



Cyclists protest bike lane "downgrade"

Cycling advocates and local residents gathered on Elizabeth St in Richmond on March 15 to protest the City of Yarra's decision to narrow the street's protected bike lanes, warning the move will make one of inner Melbourne's key east-west cycling links to Albert St in East Melbourne less safe. More on page 11. Photo: Hanna Komissarova.

EDUCATION, PAGE 03

Local teachers walk off job as support grows

TRANSPORT, PAGE 06

Sky rail proposal over Park St moves forward

SAFETY, PAGE 08

Community CCTV appeal

Yarra Park master plan nears finish line as residents push back on "commercial creep"

“ A new long-term master plan for Yarra Park is understood to be close to finalisation, setting up what could become one of the most consequential planning updates for East Melbourne's best-known public space in more than a decade.

WORDS BY SEAN CAR



Consultation on the draft closed in November last year, with feedback now being reviewed before the finalised plan, supporting reports and draft statutory controls are sent to the Minister for Planning.

At the heart of the debate is a familiar East Melbourne tension: how to balance Yarra Park's daily role as a much-loved local open space with its periodic use as the green forecourt to the MCG and the wider sports precinct.

The draft master plan leans into that dual role, explicitly framing the park as operating in two modes, "event mode" and "non-event mode". It proposes a series of upgrades, including a renewed northern recreation space, a new gathering space near the MCG concourse, improved utilities to reduce reliance on temporary generators, accessible event-day hubs, better pathways and lighting, a celebration space for First Nations use, and a tree management and replacement strategy. Those ideas are also tied to a new event management strategy, a night-time strategy, and a car-parking strategy.

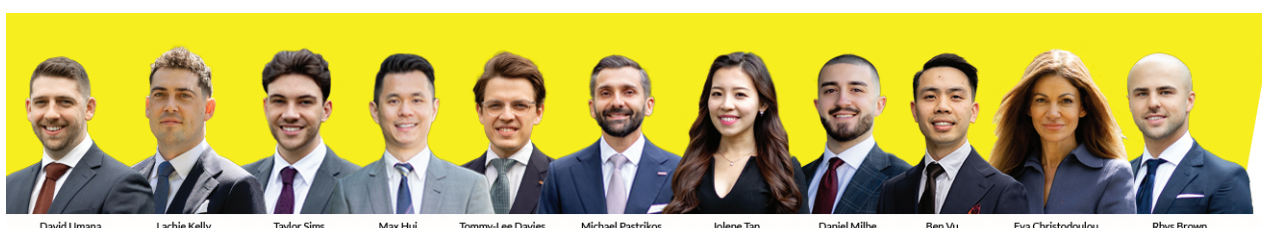
But while the plan presents those moves as a way of improving both day-to-day amenity and event operations, major local submitters argue it tips too far towards commercial activation and away from the park's core identity as open public land.

Continued on page 7.



Hyperlocal News launches podcast exploring the city's big issues

A new podcast examining the ideas, debates and decisions shaping Melbourne's future has launched, with the first episode focusing on one of the city's most iconic institutions: Queen Victoria Market.



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University Square upgrade a centrepiece of council's new Garden City push

A major second stage upgrade of University Square in Carlton is set to be one of the headline local green space investments in the City of Melbourne's draft 2026-27 budget, as the council prepares to pitch more than \$26 million for new and improved parks across the municipality.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The University Square works, backed by \$7.8 million, form part of a broader "Garden City" push that the council says will accelerate the delivery of 13 new or upgraded parks and open spaces across Melbourne.

For Carlton, the commitment is a significant one. University Square is already one of the inner city's key public green spaces, sitting at the northern edge of the CBD and serving students, workers, residents and visitors. The next stage of its renewal is expected to continue improving the park's role as both a neighbourhood retreat and an important civic space near the University of Melbourne and RMIT precincts.

The council is framing the broader budget package as a response to growing demand for greener neighbourhoods in an increasingly dense city.

Lord Mayor Nick Reece said the draft budget would help Melbourne grow its green network at "record speed and scale". "Melbourne matters – and we're leading



the way as Australia's Garden City, with 13 new and upgraded green spaces delivered at record speed and scale," Cr Reece said.

"Melbourne is growing, and our Garden City is growing with it – from planting up to 3000 new trees to creating new green spaces, we're building a green legacy for a bigger, busier and more vibrant city."

Alongside University Square, the draft budget includes a \$5 million package to fast-track projects in local neighbourhoods. That includes creating 2500 sqm of new open space at the Chapman St pocket park in North Melbourne, beginning the expansion of the Miles and Dodds St reserve in Southbank, and progressing plans to expand the Normanby Rd reserve in Southbank.

In Kensington, \$6.4 million is proposed to transform a warehouse on Chelmsford St into a new community space for relaxation, exercise, play and connection with nature.

The budget also allocates \$5.5 million to deliver more than 5000 sqm of new open space along the City Rd undercroft, while

planning continues for Market Square as part of the Queen Victoria Market renewal and for a greener, more pedestrian-friendly Franklin St linking the market with State Library Station.

Further south, the city will continue work on the Greenline project along the north bank of the Yarra, supported by a recently announced \$4.4 million contribution from the federal government.

Environment portfolio head Cr Davydd Griffiths said residents had made it clear they wanted a greener city.

"Melburnians have told us they want a city that green and alive – where nature is never far, no matter where you live, work or visit – and that's exactly what we're delivering," Cr Griffiths said.

"We know more green space makes people happier, so we're creating new open spaces, planting more trees and protecting the lungs of our city."

The council also says it will aim to plant 3000 new trees across the municipality while continuing to work with private land-owners and community groups on greening projects.

Aboriginal Melbourne portfolio head Cr Dr Olivia Ball said green space was also about caring for Country and supporting community wellbeing.

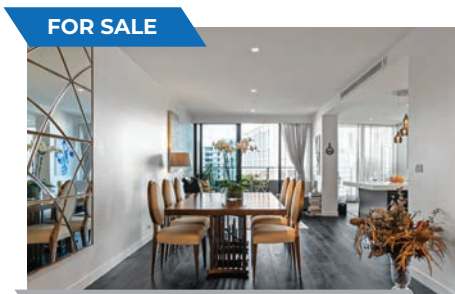
"Melbourne is built on Wurundjeri and Bunurong bik (country)," Cr Ball said.

"Ensuring there's enough green open space near where everyone lives and works is an important way local government can support community health and well-being."

She said 92 per cent of homes in the City of Melbourne were currently within 300 metres of open space, with the council aiming to lift that figure to 100 per cent.

The draft budget was formally released on March 31, with public consultation open until April 28. ●

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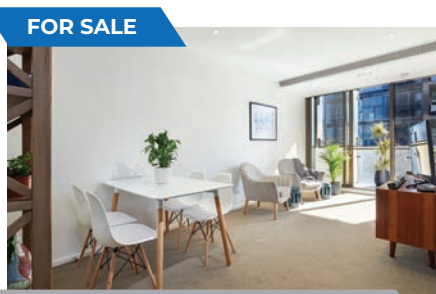


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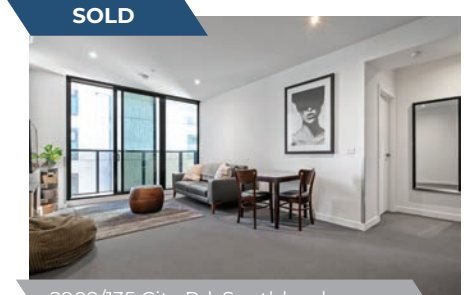


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Local teachers walk off job as support grows for school funding fight

“

Inner-city area teachers and school support staff threw their weight behind a strike for better pay and school funding on Tuesday, March 24, and many families seemed to support them.

