aboriginal people and its impacts on areas such as education, justice and employment.

Mr Hyatt said the workshop also impressed the resilience of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal people.

"One of the main points of the workshop is to underscore the continued survival of Aboriginal culture and its strengths," Mr Hyatt said.

Mr Hyatt said the workshops were based on experiential and participatory learning and encouraged discussion.

He added that workshop participants were increasingly interested in discussing "Change the Date" and "Black Lives Matter" after highly publicised social movements over the past few years.

"This is just not a lecture, we encourage participants to self-explore their own experiences, values, beliefs and behaviour," he said.

The KHT is holding the Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency workshops for organisations, and individuals and small groups throughout the year online •

**For more on the workshops:**  
[korieheritagetrust.com.au/visit-us/education/#cultural-competency](http://korieheritagetrust.com.au/visit-us/education/#cultural-competency)

## Tomato City – delivering fresh produce for 75 years

*Queen Victoria Market (QVM) stall Tomato City has been in owner John Pontelandolfo's family for almost 75 years.*

Mr Pontelandolfo's father started the fruit and vegetable stall at the market in 1946 at the age of 19 after emigrating from Molise in Italy.

After leaving his job in the insurance industry, Mr Pontelandolfo tried his hand at running the business.

"My father was going overseas and I was leaving the company and where I was working so I ran the business for three months," Mr Pontelandolfo said.

"I stayed on because it was a very good environment to work. And it still is."

Mr Pontelandolfo credits the "family environment" of QVM for keeping him in the job for more than 30 years.

"Our customers are beautiful and they're loyal as well so it's a very good atmosphere to work in," Mr Pontelandolfo said.



"Even the neighbouring traders are all very friendly and try to be like family rather than overly competitive."

Business at Tomato City has thrived as the Queen Victoria Market returns to full swing following the COVID lockdown, which crippled the city last year.

"My old customers have all returned. When there was that little lockdown they were not happy about it and then it's opened up again and they've all come back," Mr Pontelandolfo said.

"We were very, very lucky during the lockdown. We had two weeks, one week we lost money and one week we broke even. And then it went back to some sort of normality."

At Tomato City, Mr Pontelandolfo said customers were guaranteed to enjoy freshly-grown

Victorian produce.

"Our main line of tomatoes is grown in Victoria. As well as things like peas, beans, lettuces, cabbages and our grapes. Our produce is picked, packed and brought to market rather than satt in the fridge waiting for shipment down to Victoria," Mr Pontelandolfo said.

"What I enjoy about the job is that we get to go and source the best fruit and vegetables that we can and then we bring them back to the market."

Tomato City is located in H Shed •

**For more information visit:**  
[facebook.com/tomatocityqvm/](https://facebook.com/tomatocityqvm/)

## RESIDENTS 3000



## Playground for doggies

*Off-leash areas, badly-needed in parks within the CBD, could have a dual role.*

Last year, *CBD News* wrote about "Flagstaff Dog Pawrents" who are petitioning for more fenced off-leash areas in parks close to the Hoddle Grid.

There are a lot of counter arguments to such a proposal. People, who usually are not dog owners, saying that dogs are dangerous and there could be incidents in the fenced-off area. Another concern is that if an area is fenced, other people will be denied access to scarce park resources.

However, experience at the Flagstaff Gardens where more than 100 dog owners walk and play with their dogs at various times of the day, every day, is quite different.

These doggie "Pawrents" have become a growing community during the past 12 months. They understand the advantages of having a local and easily accessible fenced space in parks and gardens where dogs can run off-leash enjoying a small time each day to be free. Benefits include:

- safety for all dogs from dense city traffic in built-up areas of the city;
- peace of mind to other park users who may not like dogs;
- minimising nuisance caused by dogs who are poorly trained, under exercised and who suffer from being unable to socialise with their peers; and

- community cohesiveness that arises when dog owners and park lovers meet together on a regular basis to interact with the dogs as they play and have fun.

There are arguments that fencing will be costly and could be ugly, spoiling amenity in our parks. But there are areas close to the Hoddle Grid that are naturally suited as dog special areas. For example, the freshly renewed Alexandra Gardens south of the river and the upper area park in Birrarung Marr, that is often used for events such as the Circus - in times past. Most of that large area is naturally vegetated around the perimeter. The fencing in both places would be minimal or maybe not needed at all?

More than that. Dogs are people too, you know. Badly behaved dogs most often arise through lack of early life training and general neglect. The City of Melbourne should talk with the people at the Lost Dogs Home, who conduct training sessions for distressed, badly cared for dogs as well as for owners who want their dogs to learn special skills, such as being able to take part in agility training courses. The area set aside for such training sessions is not large.

Any relatively small area that allows dogs to play ball with their owners and to run around with some other dogs would suffice. Apartment

dogs need to commune with their neighbouring canines, just the same as people need human interaction.

Think about what it would be like, if an area close by was fitted out with agility equipment just like a playground for small children. The dogs would love it. Specialist dog trainers would be able to hold courses there. Another way to encourage enterprise within the city.

After all, dogs are a valuable asset. Guide dogs that change the lives of people with compromised vision, sniffer dogs to find illicit drugs, dogs that provide company for elderly people and dogs that partake in high fashion with their colourful coats brought out on those cold winter days. These dogs are well-trained and benefit from their careful education early in life apart from being thoroughly spoilt by their caring owners.

Playground and training for dogs in close-by designated off-leash areas, would enrich city life for both people and our canine companions •



*Sue Saunders*  
 VICE PRESIDENT OF RESIDENTS  
 3000 MELBOURNE



METRO TUNNEL

# Metro Tunnel project puts art in the picture

*There's still plenty of time to see the work of celebrated photographers at the Metro Tunnel project's construction sites.*

PHOTO 2021 International Festival of Photography and the Metro Tunnel Creative Program have joined forces to present one of the largest outdoor public photographic exhibitions seen in Australia.