”

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



Staff from the schools told *Inner City News* that at Carlton Primary 14 of 16 teachers and support staff joined the 24-hour stop-work and at Carlton North 27 out of 32 did.

At University High an estimated 80 per cent went on strike while at Princess Hill High 72 of around 85 went out.

University High School principal Nick Scott said he understood entirely why the staff had chosen to take action and looked forward to them getting a new deal “as soon as possible.”

The Australian Education Union said the workers had stopped work because of “the inability of the Allan Labor Government to put a fair and decent pay and conditions offer on the table”.

According to AEU Victorian Branch president Justin Mullaly, public schools across the state were affected by significant, ongoing staffing shortages as a result of staff having the lowest pay rates in the country and being increasingly overworked.

The secretary of the Victorian Education Department has said the pay disparity was due to Enterprise Bargaining Agreements having been introduced more recently in other states.

The strike was the first by teachers in 13 years and, according to some reports, the rally which accompanied it was the biggest in the union’s history.

Victoria Police estimated 35,000 people marched from Trades Hall to the Victorian Parliament.

Being part of such a huge “sea of red” had been an “amazing” experience, Trish Harrington, business manager of Carlton North Primary School said.



“Everyone that I’ve spoken to was really inspired by it,” she said.

“There is a big groundswell of people in public schools just wanting to see action; they want to see more funding.”

In addition to staff being lower paid than their counterparts interstate, the issue was one of resourcing.

Victorian Government schools were “underfunded,” Ms Harrington said,



referring to the state government’s failure so far to increase funding to the level of the nationally agreed, Gonski review-based Schooling Resourcing Standard.

“And until the state government puts their share in, the federal government won’t put theirs in, so we miss out in both ways,” she said.

“We want to be 100 per cent funded and you need the government to respect the roles of people in education, both teachers and those in ES positions, because the job has gotten bigger over the years, and I don’t think there’s a lot of recognition of that.”

Particularly since COVID, the environment had got “tough”, she said.

“We find that there are increasing numbers of kids with additional needs that require support and we don’t get funding

for that.”

“It makes it hard, and people are working extra hard in their own time to make it work for the kids.”

There was “appetite” for continued industrial action if necessary, Ms Harrington said.

And the school community was very supportive, with parents from the school joining teachers at the rally.

Several Carlton North Primary parents who spoke to *Inner City News* said they were in total support of the strike regardless of any inconvenience involved in having to keep their kids at home for the day.

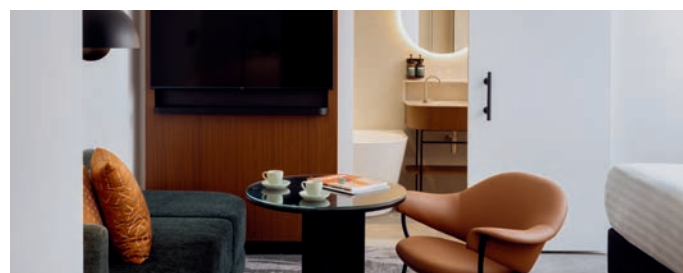
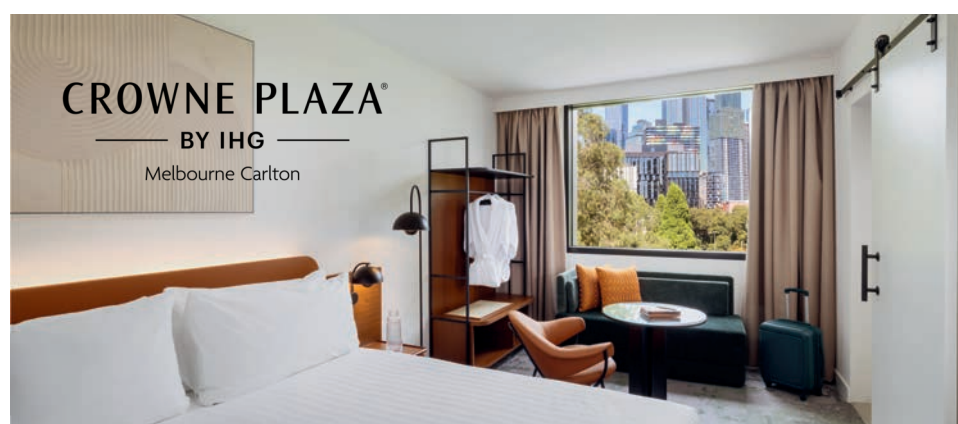
“Our teachers work so hard it’s crazy how little they get paid, so I’m very much in support. Fingers crossed,” said one mother, Megan.

She pointed also to the hard work being done by members of the school community on fundraising to cover basic school costs like pay for relief teachers.

“I also think it’s good that our kids know the conditions that their teachers have, and that there’s something that can be done – that when people get together, hopefully change can happen,” she said.

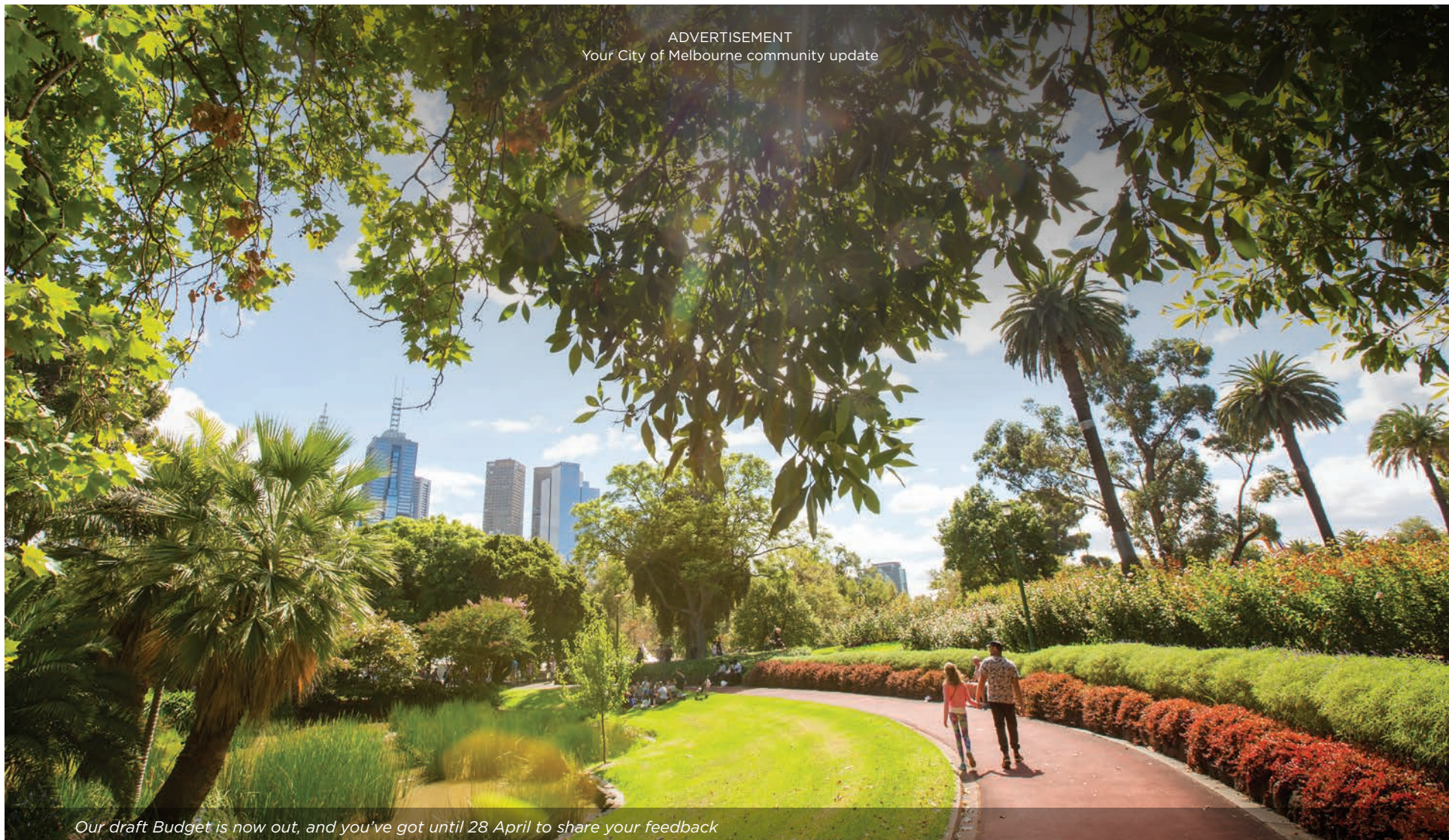
Another mother, Sarah, who worked from home on the day of the strike and “tag-teamed” supervision of a play date, described it as “totally worth it for the cause”.