Running until Sunday, March 7, more than 500 metres of photographic art will be displayed on construction hoardings across Melbourne, as part of the wider PHOTO 2021 program.

Works are on display at the sites of the Metro Tunnel Project's five stations, as well as other



locations in the city.

This is the first time the Metro Tunnel Creative Program has invited one festival to curate works across each of its construction sites.

The exhibition features Maree Clarke, who has been commissioned to provide the line-wide artwork for the Metro Tunnel, and Phoebe Powell, whose *Thank You* photo essay was installed at Parkville last year to honour frontline workers in the fight against COVID-19.

Other featured artists include Kate Disher-Quill, Amanda Williams, James Tylor, Lillian O'Neil, Jesse Boyd-Reid and Alan Stewart from Australia, and internationally-renowned artists such as Sam Contis (USA), Kenta Kobayashi (Japan), Felicity Hammond (UK), Nico Krijno (South Africa) and Ann Shelton (New Zealand).

All works are accessible at all hours of the day.



## A day to celebrate women in infrastructure

Rail Projects Victoria (RPV) – which is delivering the Metro Tunnel project for the Victorian Government – is celebrating the diversity of its employees on March 8, International Women's Day.

RPV is profiling some of the women whose skills and experience are a valuable asset to the project.

Among these is Dania Uctuk, who was born in Iraq, lived in Jordan, and spent part of her early career working with a Turkish construction company to build a dam between Jordan and Syria.

"I've worked across civil, energy, marine, infrastructure and mining industries and it's made me appreciate the value of persistence," she said.

"To achieve a great result on such large projects is never about luck, it's about hard work and believing in yourself." ●

**To discover more about Dania and other women of RPV, follow: Rail Projects Victoria page on LinkedIn or like the Metro Tunnel Project on Facebook.**

CRITIC



# Portraits of a fictional artist

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge

Photographs no longer reflect the world; rather the world reflects them. They deliver a version of reality that at a surface level is consumed as "truth".

"As such, photographs demand an act of faith," Kiron Robinson said, curator of a group exhibition at Sara Scout Presents in Collins St.

Kiron was present at the gallery's first artist talk since restrictions have been lifted.

It was a joyous affair with about 20 thinkers crowded into the salon and passages of the Collins St rooms to talk about photography.

There were discussions about loss and what photography can't do, such as find the image of the horizon or capture the "real".

"Everyone has a phone camera, so much now that people feel like they have agency and a creative centre," one commentator said.

A photographer teacher spoke about how the current generation used film, left it out to gather dust, scanned it then hashtagged it "film" to simulate authenticity.

Another had a label for the practice. He called it "hauntology", a term indicating a remix of something from the past.

"People are looking at materiality and trying to experiment with it. They're not representing the world but exploring what you can do with it," Kiron said.

"The image is always failing. It's not going to present itself as real, but functions as a stand-in."

"We are looking at photos all the time. We're

reflecting the images. When we're making work, we're making images of images. The idea of surface, reflection and desire dissolves if we try and hold it. It only delivers a surface."

Gallery director Vikki McInnis said there was a terrible rhetoric in popular photography around making memories as if you're not doing anything.

"It's the bad social media I follow," she said. "My generation is raising their families and making memories!"

The Saturday afternoon artist talk at *Not for the Sake of Something More* will be memorable for those who have craved a bit of art analysis in the flesh during the long period of dry we've all experienced.

One commentator was CBD resident and architect Jan Van Schaik who had organised a talk at Tolarno Gallery the night before, also part of the PHOTO 2021 festival.

"People have disappeared into a period of deep thinking and have ramped up their practices," he said about the lockdown. "The difficulty has been in exhibiting work."

The artist at the Tolarno talk was from Sydney and thought she wouldn't be able to attend because of the border closure.

Impediments, however, are bread and butter for feeding the ironic gestures artists engage in.

Take the six collages by Emmanuel Rodrigues-Chares in the exhibition. The only photographs are cut ups used to create portraits of a fictional artist.

*Not for the Sake of Something More*, Sarah Scout Presents, until March 27 ●

HERITAGE

# Losing more of our heritage

*In a 1970s era gold-tiled lobby nestled into a 1920s facade on Russell St, you walk past a mysterious red door hiding a theatre behind, and an old-school letterboard asks you to choose between a clunky lift and faded timber stairs.*

You continue up through the building, past a mix of faded letters on the corridor wall in Cantonese and Greek, both advertising the same law firm, that shares this space with a Japanese language studio, traditional medicine clinic, esoteric bookshop and a private library, and at the end of your journey is a surprisingly hip bar and outdoor cinema perched on the rooftop. This building says so much about Melbourne's multicultural history, creative spirit and modern character.

But sadly, the Theosophical Society Building, built as Olympic Motors in 1923, is soon to be flattened for yet another luxury hotel that makes buzzwords of the very uniqueness of Melbourne that it's destroying.

A few weeks ago, the Theosophical Society finally moved out of its home since 1975, bound for Flinders Lane, leaving the building free to be demolished later this year for a 190-room hotel complex called "Russell Place", despite it being recognised as having individual built heritage and social significance in a 2020 heritage amendment that came out just too late to counter demolition approval.

The approval plans have now also been amended without advertising to destroy the Edwardian Michael's Adventures store building next door, which has been trading since 1909, perhaps one of Melbourne's oldest small businesses.

Around the corner on Bourke St, the Palace Theatre is a literal shell, gutted for the development of a hotel tower after a long battle. The same fate befell the Duke of Kent pub on



La Trobe St recently, home to the influential New Theatre in the 1930s and many social events since, but now an empty lot awaiting the building of an apartment hotel with private driveway.

Down in Hosier Lane, an op shop, social enterprise cafe and youth outreach centre are also soon to be kicked out so the building they are in can be gutted and converted into a serviced hotel, using the street art and counter-culture history of the lane to sell rooms that will no doubt make graffiti in the popular lane harder to practice.

We may also soon lose the charming but grubby mid-century Hub Arcade, alongside New Guernica music space and iconic Chuckle Park laneway bar for, you guessed it, a hotel.