“I don’t know a parent at the school who’s not supportive of the strike,” she said. ●




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Our draft Budget is now out, and you've got until 28 April to share your feedback


OUR BUDGET PLAN FOR A MORE LIVEABLE MELBOURNE


 Total budget:
\$804.8 million

 Capital works
program:
\$175.1 million

 Garden City:
\$26.4 million

 Surplus:
\$1.2 million

 Events, arts, culture,
activation:
\$41.2 million

 Safety and cleaning:
\$73.2 million

We know budgets aren't usually the most exciting time of year – especially when Melbourne has just squeezed in Moomba, the opening round of the AFL season and the Australian Grand Prix in one glorious weekend.

But this draft Budget really matters, because it sets out a plan to support a more liveable Melbourne.

It proposes investment in greener spaces, cleaner streets and more active laneways, and aims to make the city easier to get around and better connected.

It's supported by strong financial management, with this draft Budget delivering a third consecutive surplus and a path to being debt-free by 2032.

And because this is a draft Budget, we want to hear from you. Share your feedback using the QR code on the opposite page before 6pm on 28 April to help shape the final Budget.

There's a lot in it, but here are some of the ways you'll see the difference.



Feedback on the draft Budget 2026–27 can be provided on Participate Melbourne from 6pm on Tuesday 31 March until 6pm on 28 April.

BRINGING OUR STREETS TO LIFE



Our draft Budget invests in major events like NYE, which bring the city together

Melbourne's street life is part of what makes the city tick. This draft Budget strengthens that with a focus on lighting, precincts and events that draw people in and keep the city moving:

- **Lighting up Melbourne**
\$2 million to light up more streets and laneways, doubling last year's \$1 million investment, with upgrades in places like Hosier Lane, Collins Street and Hardware Lane to improve safety and support activity after dark.
- **Creating a new Little India precinct**
In Docklands, more than \$1.2 million will help bring Little India to life, with infrastructure, public realm upgrades, creative projects and events.
- **Backing the events that bring the city together**
Across the year, almost same as last year will support major events like New Year's Eve, Moomba and the Christmas Festival, driving visitation and backing local businesses.

GROWING THE GARDEN CITY

Greening Melbourne remains a priority in this budget, with faster delivery of parks and more trees across the city:



We're investing in more parks, trees and greener streets across Melbourne

- **More parks, closer to home**
We're fast-tracking the planning and delivery of 13 new or upgraded parks and green open spaces across the municipality, making sure nature is never far away in our Garden City.
- **3,000 new trees across the city**
We'll plant up to 3,000 new trees across the city, growing Melbourne's urban forest and bringing more shade and greenery to our streets. It will help make the city cooler, greener and more climate resilient.
- **A greener stroll to grab your groceries**
Design work is progressing on Market Square at Queen Victoria Market – the city's biggest new park in more than 50 years – alongside a greener, pedestrian-friendly Franklin Street connecting State Library Station to the market.



Keeping Melbourne active and connected

RESPONSIBLE RATES, PRACTICAL SUPPORT THAT GOES FURTHER

Keeping costs manageable while consistently delivering the services people rely on remains a clear focus:

- **Keeping rates as low as possible**
After we delivered a full rebate on the Victorian Government's 3% rate rise last year, ratepayers will see a 2.75% increase on their rates notice this year. Pensioners will again receive up to a 25% discount, and ratepayers can access support through payment plans and interest-free extensions.

- **Staying active, together**
To support community wellbeing, we're continuing our popular free fitness classes in the park, along with \$2 weekday summer pool visits and free summer swim lessons, helping keep people active and connected.



- **Helping put food on the table**
Rising food prices are putting pressure on households, and we're responding. This draft Budget invests in food security programs that rescue surplus food and deliver it to those who need it most. We will also expand our food rescue partnership at Queen Victoria Market, helping food relief providers reach more vulnerable people in our community.

CLEAN, SAFE AND EASY TO GET AROUND

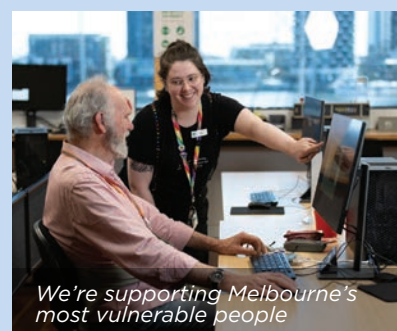
A great city works well day to day, and this draft Budget focuses on the essentials that make Melbourne safer and easier to navigate:



We're investing in a cleaner and safer Melbourne

- **More Community Safety Officers**
The number of Community Safety Officers will double, with 22 CSOs providing a stronger on-street presence.
- **Streets designed for people**
We're exploring ways to make it easier for pedestrians to move through the heart of the city, including extending Bourke Street Mall. Flinders Lane will also get a major refresh between Swanston and Degrave streets, with wider bluestone footpaths and more greenery and more space for the community to enjoy.
- **FOGO goes high rise**
For the first time, we're rolling out food and garden waste recycling to high-rise apartments, making it easier for more residents to reduce waste and keep apartment living green.

A FAIR GO FOR EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD



We're supporting Melbourne's most vulnerable people

From local libraries to neighbourhood hubs, having community places close to home helps people connect and feel part of something bigger:

- **New spaces to connect, learn and come together**
A 6.3 million investment will see new and upgraded community hubs including Southbank Library and the North Melbourne Community Hub, offering modern spaces to connect and learn.

- **Supporting our most vulnerable**
For the first time, dedicated support will be introduced for people experiencing homelessness with complex mental health challenges. A \$2.3 million investment will expand services for those at risk or sleeping rough, building on the care and connection already in place.
- **Giving kids a strong start**
Giving every child the best start means supporting families early. This draft Budget invests \$500,000 in early childhood services, focused on those who need it most. These programs aim to boost literacy, physical activity, improve access to nutritious food, and provide family-centered support including early intervention and domestic violence prevention.