Developers might argue places like the Theosophical Building are "uneconomical" and that yet another hotel will bring "vibrancy and activation" to the city, but this misses the broader picture. Slightly run down, older buildings are perfect places for creative uses, pop-up businesses and exactly the kind of quirky entrepreneurship and "hidden secrets" Melbourne sells itself on to the tourists who stay in hotels, not to mention the Melburnians who call this city home.

We would argue, especially at this time, that Melbourne needs what remains of its shabby chic low-rent buildings, theatres, pubs, specialty stores and laneway bars far more than it needs an oversupply of luxury hotels built primarily for the short-term profit of developers ●



Tristan Davies

PRESIDENT MELBOURNE HERITAGE ACTION CONTACT:TRISTANDAVIES@GMAIL.COM

STREET ART

# New mural for Melbourne

*As the planet completes another rotation of the sun, and things really ramp up in 2021 I hope all readers had a fun and somewhat normal holiday.*

Last year was interesting; it was a seriously good time for artists to lock themselves in their studio and create art in a COVID-induced stupor. I thought I would give you a bit of a run down on what's been happening around Blender Studios.

So, this month saw the painting of a 90-metre mural at the troubled Central Pier in Docklands. Blender has been commissioned by TAC to help celebrate and inform the community about all the new bike paths and bike lanes that have been set up during the past few years. This wall coincides with the release of the Melbourne bike map. So, we decided to get eight of Melbourne's hottest urban artists to create the dynamic and large-scale mural. The mural reflects on the icons of inner-city suburbs.

Adnate created a portrait of the lady whom was the original model of the skipping girl to represent Richmond, Kaffine has created a very awesome LGBTQI-friendly artwork of Collingwood and its famous characters and icons, and I will be creating the link from the suburbs to the inner city. It was completed at the end of February and the mural will be up for quite a few months so get on your bike and go check it out.

Hosier Lane had remained reasonably clean and cool since we re-did it for the Melbourne Christmas Festival. It's been really amazing that the lane has remained in such great condition for so long. Some of the work has been replaced, without being destroyed. One artist decided to paste up a kangaroo skull in the main spot. I



couldn't see any artistic or conceptual premise in such a piece when the rules generally are don't go over a work unless you are going to do something better. The problem is some of these art school kids think they are awesome. As the lane slowly slips back into mediocrity now really is the time for the council and the community and the artists to come together and fix Hosier Lane once and for all. It creates so much income and credibility to Melbourne's creative landscape that we should look at where we would like it to be in five years. Keep in mind it was getting around 7000 visitors a day pre-COVID.

The New Blender Lane that runs between Haileybury College and Blender Studios (off Dudley St) has fast become one of the coolest spots to see the city's street art, as artists have slowly filled the lane with hidden treasures,



sculptures miniatures stencils and artwork.

If you're in the lane between Wednesday and Saturday between 12pm and 5pm, you can visit the Darkhorse Experiment. This is the gallery that runs out of the Blender Studios and has direct access from the New Blender Lane.

I am fortunate enough to have my exhibition *Suburban Isolation* currently running for three weeks until March 20. My show is the culmination of four years of research that will lead to the completion of my PhD. This show looks at the intersection of fine art and street art and will have two major immersive installations based on the artwork where I covered the entirety of Rutledge Lane in Empty-Nursery Blue and made it look like a giant empty swimming pool. The other installation is a bit of a secret and I have made many small works and

paintings, most which were made during the lockdowns.

Darkhorse Experiment (Blender Studios) is located at 35 Dudley St, West Melbourne.

Anyway, that's some of what's been happening around Blender and the CBD.

Hope to see you around.

Stay kool.

Doyle ●



*Adrian Doyle*

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## Nature Therapy

“That’s some bubble!”

*Bicycle path, Birrarung Marr*

# Government hypocrisy on the record

*Hansard can be decidedly inconvenient for pivoting politicians.*

The state government managed to tie itself in syllogistic knots defending the indefensible this month, at the second reading of the *Owners' Corporations and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2019*. Its stunning self-contradictions are now recorded in *Hansard* for posterity.

They had a chance to get it right and they stubbornly refused to listen to the needs of apartment-dwellers.

From the time the Bill was drafted, We Live Here made submissions and lobbied for amendments, including one to protect apartment owners from the inequity of long-term service contracts gifted to developers' mates. As described in previous columns, some of the contracts are 25 years and we have had an example of 99 years reported to us.

Commendably, Greens MLC Dr Samantha Ratnam introduced an amendment to the Bill, precisely along these lines, limiting to three years any service contracts signed by a developer. While the Bill laudably limits owners' corporation (OC) management contracts, it's silent on sweetheart deals for other huge commitments like building management and cleaning.

The argument mounted by the government was exasperatingly risible. Labor MLC Shaun Leane, craftily narrowed his focus to utilities ...

"The consequence could be severe, particularly for utility providers, who require certainty beyond three years for the viability of their businesses. It could result in owners' corporations struggling to find businesses willing to provide the most basic services – that is, water and electricity – given that the contracts would be for a maximum of three years," Mr Leane said.

So here we have the Victorian Government

zealously espousing the right of developers to lock apartment owners into onerous long-term contracts.

How did this government work itself into such a distastefully invidious argument that abrogates both social responsibility principles and free market policies – risking affront to the entire political spectrum?

Our proposal for a three-year limit would still be an excellent outcome for providers in a market dominated by shorter deals. And if a provider does a good job, they will likely retain the contract after the three years is up. That's the appeal of competition isn't it?

The Honorable Member's specious utilities example conspicuously contradicts government policies that actively promote competition in the electricity market.

Do you recall the Victorian Government offering everyone \$50 each just to have a look at its energy comparison website? That was part of a suite of competitive reforms associated with its *Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*, passed on October 17, 2019.

This is where *Hansard* becomes inconvenient, recording unanimous government support for that pro-competition energy Bill.

Fast forward scarcely more than a year and *Hansard* now records the same government capriciously condemning apartment dwellers – 25 per cent of Victorians – to suffer anticompetitive gouging at the hands of building services providers.

Why the about-turn, indulging the cupidity of developers and their cronies?

What's going on here, is it a case of incompetence, ignorance or undue influence?

## Greens and independent support

After almost two years of lobbying, We Live Here had the support of the Greens and several crossbenchers for a range of amendments to the OC Bill:

- Andy Meddick, Animal Justice Party

- Clifford Hayes, Sustainable Australia Party
- Rod Barton, Transport Matters Party
- Catherine Cumming, Independent Government hypocrisy on the record
- Fiona Patten, Reason Party – although perplexingly, Ms Patten voted against our amendment about reasonable limits on contracts that developers dish out.

Dr Ratnam proposed three amendments, which were all rejected by the government. Nevertheless, she used the opportunity to press for other urgent reforms:

"The short-stay industry has largely been left to set its own rules, with the government only intervening to implement a complaints process and avoiding implementing any real regulation of the industry," Dr Ratnam said.

"Now we are facing the need to reinvent our cities in light of the havoc wreaked by COVID, this is a perfect time to be looking at how we make our cities more liveable."

Hear, hear!

## "Oops, thanks for the reminder"

Dr Ratnam also raised the issue of the review of the *Short-stay (Accommodation) Act 2018*, promised for 2020 and seemingly forgotten.

Labor MLC Mr Leane sought some whispered advice before confirming that, err, yes, there will be a review "which will start this year".

Asked for more specificity about timing and terms of reference, Mr Leane dodged with, "I cannot be more descriptive."

Maybe *Hansard* needs the "shrug" emoji.

Pressed on the issue Mr Leane then went on to repeat the party line, "there is a provision in this [short-stay] Bill that gives owners' corps the ability to penalise certain owners if they are breaching the short-stay rules."

This is shamefully deceptive. In its two years of operation, the number of cases where owners have successfully taken action in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

(VCAT) under this provision is ZERO.

The short-stay Act is a toothless, useless law and Mr Leane knows it.

## We need dedicated regulations for apartments

The reading of the *OC Amendments Bill* highlighted the convolutions required to draft a single piece of legislation covering everything from caravan parks to skyscraper apartment towers. Navigating the new law will be a huge challenge, perhaps one relished by our learned friends in the legal profession.

A review of the short-stay Act is quasi-scheduled, with the task of establishing terms of reference apparently not in anyone's in-tray quite yet.

Now the government has a chance to set terms to review several issues in concert: specific provisions for short-stays, general improvements to regulatory framework, and the role of planning regulations.

Perhaps the new Minister for Consumer Affairs Melissa Horne can jump out of the ministerial revolving door to take charge.

## Campaign donations

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



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## SKYPAD LIVING

# The Wild West of OC elections

*Owners' corporations (OCs) are often referred to as a fourth tier of government – and our elections are just as political!*

Upon purchasing your apartment, as a lot owner, you automatically become part of your OC. But to join the committee, the key decision-making group for your building, you must be elected by your fellow owners (or their proxies) at your Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Sounds democratic – and seems like a great instance of hyperlocal democracy in action. That is, our vertical villages are managed by an annually elected group, drawn from fellow owners, and it is they who make decisions about how our building is managed, including how our levies are spent and what actions are taken to address problems.

Regrettably, this committee, most especially how it is elected, also typically involves hyperlocal politics. And in many buildings, the intensity of competition rivals that of other levels of government.

It is all too common to hear of buildings run as fiefdoms, where long-standing committee chairs have developed a sense of entitlement to the role. Woe betide any whippersnappers who dare challenge this status quo!

In other tiers of government, such as local council, procedures have been developed to ensure that our electoral systems are fair, transparent and promote effective participation. While you might initially think that the last thing our vertical villages need is more procedures, the calibre of our OC committee daily affects the quality and fabric of our home life – this committee is the maker of by-laws, the

procurer of contracts and the setter of fees and levies.

And this is why the way each OC exercises its choice over who will represent them has never been more important.

So, what are these issues impacting the transparency of our elections – here are three: dummy nominees; proxy farming; and robust electoral processes.

## Dummy nominees

In local government, this refers to a candidate who stands for election with no intention or realistic chance of winning. Their purpose may be to direct preferences to other candidates or split the vote or simply to block other candidates. In the case of OCs, someone can be asked to nominate (perhaps by the entrenched chair!) for the purpose of blocking others from securing a position on the committee. The way this works is that each owner can vote for up to 12 people. Proxies are collected (proxy farming) by the serious candidate, who then directs these votes towards their preferred 12. So, if someone collects 60 or 70 proxies, these can be used for their preferred 12 nominees, thereby blocking others from being elected. This can result in nominees being elected who have little interest in serving on the committee. One recent instance I have heard about involves a nominee who is currently selling their apartment and who has twice been previously elected and then resigned soon after.

## Proxy farming

Proxies are part of an important mechanism which allows owners to appoint someone (a proxy) to represent them if they are unavailable. The proxy can use this assigned power to vote in committee elections and on resolutions, and/or otherwise represent the lot owner. It is often the case, however, that owners do not direct the proxy as regards their wishes, with the result that the proxy has free rein and can direct these votes to whoever and however they choose. Proxy farming occurs when large numbers of proxies are actively sought for the purpose of concentrating voting power so as to determine outcomes (e.g. who is elected, which resolutions pass). If there is no direction given, this means that a small number of owners (maybe even one owner) can determine the outcome of meetings, elections and resolutions. At its heart, proxy farming is all about the balance of power – who has it, who wants it and what they want to do with it. It is deeply undemocratic and other Australian states (such as NSW) have strict limitations on proxy farming. Not so Victoria – yet.