Projects like the Greenline are one way this draft Budget is investing in making Melbourne greener and more liveable

Residents are invited to meet City of Melbourne Councillors during our public consultation on the draft budget.

Residents can provide feedback on the budget and ask questions about issues that matter.

- 11am-1pm on 8 April at City Square (in conjunction with a 'fitness in the park' activity)
- 11am-1pm on 17 April at Queen Victoria Market
- 10am-12pm on 18 April at Young Husband Rose St Market
- 4-6pm on 24 April at Boyd Community Hub in Southbank
- 4-6pm on 27 April at Clayton Reserve dog park in North Melbourne



Feedback on the draft Budget 2026-27 can be provided on Participate Melbourne from 6pm on Tuesday 31 March until 6pm on 28 April.

KEEP IN TOUCH

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Young writer found vocation in family history project

“

Carlton writer and Triple R presenter Jonathan Butler, who has published a true crime family history, is appearing in two events at the Melbourne Writers Festival next month.

”

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



From an early age Jonathan Butler was enchanted by a photo hanging in his mother's bedroom.

In it his grandmother, Winifred, and her cousin, Warwick, as kids, were posing in dress ups – she in baggy pants and a coat, he in a hat, heels and dress.

The spectacle both excited and reassured the young Jonathan, who had tried on his sisters' dresses more than once and sensed he was gay but had found little recognition of that possibility in the world around him.

“Growing up in the '90s you just didn't see it,” he said. “I didn't see it in the news on TV; no-one talked about it.”

“If there was ever a slight glimmer of it, it was shut down and spoken about badly.”

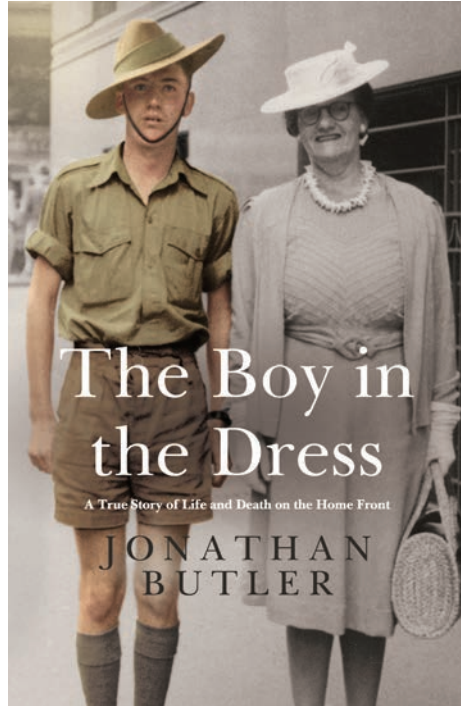


“So just in that vacuum of anything, I think this photo was like, 'holy crap!'”

But his “ancestor” Warwick, who was then a young serviceman, had been murdered in Townsville in 1944, and the mystery around the crime had never been solved.

From the age of 16 Jonathan and his mum started investigating the story.

“As soon as they launched Trove – the online newspaper resource, and ancestry.com, Mum and I were sort of on it,” he told



Inner City News.

“We were doing the sleuthing to try and find out what happened, because there was a family rumour that Warwick was gay and I was very interested in finding out if his death was a result of his sexuality.”

“I basically didn't stop until I was 27.”

During that decade of research and the four years of writing that followed it Jonathan found out “some pretty amazing stuff”, “worked through” issues around

sexuality with his mum, came out as a gay man, taught himself research skills and produced a book that straddles the genres of true crime and Australian history, family history and queer history.

He also found his calling as “an enthusiast” and writer of queer history and forged strong links with the community involved with the Australian Queer Archives at the Pride Centre in St Kilda.

Since *The Boy in the Dress* was released in 2022 Jonathan has regularly run family history workshops for writers.

“I was lucky enough to be invited to do that this year for the Melbourne Writers Festival,” the 35-year-old said.

Unfortunately, the May 6 workshop has already sold out.

A second event he is part of, on May 9, is a “light-hearted panel chat” with his Triple R *Queer View Mirror* co-host Sam Elkin, as well as comedian and commentator Aurelia Sinclair and Fiona Wright, the author of “sharply satirical new novel” *Kill Your Boomers*.

Likely to be on the agenda, along with intergenerational inequality, are Sydney versus Melbourne tensions, property lust and the decline of “the Great Australian Dream”.

As with the radio show, the idea was “to kind of bring people together and just have a chat about art and queerness and different ideas,” Jonathan said.

“I'm really looking forward to it. It should be fun.”

For more information on Melbourne Writers Festival events visit: mwf.com.au

The Boy in the Dress is published by Affirm Press. ●

Sky rail proposal over Park St moves forward, but Royal Park concerns deepen

Plans to elevate the Upfield rail line over Park St at the northern edge of Royal Park are progressing, with some local residents viewing the emerging design as having limited impact on nearby homes.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



However, park advocates have warned the effects on Royal Park itself will be far more significant than first suggested.

The project forms part of the Victorian Government's level crossing removal program, which aims to eliminate the congested crossings at Park St in Parkville and Brunswick Rd in Brunswick.

Together, the two crossings carry around 71,000 vehicles each day, with boom gates currently down for up to 30 minutes during the morning peak, causing significant traffic delays and disruption for commuters.

Under the emerging concept, trains will run on an elevated rail bridge over Park St before descending into the existing rail corridor through Royal Park. For Parkville residents, one of the most notable design features is the proposal to slightly lower Park St itself, allowing the rail bridge to begin descending earlier as it approaches the parkland.

Local community group the Parkville

Association has indicated it is broadly comfortable with the direction of the project, noting that the latest concept appears to have minimal impact on residents living along The Avenue. The design has therefore been seen by some as a relatively balanced outcome between transport improvements and neighbourhood impacts.

However, the Friends of Royal Park have pushed back strongly on any suggestion that the project's impact on the park will be limited.

Friends of Royal Park's Kaye Oddie said the sky rail through Royal Park did “not represent any kind of balance in reference to neighbourhood impacts”.

“Impacts will be totally detrimental,” she said.

Ms Oddie said public descriptions of the structure's height over Park St had understated what people would actually see once the full rail infrastructure, trains and overhead electrical equipment were taken into account.

According to Ms Oddie, while the sky bridge itself may be around 4.8 metres above Park St, the total visible height including rails, trains and gantries would be closer to 10 to 12 metres as it enters Royal Park.

She said that was a major change from the current situation, where trains run through a cutting from Park St towards Royal Park Station and are largely not visible, with minimal light and sound impact for both residents in The Avenue and park users.

“Skyrail through Royal Park will be highly visible as a built infrastructure with moving trains, and more highly visible and with



greater impacts at night with lights and noise,” she said.

Ms Oddie also noted that Royal Park was designated a “Dark Space” under the City of Melbourne's 2021 Lighting Strategy in order to protect biodiversity and wildlife. She said the introduction of elevated rail, lit trains and overhead infrastructure would undermine that objective and affect the park's environmental values.

The Friends group is also critical of the state government's decision not to require a full Environmental Effects Statement for the project.

In March, the Minister for Planning ruled that a full Environment Effects Statement would not be required, allowing planning and design work to continue. But Ms Oddie said that was “disappointing and unacceptable”, particularly given Royal Park's status as bushland parkland and the likely removal of mature trees and other vegetation near McAlister Oval for construction purposes.

The authority says feedback gathered

through community consultation in 2024, along with technical and engineering requirements, will help shape the final concept design, which is expected to be released in 2027.

Public information sessions were also held in February, giving residents an opportunity to review early planning ideas and ask questions about the project.

A Victorian Government spokesperson said that it would plant two new trees for every one required to be removed, as well as planting shrubs and grasses across the project area, while creating two MCGs worth of open space beneath the new elevated rail line.

“We are removing eight dangerous and congested level crossings in Brunswick and Parkville to improve safety and ease congestion for all road users,” the spokesperson said.

“This project will unlock two MCGs worth of open space, plant new trees and is an important first step to delivering further enhancements to the Upfield Line.” ●

Yarra Park master plan nears finish line as residents push back on “commercial creep”

Continued from page 1.

The East Melbourne Group (EMG), in a detailed submission backed by planning advice from Hansen Partnership, says the draft places “disproportionate emphasis on commercial and event-based uses, with insufficient regard for Yarra Park’s role as a peaceful public open space for local residents”.

Its core position is blunt: “Yarra Park is first and foremost a public open space, essential to the wellbeing of East Melbourne residents”. The group says the park should remain primarily for passive recreation, with any events limited in number, respectful in character and subject to direct community consultation. It has called for public car parking on grass to be phased out by 2030, a 50-metre amenity buffer to be maintained from Vale St and Jolimont Terrace, and for paddocks 12, 24 and 25 to be designated exclusively for passive recreational use.

The City of Melbourne’s own management submission raises several overlapping concerns. While generally welcoming the draft and supporting its broad planning direction, the council says the plan should better recognise Yarra Park as part of a broader open space network and more fully address its residential interface.

It also says the park’s future use for car parking should be stated more clearly, noting that the city “generally do[es] not support green open spaces being used for vehicle parking”.

That issue of parking remains one of the most contentious. The draft master plan proposes reviewing existing public and accessible parking locations and surface treatments on event days but stops short of committing to a phase-out. The EMG and individual resident submitter Jason Romney both argue that is not enough, pointing to repeated grass damage, mud, loss of usable parkland and the visual blight created by event-day vehicle use. Mr Romney says the only acceptable long-term strategy is “the removal or significant further reduction of public car parking to protect the environment and ensure safe recreational use”.

Hansen Partnership goes further, arguing the master plan should explicitly consider alternatives outside the park, including parking within the MCG or at the redeveloped Punt Road Oval, particularly for accessible parking. It says that would be more consistent with broader planning policy aimed at reducing vehicle access and parking in Yarra Park.

Events are the second flashpoint. The MCC draft says improved power and water connections would reduce the need for temporary generators and make event operations less ad hoc. The City of Melbourne supports that in principle, saying better permanent infrastructure could reduce damage from



vehicles and generators and make the park more suitable for events already migrating from elsewhere, such as the AFL Grand Final Parade.

But both the East Melbourne Group and Hansen warn that the plan lacks clarity about what exactly counts as an “event”, how often such events could occur, how long bump-in and bump-out periods might last, and how the community would be consulted.

The EMG says, that while “one could consider the current presentation of the park as mediocre,” its “unique position as one gateway to the MCG and Melbourne and Olympic Park Precinct should be presented as a world leading park of significant natural beauty and not give way to crass commercialism”.

It added: “Just as one would not consider temporary structures such as carnival rides and garishly signed alcohol outlets suitable for the Fitzroy or Royal Botanic Gardens; so should this be the case with Yarra Park.”

“There is already alternative infrastructure at Punt Road Oval and Birrarung Marr to provide for this, if deemed necessary.”

Hansen says the draft Event Management Strategy is too vague and gives little reassurance that the everyday values of the park will be protected over time.

Mr Romney’s submission is the most forceful, warning of “commercial creep” and objecting to the prospect of Yarra Park becoming an overflow venue for increasingly elaborate pop-up festivals and entertainments. He argues the plan risks turning the park into “an inner-city version of the Royal Showgrounds” rather than preserving it as “a peaceful retreat from the city”.

A further point of contention is the proposed planning mechanism itself. The master plan would be given effect through a new Special Control Overlay and Incorporated Document, replacing the existing 2010 Yarra Park Master Plan implementation controls. Hansen says that matters because those tools would remove

normal third-party notice and appeal rights, making it critical that the final master plan contains enough detail to give the community confidence about future use and development.

There are also concerns that the draft does not adequately account for major future changes nearby, including the Punt Road Oval redevelopment, the flagged Shane Warne Stand rebuild at the MCG, and possible future upgrades to Richmond Station, all of which could alter access, parking needs and pedestrian movement during the life of the plan. Hansen argues the master plan may therefore be premature unless those major projects are properly integrated into it.

For now, the review process is entering its final stage. The MCC says a consultation summary report is also being prepared and will accompany the formal amendment request to the minister. If approved, the final master plan would be gazetted into the planning scheme. ●




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Community CCTV appeal

Local police are appealing to members of the community with public-facing CCTV cameras to register them in a database used to help solve crimes.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



Local Area Commander Inspector Kael Oosthuizen told *Inner City News* the existing state-wide Victoria Police Community CCTV register was already “incredibly useful”, and police wanted to continue to build it.

“Essentially the register allows our members to see on a map the location of privately-owned CCTV systems and cameras and contains the contact details for who owns them if for some reason we think CCTV is going to benefit an investigation,” he said.

In the last month alone police had used the register numerous times to identify CCTV that might help investigations, he said.

In one instance officers investigating the theft of a vehicle from a multi-storey car park in the CBD were able to identify the owners of nearby CCTV systems, request footage and identify an offender.

In a second instance, in the case of the theft of an e-bike from outside a Melbourne hostel which had no useable CCTV, a check of the register located a nearby property that did, resulting in potential offenders being identified.

The register, which was started in September 2021 with an initial 415 cameras had since grown to more than 6000 across the state, Inspector Oosthuizen said.

It was growing daily, with more than 130 cameras added in the month of March.

“It’s becoming an increasingly useful tool for our investigators.”

The register didn’t include internal cameras in businesses, the inspector stressed.

“Really what we’re after is CCTV that captures an element of community space – whether it’s a street or footpath or a shared space.”

It was important to note that the process of registering was entirely voluntary, he said, and wouldn’t give police automatic access to any systems.

“We don’t have any ability to dial into anyone’s system or anything like that, just the knowledge of where it is and the fact that someone has indicated their willingness to share.”

All personal details would be stored in a secure police database, he said, and footage, if required, could be uploaded to police online.

“This is an organisational platform we’re keen to make people aware of,” the inspector said.

“It’s use really supports my investigators and my police members and we’re keen to see an increased awareness of it so that the community can register their interest if they choose to do so.”

People willing to provide the location of their CCTV, or with questions about the register, should contact their local police station (Melbourne North 8379 0800), (Melbourne West 9624 3999), (Melbourne East 9637 1100) or Acting Sergeant Nick Parissis at nektarios.parissis@police.vic.gov.au

They will be asked to fill out a one-page form sent by email. ●

Labor Cr Davydd Griffiths to challenge Ellen Sandell for Melbourne

City of Melbourne councillor Davydd Griffiths has announced he will run as a Labor candidate for the seat of Melbourne at the upcoming state election in November.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



The 51-year-old, who was elected to the council in 2020, has been a member of the Labor Party for 30 years, and said there had been “a long, slow fuse” to his upcoming tilt at parliament.

He had put up his hand for Labor pre-selection because of the opportunity it offered to address issues that he was passionate about, Cr Griffiths said. “And obviously the lessons and things I’ve seen, being a local councillor have helped inform that,” he told *Inner City News*.