## Electoral process

While the current system has been in operation for many years, there remains a great deal of confusion regarding nomination and voting procedures, starting with the submission of documents. For example, proxy forms require all owners to be listed and to sign. However, this seemingly straight forward issue repeatedly

proves problematic, especially for people from non-English speaking backgrounds. There is an array of other procedural issues, such as the practice of nominating "from the floor" which gives little time for strata managers to confirm nominee eligibility and little scope for owners to consider such nominations. Many of these issues could be resolved through a combination of clearer instructions from Consumer Affairs Victoria, regulatory improvements, and the introduction of tailored online strata registration systems, which could assist in checking submissions while they are being completed.

The way our community, the OC, is able exercise choice over who will represent us is fundamental to our wellbeing. These three issues – dummy nominees, proxy farming and electoral process – are just the tip of the OC electoral iceberg. Failure to improve robustness and transparency promotes undesirable and undemocratic practices, leading to the concentration of power in the hands of those most adept at working this inadequate system. Now is the time to begin a genuine dialogue about how hyperlocal democracy can best work in our vertical villages ●



Dr Janette Corcoran  
APARTMENT LIVING EXPERT  
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# Pet's Corner

## Frankie's post-lockdown play

“

*Biagio Genovesi is enjoying morning strolls with pet pup Frankie once again, following Melbourne's snap five-day lockdown.*

”



WORDS BY *Micaela Togher*

Frankie, who lives with Biagio in his West Melbourne home, is relishing her newfound freedom in sunny Flagstaff Gardens.

“She loves walking, she goes for as long as I'm able to take her,” Biagio said, who adopted Frankie four years ago.

Biagio is recuperating from a recent surgery that left him with a portion of his lung removed. COVID-19 precautions are vital for his continued recovery, but he is frank about his view on the continued lockdowns – “we have to cope with it, but it's very frustrating,” he said.

In spite of the hurdles, he is determined to continue

walking Frankie. “That's why I'm taking it slowly today, I'm still recovering,” he said.

During Melbourne's second wave of coronavirus last year, Biagio's adult children pitched in to help their father take care of Frankie. “She goes for sleepovers and they take her on bigger walks,” he said.

Frankie – lovingly referred to as “Frankster” by her owner – also loves sleeping and snacking on Schmackos in her spare time.

While Biagio is not sure of Frankie's exact breed, he is certain of something: No matter what the future holds, nothing will stop Frankie from frolicking about in the Melbourne sun ●

### MUSIC

## Something For Kate

Two clear examples of the symbiotic relationship between art and music could be found in a couple of art galleries in the CBD.

During lockdown 2.0 many people had the time to listen to and organise their vinyl record collections. One album that got mentioned and rated well was Lou Reed's *Transformer* from the early 1970s that he recorded in London. Some consider it one of the pivotal albums of his career with such great songs as *Satellite Of Love* and *Perfect Day*.

Sue Beyer's recent art exhibition at forty-fivedownstairs gallery in Flinders Lane was entitled *Transformer*.

A collection of vivid colourful geometric paintings, a patchwork quilt of intense colours, an abstract graffiti inspired vivid coloured video installation and a wall of mirrors painted in bright colours with finger traces of graffiti. The colours and feel of Sue Beyer's *Transformer* are grandiose and generous. Much like the sentiment of Lou Reed's *Perfect Day*.

One song that was popular among many musos in Melbourne during Lockdown 2.0 was Dolly Parton's impromptu performance in an Irish pub of *A Coat of Many Colours*. It was an incredible performance where she sang the song with the local Irish band that she had never met before. A great delivery of a song; check it out on YouTube.

The second example of music consciously/unconsciously influencing art could be found in February 2021 at the magnificent Arc One Gallery Space located in Flinders Lane Melbourne. The artist Pat Brassington's latest show at Arc One was entitled *Night Swimming*.

*Night Swimming* is a song from REM's 1992 album *Automatic For The People*. It is a song that Michael Stipe already had the lyrics to. When he heard Mike Mills play the circular riff on the piano, he told him to play it again and let rip the complete *Night Swimming* song. Jaws were dropping in the studio. *Night Swimming* is all about memory and nostalgia.

A songwriter similar to Stipe is Something For Kate's (SFK's) Paul Dempsey. Very Cormac McCarthy in his lyrical depth and drive. Intense lyrical wordplay, very wry, maybe not as cryptic as REM. The new SFK album *The Modern Mediaeval* is a ripper and is getting a

lot of airplay on the radio and is being played in cafes bars and car stereos. SFK had a very active presence during lockdown 2.0. At one stage Paul Dempsey teamed up with Powderfinger's Bernard Fanning to perform the Queen/David Bowie song *Under Pressure*.

The multi-talented Caroline Kennedy from Dead Star epitomises the creative type that can transcend multiple fields in the artistic realm.

For many the apogee for the band Dead Star was their absolute sublime performance of their major song *Deeper Water* on the Network Ten late night variety show *The Panel*. This was a pure zeitgeist moment in many share households around Melbourne.

As well as being a great singer, the charismatic Caroline Kennedy is a compelling visual artist, using blocks of colours, imaginary doorways stairs stars in a distinctive style. Sidney Nolan meeting Mark Rothko.

Preceding the chicane of snap lockdown 3.0, many bands had returned to the live scene, absolutely fired up and raring to go, like a nitrous oxide fuel injected funny car at Calder Park back in the '80s. As part of Melbourne Music Week Extended, the band High Tension played a phenomenal gig at Max Watts on Swanston St. People were cheering them on and were impressed with how tight the band was playing, as if they had been gigging all the way through lockdown 2.0. This was as exhilarating as watching Nature Strip fangin' it over 1000 metres down the Flemington straight to win the 2021 Black Caviar Lighting Stakes the day before Valentine's Day.

Marsden Williams and 245T were back rehearsing, check this band out, they are like a cross between Royal Truck, Gram Parsons and *Gimme Shelter* Stones. An awesome bunch of musos, they are based around that Muscle Shoals Record Store. This is the band Alain Delon would watch in his first year at the Sorbonne. Very rock and roll ●



*Chris Mineral*

MINERALSANDS@HOTMAIL.COM

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HISTORY

## Victory Parade, August 1945 – “106 minutes of wild cheering”

The War in the Pacific was over and despite cold and rain, Melbournians turned out in force to celebrate. It had rained for 90 minutes before the parade of 20,000 service personnel and other war workers marched through the CBD in the early afternoon of Friday, August 24, 1945.