The Flemington resident will face a significant challenge lining up against incumbent Ellen Sandell, who has held Melbourne since she won it for the Greens in 2014.

In 2022 Ms Sandell received 37.29 per cent of the primary vote compared to Labor candidate Rebecca Thistleton’s 30.65 per cent, and after preferences were distributed had 60.19 compared to Labor’s 39.81 per cent.

The seats of Melbourne and Prahran were the first Greens lower house wins in Victoria.

Before that Melbourne had been held by the ALP since 1955 and for much of the first half of the 20th century.

Cr Griffiths said he wasn’t motivated by the idea of winning the seat so much as a belief in the “real need for a strong local voice”.

He sees “services for residents and locals, particularly as our population grows locally” as the key issue for the electorate.

While every level of government worked together, he said, “certainly some of those big things, like schools and hospitals and public transport, obviously fall into the



bailiwick of the state government”.

Born and raised in Bendigo, Cr Griffiths moved to Melbourne when he was 18 to study teaching and spent six years working at Glen Waverley Secondary College and Mac. Robertson Girls’ High before moving into politics – first as an electorate officer, then a policy advisor in health, mental health and education to ministers in the Victorian parliament.

After leaving policy work and spending a few years as a stay-at-home dad, he made the unusual shift to hospitality, setting up a beer and burger bar in Macaulay Rd with a friend, which they operated for just under two years, before buying and running the Royal Mail Hotel on Spencer St for another two-and-a-half years.

As a councillor he has been involved in a broad range of areas, including education, infrastructure and economics, and is currently the portfolio lead for environment and deputy for community, health and city services.

Cr Griffiths said his family – wife, former councillor and former Labor member for

Melbourne Jen Kanis, and 14-year-old son, Blake – had played a genuinely meaningful role in the council work he had done, with Blake also providing a constant, very real link to the future.

As for the unusual Welsh spelling of his first name, Davydd, “it doesn’t cause me any grief at all,” Cr Griffiths said.

“It makes you stand out, so people don’t forget you, and that’s why you’ve got to make sure that you’re always delivering, because they can track you down pretty easily.”

Asked if he would remain on the council until the state election in November, Cr Griffiths said he would be following the appropriate protocols.

If there is a need to replace him, it’s highly likely that his fellow Labor candidate at the 2024 election Zainab Abdi Sheikh – who ran second on the group’s councillor ticket – would replace him on council.

With the 2024 Labor ticket having received more than 0.5 quotas and preferences from other teams, it’s anticipated that if Cr Griffiths were to defeat Ms Sandell, Ms Sheikh would become the first woman of African descent to serve on the City of Melbourne.

Ms Sheikh is a dedicated and passionate senior community development worker who currently serves as operational manager at Somali Women’s Development Association Inc. and as a community advisory committee member at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

And there could be more appetite for change in Melbourne. Cr Griffiths will take a lot of heart from last year’s federal election, where new Labor MP Sarah Witty claimed the seat of Melbourne from Adam Bandt, who had held the seat for the Greens since 2010.

A beer lover and the president of the Flemington and Kensington Bowling Club, Cr Griffiths said that being pre-selected for the Labor Party was an opportunity “lots of really good people don’t get” and was something he was “genuinely really honoured” by.

“To have that chance is really meaningful to me, it’s meaningful to my family and I want to make every post a winner now that that’s happened,” he said. ●

Melbourne Writers Festival to return for its 40th instalment

The Melbourne Writers Festival (MWF) has announced the program for its 40th anniversary edition this year, with more than 150 local and international artists set to appear across the city from May 7 to 10.

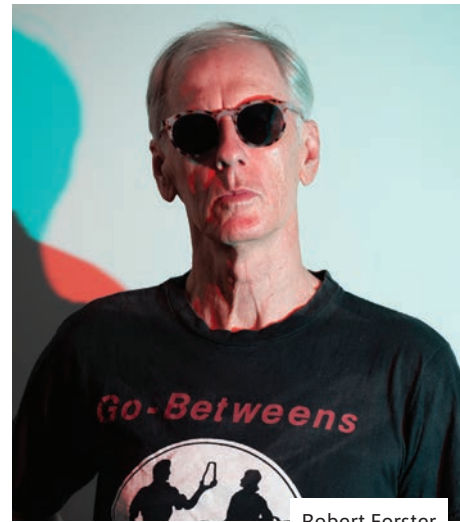
WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



The program, given the theme “Visions & Revisions”, would see writers, thinkers and storytellers explore “the futures we imagine, the stories we carry, and the revisions – personal and collective – that define us,” organisers said.

At Trades Hall’s Fringe Common Rooms on May 9 the founder of legendary indie rock band the Go Betweens, Robert Forster, will be telling stories from his debut “rock-and-roll joyride of a novel” *Songwriters on the Run* with local music identity Brian Nankervis. He will also play some music.

Afternoon event *Acoustic Mirrors* at the Common Rooms on May 9 promises to “transform the written word into a collection of poetic performances and intimate soundscapes” when local and international musicians and poets get together.



Robert Forster

Over at the Nova on Friday, May 8, Japanese psychological thriller *Exit 8* will screen with sparkling wine for the audience and a post-film Q&A with director Genki Kawamura.

Big-name international guests at this year’s festival include former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Canadian *Life of Pi* author Yann Martel, British 2025 Booker Prize winner David Szalay, feminist Irish-Indian poet Nikita Gill and best-selling North American speculative fiction novelist R. F. Kuang.

Among the many Australians appearing

are Anita Heiss, Daniel James and Evelyn Araluen – who are First Nations curators of the event – along with Andy Jackson, Maxine Beneba Clarke, Toni Jordan, Alice Pung, Romy Ash, Sam Elkin, Lally Katz and First Dog on the Moon.

Novel or standout events include an assessment of the political moment hosted by former *Insiders* host Barrie Cassidy; Sunday walking tours “tracing the city’s lost bohemian haunts and literary gathering places” with historian Robyn Annear; a meeting of Australian crime writers Dervla McTiernan and Benjamin Stevenson; a discussion by the authors of the new anthology *Crip Stories* about their perspectives on disability; and a song cycle by composer Sophia Brous created from the writing of poet Dorothy Porter, to be performed with composer Paul Grabowsky and introduced by Andrea Goldsmith.

There will be events focused on the rise of independent media (Osman Faruqi, Antoinette Lattouf, Amy Remeikis), artificial intelligence (Toby Walsh), sex and pleasure (Madison Griffiths and Kayla Jade), defiance and resilience (Antoinette Lattouf and Grace Tame) and a definitive cookbook (Stephanie Alexander).

Parkville local Tony Birch will deliver the closing night address on May 10 about the ethics of reading and writing, and the responsibilities of creative freedom.

For more information and bookings visit: mwf.com.au ●

LYGON LOCAL

From pasta to pancakes – Al Dente takes on breakfast

The owners of Al Dente Enoteca aren't afraid of change.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



Their business, which recently had a party to launch itself as a breakfast venue, has been undergoing near constant evolution over its five-year history.

These days the eatery is well settled into its Nicholson St address and high-end but relaxed reputation, its founder Andrea Vignali, front-of-house head Michelle Badek and executive chef Davide Bonadiman told *Inner City News*.

Their food is largely contemporary Italian – traditional recipes with a modern twist – using ingredients obtained as locally as possible, Andrea explained.

Around 80 per cent of ingredients are local, sourced with an eye for sustainability.