“It’s on!” the crowd cried. Shops and businesses shut their doors as excited city workers headed out to greet their heroes. There was cheering, clapping, whistling. Confetti and streamers swirled around the heads of those marching.

As you can see from this image taken in Elizabeth St near the Block Arcade, nothing could deter the crowds, many of whom had been waiting in the rain for several hours, determined to secure a good vantage spot. Despite warnings not to stand or sit on shop verandas, all along the street people took the risk. Some sang in time to the bands as they played *Mademoiselle from Armentieres* and other wartime favourites. Some threw caution to the wind and dangled their legs over the edge as they threw streamers down on the marchers. Others cheered and waved flags.

The scene was the same in every street. If there was a flight of steps, a window or window ledge, a truck or roof top with a view, it was found and claimed long before the march began. Small boys perched high in the treetops along Collins St and one newspaper reporter even glimpsed seven men perched precariously on a decorator’s ladder and plank.

The marchers represented a broad spectrum of war workers. There were representatives

of the army, navy and air force. There were POWs and the crowd went wild when a group of Kokoda Trail survivors passed by. Munitions and aircraft production workers marched alongside other civilian personnel. Australian Army nurses were joined by the Australian Women’s Land Army (in their first public march). Bands from all branches of the services were interspersed among the marchers and were joined by a number of municipal bands.

It is a group of nurses and drivers from the Australian Red Cross who dominate this image. Most of their war work was done on Australian soil. Nevertheless, they played a vital role in the war effort. The nurses probably worked in hospitals and convalescent homes. A few may even have served overseas. The drivers drove trucks and ambulances. Other Red Cross workers took part in a wide range of supportive activities, including catering and fundraising as well as hospital visiting, providing home help and even library services. The Red Cross also provided medical attention and food parcels to prisoners of war.

The humanitarian work of the Red Cross during both World Wars and beyond is well documented, but perhaps less well known is Melbourne’s connection to the tracing of missing persons and the role Red Cross luminary Vera Deakin (later Lady White) played in this. The daughter of Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, Vera was only in her 20s when she became the founding secretary of the Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau. She did similar work during World War II in her role as Director of the Bureau (Victorian division)

▼ Image H98.100/2491, courtesy State Library of Victoria.



during World War II and her commitment to the organisation continued until the 1970s.

For those interested in Vera Deakin’s contribution to the Australian Red Cross, a new book, *Vera Deakin and the Red Cross*, by historian and RHSV Fellow and honorary secretary Carole Woods, has just been published and can be purchased from the RHSV Bookshop. Carole will give a not-to-be-missed talk on “Vera Deakin in War and Peace” at the RHSV’s Drill Hall, 239 A’Beckett St (near the Flagstaff Gardens) on

Tuesday, March 16. Bookings can be made on the RHSV website. [Historyvictoria.org.au](http://Historyvictoria.org.au) ●



Dr. Cheryl Griffin  
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

PRECINCTS

## Life returning to Collins St

*It’s a pleasing moment to walk through the Collins Street Precinct and see busy retail stores and restaurants filled with people.*

As Melbourne emerges from a long-protracted series of lockdowns, the Collins Street Precinct is once again demonstrating its place as one of Australia’s premier destinations.

Following the back-to-work announcements, many Melbournians are returning to their offices in the CBD and there will be more joining them in the coming months. The streets are once again filled with local residents getting out and exploring the city.

Luke Harris, President of the Collins Street Precinct Group, has himself only recently returned to working in his CBD office, and is excited by the confidence that many new businesses in the precinct are placing in Melbourne’s CBD.

Mr Harris said, “After the year that Melbourne has had, it’s invigorating to walk through the precinct and see so many businesses reopening and new ones setting up shop.”

“It’s often assumed that the Collins Street Precinct is only the main boulevard, Collins St, but we also embrace Melbourne’s laneway culture, as the precinct encompasses Little Collins Street and parts of Flinders Lane.”

“As you walk through the Collins Street Precinct you’re met with familiar faces as some of Melbourne’s favourite spots reopen their doors. However, while Melbourne has been staying home, the Collins Street Precinct has been busy during the past 12 months welcoming a diverse range of new and exciting businesses.”

One of the major new additions to the Precinct is 80 Collins, a premium destination where culture, business and luxury collide. Situated at the “Paris end” of Collins St, 80 Collins includes dining destinations like the already opened Farmer’s Daughters from Alejandro Saravia and the premium cocktail bar Nick and Nora’s. Alongside this dining offering sits luxury retailers Saint Laurent, Mulberry, Georg Jensen and Feit, as well as soon to open Next Hotel Melbourne.



Other new additions to the precinct include the highly anticipated W Melbourne hotel; Chancery Lane, Scott Pickett’s European-inspired Bistro on Little Collins St; the breath-taking Two Pillars in the foyer of the Olderfleet building and of course the reopening of the historic Block Arcade’s The Tea Rooms 1892.

These new spots join long-term favourites like Italian Pasticceria, Brunetti; modern-Vietnamese dining destination Uncle; luxury hotel the Sofitel Melbourne on Collins; premium retail destinations like Louis Vuitton, Burberry, TAG Heuer, Coach and Versace; homegrown brands like ELK, Peter Sheppard, Adriano Carbone Master Tailor, Temelli Jewellery, MDT Design – and the list goes on.

Harris concluded, “There’s nothing that makes me happier than seeing the city thrive and that’s the challenge that we set to Melbournians: get out and explore the city that you call home and fall in love with Melbourne again.” ●

**For more information, visit:**  
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BUSINESS

## Central Equity launch Parkhill Apartments

*Melbourne-based developer Central Equity is set to add their newest apartment project to the portfolio with the launch of Parkhill Apartments in West Melbourne.*

With the launch spanning two weeks from March 6 to 21, Central Equity is encouraging early home buyers to attend and take advantage of the \$15,000 HomeBuilder Grant and 50 per cent stamp duty concessions.