They include fresh produce from local farms and meats such as duck and 'roo – kangaroo tartare is a signature dish.

The majority of wine on the menu is Australian, with around half of that from Victoria.

For the owners, though, first and foremost is for their customers to feel comfortable and individually "cared for", they say, and waitstaff will only explain ingredients if they are asked to.

With their restaurant now serving seven days a week, the trio are keen to move on from its being categorised as a COVID-era startup.

Nevertheless, the origin story is a good one and they are happy to tell it.

For one thing it involves romance, and for another, resilience.



When the city shut down in 2020, Andrea – an Italian citizen who had been working as a chef at Grossi Fiorentino – needed to find an income, and together with his friend and former colleague Davide, started making homemade pasta.

From a cramped house, they moved into a mate's four-storey pub in town and began doing "fine dining" home deliveries as well.

The business took off, growing to a high point of \$40,000 of sales in one day.

"We were feeding hundreds of families a week and we got very busy," Andrea says.

"We started supporting all the visa holders that couldn't support themselves and all our chef and head-chef friends were then prepping pasta for Al Dente."

At this point, Michelle met the chefs as a customer.



Impressed by their initiative and unfazed by the \$70 minimum order and the fact they had run out of pasta at the time, she put in a request for 2.5kg of mushroom ragu.

While this was way more than she needed, and some of it was probably still in her freezer today, the order turned out to provide "the best return on investment" she had ever had, said Michelle, who has since married Andrea and taken on administrative and front-of-house responsibility for Al Dente.

For his part, Andrea says he and Davide would have got nowhere without his wife's administrative nous.

"We always say that we wouldn't be able to send the first email," he said.

"[We'd be] still there trying to do it – 'how do you apply for the food permit?'"

Since opening as a physical restaurant



in 2021 the trio have expanded Al Dente's eating areas into the Italian delicatessen, Saporì, they established next door.

Last year they tried their hand at running a pizza bar out of an Elgin St laundromat.

After the business got robbed, they shut it and channelled the impulse into weekend breakfasts.

The idea is for "a bit of a fancy breakfast" compared to what else is around, Andrea says.

"We have crumpets, lobster buns and poached eggs; our signature dish is cacio e pepe (pecorino Romano cheese and toasted pepper sauce) omelette, which is from our night-time signature dish, cacio e pepe tortelloni."

Also on the breakfast menu – served Friday to Sunday from 8am to 11am – are hash browns and trout, sourdough pancakes and a range of Italian croissants, including Nutella and pistachio cream flavours, along with tiramisu.

Among the drink options – mimosas, espresso martinis, apple juice and ginger tea. ●

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Comedy festival comes to Carlton

“ This year the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, which runs until April 19, marks its 40th anniversary with its biggest ever event, taking in more than 800 shows.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



The festival is marking its 40th anniversary this year with the staging of its biggest ever event – its 800 shows an increase from last year of more than 100.

According to Susan Provan AO, who has directed the festival since 1994, it grows organically each year, and its scale is what makes it exciting and “something people want to be a part of”.

“That’s why artists flock from all over because there’s a great sense of camaraderie. People want to go and see each other’s shows, and they wind up striking creative partnerships,” she says.

For the audience it can be hard to poke a stick at the sheer volume of performers, but one approach is to go local.

“North of the city, there are really beloved venues like The Motley Bauhouse in Carlton, which has got an incredible lineup of really interesting, new and exciting artists,” Ms Provan says. “They’ve got a great program.”

“We’ve got a really big program we’ve created at Trades Hall in Carlton, so go and

see stuff there!”

Among the international acts the director mentions are Malaysian “weirdo” Phil Wang, New York “toxic optimist” Zainab Johnson, English animal lover Josie Long and “delusional queer icon” Sam Nicoresti.

As for locals, there is a long list of well knowns and up-and-comers, including Denise Scott, Geraldine Hickey, Lizzy Hoo, Celia Pacquola, Lano & Woodley, Bron Lewis, Melanie Bracewell, Nazim Hussein, Ray O’Leary, Tom Cashman, Reuben Kaye and Chris Ryan.

A series of gala events includes *Asian Allstars* (April 4), *Upfront* female and non-binary comics (April 6) and *The Big Four Oh* celebration (April 13).

There are grand finals of high school *Class Clowns* (April 2); *First Nations Deadly Funny* (April 11) and emerging comic *Raw Comedy* (April 12) events.

Meanwhile, *The Great Debate*, at the Melbourne Town Hall (April 5), will examine the claim “That it was better in the olden days” while a documentary about the 50-year career of Rod Quantock is set to premiere at ACMI (April 16).

Over the school holidays Fed Square and the City Square will host the (Very) Big Laugh Out (April 3 – 18) with free all-ages programming, packed with “world-class street performers and the best stand-up, physical and musical comedy in da biz” kicking off from Good Friday.

Above all, Ms Provan urges people just to get along to the festival, and if in doubt, to see acts they haven’t heard of.

“Just take a punt. The tickets are not that expensive compared to big music concerts or big theatre shows - our average ticket price is somewhere around \$35,” she says.

“You just never know what you’re going to see – comedy is constantly surprising, which is great, and we need it at the moment!”

The Melbourne International Comedy Festival runs until April 19. ●



Citizen scientists log city’s top three insects

Insect BioBlitz iNaturalist photo competition winner – a tri-horned treehopper. Photo: Jason Walters.

Insects were under the magnifying glass around the City of Melbourne last month, with the launch of a local guide to the critters followed by a series of events aimed at getting to know them.

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



Insects play a vital role in the environment, helping pollinate plants, maintain healthy soils, control pests, and provide food for bigger animals, and in the City of Melbourne more than 1500 species call the parks and gardens home.

Many species are facing extinction as a result of habitat loss, pollution and climate change and there are several key ways to help.

So reads the City of Melbourne’s new eye-opening insect guide, which recommends

planting indigenous species; keeping rocks, logs and leaves lying around; avoiding chemicals; turning off lights at night; and contributing to science by observing and recording local insects.

Produced by council staff, together with Federation Square and the community organisation Heartscapes, the simple, 16-page guide features information on insect anatomy and metamorphosis and illustrated pages on different categories of the critters.

It also contains facts such as: “One in four of all animals on Earth are beetles”.

According to Cr Davydd Griffiths, the City’s portfolio lead for environment, since its creators officially launched the guide on February 28 they had run out of copies.

“I don’t think we expected it to be as popular as it was,” he said.

The same was true of the launch event at Federation Square venue The Edge, which saw people turned away.

The crowd of 500 heard from a range of leaders involved in insect-friendly

initiatives, including the City of Melbourne’s Senior Urban Forester, the founder of a community-led “pollinator corridor” project from Westgate Park to the Botanic Gardens, and representatives from the Melbourne Zoo and new Melbourne Arts Precinct garden, Laak Boorndap.

City of Melbourne resident Heather Wheat told *Inner City News* the guide and its launch were “fantastic”.

An avid gardener, Ms Wheat already monitors and encourages her local insect populations.

The guide, which contains “a good spectrum of beetles and wasps and bugs and butterflies and other things”, was “really good for raising awareness of what’s around,” she said.

“And once you’ve seen the insects, you think, ‘oh, gee this is pretty,’ and you start looking at them differently.”

The launch of the guide kicked off a week of “BioBlitz” sessions and other events around the municipality, from March 1 to 8, where attendees logged insect sightings using crowd science app iNaturalist and took part in walks and other expert-led activities.