Located at 408 Spencer St and just metres from the inner-city oasis of Flagstaff Gardens, Parkhill is within walking distance to Queen Victoria Market, the CBD, Southern Cross Station, major city universities, key employers and many of Melbourne’s finest cultural attractions.

Close to many of Melbourne’s finest public and private schools including University High School and Haileybury College, Parkhill boasts proximity to leading hospitals, Lygon St and harbourside restaurants and shops.

Parkhill features a range of spacious one- and two-bedroom apartments with open-plan layouts and 2.7m high ceilings, maximising natural light and city aspects.

Quality fittings throughout include composite bench-tops and vanities, a Miele oven, cooktop, and rangehood, German tapware, reverse cycle air conditioning and pre-cabled apartments for broadband internet.

A beautiful rooftop terrace garden includes a landscaped relaxation and barbecue area and fitted gym for exclusive resident use.



With onsite concierge services, security, and secure lift access, residents can sit back and enjoy double-glazing and thermal insulation for maximum comfort.

Central Equity, Melbourne’s leading multi-award-winning developer, has completed more than 80 developments across the past three decades and is widely-regarded as a primary provider of high-quality inner-Melbourne residential apartments.

Already proving popular with city residents who value location and won’t compromise on style and design quality, Parkhill has several designs available, with prospective buyers encouraged to make their inquiries soon.

The Parkhill launch will take place on-site at 408 Spencer St, West Melbourne, with a mortgage broker on site on the weekend, as well as barista-made coffee ●

**For more information, visit:**  
[parkhillmelb.com.au](http://parkhillmelb.com.au) or  
call 1800 63 88 88

## “淡化”难民动议凸显市政分歧

Katie Johnson

墨尔本市政的未来墨尔本委员会就如何最好地帮助仍被拘留在Carlton花园酒店(Park Hotel)的13名难民,进行了激烈地辩论,最后投票达成一项“淡化”难民宣传的动议。

绿党议员Rohan Leppert提出的原动议包含一项条款,要求市长Sally Capp呼吁联邦政府立即释放这些人。

但是市长和其他五位议员投票修改了这个议案,删除了要求她向移民部长Alex Hawke和海关、社区安全和多元文化事务助理部长Jason Wood表达市政立场的条款。

市长表示,她注意到社区对这个问题表达的“热情和同情”,但市政需要与其他各级政府合作。

市长说:“我们绝不能忽视移民和难民对

我们城市的经济和文化贡献。”

“我们应该想方设法与其他各级政府合作,为居住在墨尔本市花园酒店的人呼吁他们的人权,改善他们的生活条件。”

修正后的议案主张“提供医疗和精神健康支持服务”,以及“对继续拘留这些人的解释”,而不是要求释放这些人。

该修正案还删除了一项条款,即“与联合国人权理事会和人权事务委员会一起谴责无限期和任意拘留寻求庇护者的行为,这是对人权的严重侵犯”。

取而代之的是,修正案中指出“墨尔本市内的所有人都应受到联合国《世界人权宣言》的保护”。

副市长Nicholas Reece表示,尽管他对这个问题反应非常强烈,但他还是投票赞成该修正案,因为这是一项“改进”的议案。



## 物业管理修正案遭否决

一项旨在让物业管理机构更容易对腐败的开发商采取法律行动的提案,在维州上议院遭否决。

David Schout

这个由维州绿党提出的修正案,试图对建筑开发商签订的所有合同设定三年的上限,但没有得到两个主要政党的支持。

绿党争辩说,在物业管理之下居住或拥有财产的150万维多利亚居民没有得到现行立法的充分支持。

他们试图降低对开发商提起法律诉讼的

门槛,要求物业管理机构中开发商的比例从75%降到50%。

Sandell女士说:“我和很多公寓大楼里的居民谈论过此事,他们觉得现行的物业管理法并不支持他们。所以说这项修正案是解决这个问题的绝佳机会。”

“绿党的这个修正案将会收紧潜在腐败开发商的行为规则,同时支持居民对他们采

取法律行动。我们将继续支持这些居民,直到政府为他们提供足够的保护和支持。”

修正案旨在降低物业管理公司寻求法律诉讼的障碍,特别是在建筑缺陷和覆盖层整改方面,这已成为近年来的一个重要问题。

他们还试图保护建筑物的居住者免受开发商在建筑竣工时签订的长期合同之影响,由于这些合同,随之造成后面的业主被迫来买单。

报告表明,其中一些是缺乏竞争力的“数十年合同”。

分契业权律师事务所(Strata Title Lawyers)首席执行官Tom Bacon表示,他对主要政党的回应感到失望。

Bacon表示:“我想整个维州的物业管理机构都会对工党和自由党与选民之间的脱节感到沮丧。”

“两个主要政党都否决了绿党提出的合理修正案,该修正案将所有管理和设施合同的期限限制为3年,并允许物业管理机构通过普通决议起诉开发商和建筑商的建筑缺陷和易燃覆盖层问题。我们现在看到了所在的偏袒。它与物主、投资者和普通居民无关,而是完全站在开发商、建筑公司以及选举捐赠者一起。”

Bacon表示,这一结果对物业管理公司来说并不是个好兆头。

## 女王市场的疫情热点

Rhonda Dredge

2月16日星期二,在维多利亚女王市场(QVM)的A和B大棚中,板条箱是空的,水果和蔬菜被粗麻布遮盖着,这里几乎没有行人。

六天前,一名与假日酒店(Holiday Inn) COVID集群有关联的顾客来过这里。

没有人知道在当天上午8点45分至10点10分之间这位顾客去过哪些摊位,她在周日的测试中呈阳性。

卫生与公众服务部(DHSS)指令37个摊位的所有员工以及其他9名人员接受测试和14天的自我隔离。

星期二是政府宣布这里为疫情热点之后

交易的第一天,这里的所有人(包括商摊售货员,顾客和管理员)都花了一定的时间来处理应付这个问题。

QVM首席执行官Stan Liacos说:“对我来说,这很复杂,有些规则不仅仅针对这个市场,而是整个维州。”

据摊位货主称,政府宣布疫情热点后的当天,市场经历了最糟糕的交易日。

一家面包店到上午10.30时只有六位顾客光顾。Liacos先生对本报说:“这是我见过最清静的场景。”

QVM的首席执行官证实市场交易量不到其COVID之前数据的20%,但表示当天晚些时候顾客数量有所回升。

他说:“就客流量而言,下降了80%。



您可以想象一下,在同一时间里所发生的事情,没有游客,没有城市工人,五公里限制和全面封锁……然后就是公众对COVID疫情案例反应所陷入的困境。”

他说,市场大棚已经彻底清洗过了, DHSS允许那些周四没有营业的摊位可以重新开放经营了。



## 1.83亿的大楼项目提交部长报批

2月16日,墨尔本市政批准了提议的一项价值1.83亿澳元,高23层的大楼项目,该项目建筑将位于墨尔本市法律街区。

Meg Hill

如果得到州规划部长Richard Wynne的批准,该开发项目将拆除Lonsdale街上现有的办公大楼以及Little Lonsdale街上的八层地上停车场(“Flagstaff停车场”)。

提议项目的建筑将在Lonsdale街550号和Little Lonsdale街535号临街,并设有地下停车场和地面零售店,上面设有22层办公空间。

作为批准该申请的条件,墨尔本市政建议规划部长要求该建筑的底楼沿Healeys Lane部分后置两米,因为这是Lonsdale和Little Lonsdale街道之间的主要连接处。

申请人Lonsdale投资公司已要求取消这个提议条件。Urbis的城市规划师Jamie Govenlock在2月16日的未来墨尔本委员会(FMC)会议上代表申请人作了发言。

他说:“我们认为这个条件将是吸引Healeys Lane沿街合适的零售、食品和餐饮顾客以及租户的重大障碍。”

Govenlock先生说,当前的COVID环境难以获得租户,再者由于在Healeys Lane沿街开发区所提议的零售空间底层是餐馆,因此空间的损失将成为进一步的障碍。

但是市政规划主管Nicholas Reece议员说,项目大楼的后置是考虑Healey Lane的重要性以及该场地周围开发的安全性。

# What's on: March 2021



**MARCH 2 @ 7PM**  
 Online aquatic exercise program  
 The physiotherapists at Hydro Functional Fitness are hosting the 500-50 Aquatic Exercise Challenge. The challenge aims to support 500 aquatic exercise sessions in 50 days for 50 people and will be raising money for Musculoskeletal Australia.  
[hydrofunctional.com/march2021](http://hydrofunctional.com/march2021)

**THIRD TUESDAY OF MONTH @ 10AM**  
 EastEnders meet-ups  
 Representing residents living in the CBD's eastern quadrant, EastEnders hold monthly meetings covering locals issues via Zoom. Coffee meetings will return in March subject to COVID restrictions.  
[eastendersinc@gmail.com](mailto:eastendersinc@gmail.com)

**TUESDAYS VIA ZOOM @ 7.40AM**  
 Rotary Club of Central Melbourne  
 Due to the necessity to remain out of public spaces where possible, Rotary continues its Zoom breakfast meetings until a decision is made to return to face-to-face meetings.  
[rotaryclubcentralmelbourne.org.au](http://rotaryclubcentralmelbourne.org.au)

**10.30AM-2PM WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY 10AM-3PM SUNDAY, 326 LONSDALE ST**  
 Meet up with friends  
 Instant coffee or tea with a biscuit for \$2.00. Meet up with friends or enjoy meeting others at St Francis Pastoral Centre (entry next to the book shop in the church yard). 9663 2495

**UNTIL MAY 16, 10AM - 6PM**  
 Bending The Bars Exhibition  
 Commemorates the 40th anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Victoria. The exhibition shares the stories and processes that led to the passing of a historic law reform.  
[oldmelbournegaol.com.au](http://oldmelbournegaol.com.au)

**SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 28**  
 Free movies at Fed Square  
 Enjoy classic 80s films screening outdoors on the big screen at Fed Square  
[whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au/things-to-do/free-movies-at-fed-square](http://whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au/things-to-do/free-movies-at-fed-square)



**LANEWAY LEARNING**  
 Cheap, fun classes in anything and everything. Weekday evenings in cafes, bars and other spaces around Melbourne. Classes usually have about 20 people to keep it friendly.  
[melbourne.lanewaylearning.com](http://melbourne.lanewaylearning.com)



**RESIDENTS 3000**  
 Get involved with your local CBD residents' group!  
 Hosting regular meetings, events and activities for all residents living in postcode 3000. Head to the website for more information or to become a member.  
[residents3000.com.au](http://residents3000.com.au)

**MARCH 13 @ DEGRAVES ST**  
 Degraives St traders hit the street!  
 Businesses operating along the CBD's iconic Degraives St will bring their products out from their shops to the street. The event will run all day.  
 For more information contact Melanie:  
[info@clementines.com.au](mailto:info@clementines.com.au)

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 墨尔本唐人街  
[chinatownmelbourne.com.au](http://chinatownmelbourne.com.au)  
 e: cpamel@bigpond.net.au

Selling & Leasing the best homes in the CBD.  
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 846 Bourke St, Docklands 9251 9000

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 Will Caldwell 0419 010 270  
 Suzie Inglis 0416 671 572  
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### Shopping

**QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET**  
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[qvm.com.au](http://qvm.com.au)

# CBD NEWS

Talk to Jack Hayes  
 T 0401 031 236  
 E [jack@hyperlocalnews.com.au](mailto:jack@hyperlocalnews.com.au)  
 about how to customise your campaign to our audience every month.



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