These included day and night-time BioBlitz events at Royal Park, one at the General Cemetery in Parkville and an educational “compost critters” session at the Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre.

According to Cr Griffiths, more than 800 individual observations were made at the BioBlitz events, with 237 different species recorded.

Of these, the top three were the chequered cuckoo bee, lesser grass blue butterfly and wingless grasshopper, he said.

The chequered cuckoo bee was one he had spotted himself at Royal Park.

The series of events had promoted positive actions people could take such as building “bee hotels”, planting insect habitat, linking green spaces and avoiding pesticides, as well as recording insect sightings, the councillor said.

“The enthusiasm Melburnians have shown for going out and engaging with them is really exciting.” ●

Packaged liquor licence application

We Gertrude Grocer Carlton Pty Ltd applied to Liquor Control Victoria on 3rd December 2025 for the grant of a packaged liquor licence at 144 Elgin Street Carlton Victoria 3053.

Any person may object to the grant of this application on the grounds that:

- it would detract from, or be detrimental to, the amenity of the area in which the premises are situated, and/or
- it would be conducive to or encourage the misuse or abuse of alcohol.

An objection must state the reasons for the objection. All objections are treated as public documents.

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Objections must be made no later than 30 days after the date of this notice.

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Cyclists protest Yarra's Elizabeth St bike lane downgrade in Richmond

Cycling advocates and local residents gathered on Elizabeth St in Richmond on Sunday, March 15 to protest the City of Yarra's decision to narrow the street's protected bike lanes, warning the move will make one of inner Melbourne's key east-west cycling links less safe.

WORDS BY
SEAN CAR



The protest came just a day before works began to remove the existing separators as part of road resurfacing and redesign works that will reduce the width of the lanes in order to reinstate 45 car parking spaces along the street.

For riders, the issue reaches beyond Richmond. Elizabeth St forms part of a major cycling corridor connecting through Hoddle St to Albert St in East Melbourne and on to the CBD, making it an important link into the City of Melbourne's broader bike network.

Advocates say narrowing the lanes undermines the role of the route as a Strategic Cycling Corridor and risks creating a weaker connection just as the City of Melbourne prepares to upgrade and widen the Albert St protected lanes in 2026-27.

In a media release issued after the protest, campaigners said residents had sent hundreds of emails to Roads and Road Safety Minister Melissa Horne and Minister for Public and Active Transport Gabrielle Williams, urging them to intervene and stop the changes.

With no action taken by the state government, protesters returned to the street as works commenced on Monday, March 16, as crews began removing the yellow traffic separators protecting the current lanes.

The Yarra Bicycle Users Group said riders using bicycles, e-bikes and e-scooters would now be left without protection from traffic for the next four to five weeks during construction.

Critics argue the narrower lanes and reduced buffers will increase the risk of close passes and dooring, particularly for people riding larger bicycles such as cargo bikes, as well as delivery riders who rely on the corridor daily.



Local resident Karen Hovenga said the timing of the downgrade was particularly concerning.

"As a local, I support these lanes and at a time when many people are facing uncertainty due to possible petrol shortages, the Victorian State Government shouldn't allow local councils to play short-term politics and remove safe alternative travel options and waste ratepayers' money," she said.

Campaigners have also argued that Yarra's redesign falls short of state design guidance for Strategic Cycling Corridors, which recommends a minimum rideable width of two metres for protected bike lanes on streets such as Elizabeth St.

The existing lanes were first trialed in 2020 and made permanent in 2023. But after a change in the makeup of the council, councillors voted in April last year to pursue a redesign that would make room for more parking on the north side of the street.

The issue has remained contentious ever since.

As previously reported by *Inner City News*,

councillors voted in August 2025 to proceed with concept designs narrowing the lanes, despite concerns from cycling groups, transport experts and some councillors that the change would make the route less safe and potentially compromise a state-significant corridor.

The council later approved additional funding in February this year for resurfacing works, bringing the reported total cost of the project to \$720,000.

Supporters of the existing bike lanes say the money is being spent to make the corridor worse.

Streets Alive Yarra's Herschel Landes said the controversy exposed a broader problem with cycling infrastructure standards.

"These minimum design guidelines have never been made mandatory, and local

streets, even those which are Strategic Cycling Corridors, are at the mercy of local politics and influence," he said.

Greens councillor Sophie Wade, who has opposed the changes, said residents had been let down.

"Labor has stood by while Yarra Council rips up safe bike lanes," Cr Wade said. "Residents deserve safe and affordable options in Richmond, as they were promised."

Yarra has previously argued the redesign is intended to balance cycling access with local parking needs.

But for critics, the start of works marks a symbolic and practical setback on a route seen as crucial not just for Richmond, but for the wider inner-city cycling network leading into Melbourne's CBD. ●

Hyperlocal News launches *Future Melbourne* podcast

A new podcast examining the ideas, debates and decisions shaping Melbourne's future is continuing to build momentum this month, with new episodes now live on the city economy and Docklands, and another on housing to be released next.

Produced by Hyperlocal News, the publisher of *Inner City News* and its network of local newspapers across the City of Melbourne, *Future Melbourne* aims to provide a platform for deeper conversations about how the city is evolving and what lies ahead.

Hosted by Hyperlocal News publisher and editor Sean Car, the podcast features interviews with key voices from across Melbourne's civic, planning, business and cultural sectors, unpacking the challenges and opportunities facing the city.

The series launched with its first episode focusing on one of Melbourne's most iconic institutions, Queen Victoria Market, with CEO Matt Elliott discussing the precinct's ongoing renewal and the future of one of the city's most recognisable public spaces.

Since then, the podcast has expanded into some of the biggest questions facing the municipality.

A recent episode features former City of Melbourne councillor, *Crikey* founder and shareholder activist Stephen Mayne, who joins the program to discuss the future of Melbourne's CBD and the economic forces shaping it in the years since the pandemic.

That conversation explores the long shadow of COVID on the central city, from office vacancies and hybrid work to what the City of Melbourne can realistically do to help drive economic recovery and renewed activity in the CBD.

Another new episode, now also live, turns the spotlight on Docklands, with former City of Melbourne councillor Jamal Hakim joining the podcast to discuss the waterfront precinct's challenges, opportunities and long-running revitalisation efforts.

The next episode, which is now available, examines housing pressures and affordability challenges in the City of Melbourne, with Housing All Australians founder Rob Pradolin joining the conversation.

Mr Car said the podcast was created to extend the role Hyperlocal News has long played in covering local issues and community conversations across the municipality.

"For many years our newspapers have reported on the key decisions shaping Melbourne, from planning and development to major civic projects and local issues affecting our neighbourhoods," Mr Car said.

"The podcast gives us a new platform to take those conversations further and to hear directly from the people involved in shaping the city's future."

He said the idea behind *Future Melbourne* was to provide thoughtful, accessible discussions about topics that often shape everyday life in the city but can be difficult to unpack in traditional news formats.

The series is supported by Good One Creative, with episodes set to cover a wide range of topics affecting Melbourne's future, including Arden-Macaulay, Fishermans Bend, the Melbourne Arts Precinct, the future of Lygon St, the Yarra River, city safety and the role of public space in shaping community life.

Mr Car said following an initial pilot of 12 episodes, the aim was to build the podcast into an ongoing forum for informed discussion about the direction of the city. ●



PARKVILLE ASSOCIATION

Farewell

It is hard to believe 10 years ago the then president of the Parkville Association asked for volunteers from the committee to take over the chair. I was still working but put my hand up not knowing I would still be there 10 years later!



It has been fun caring for a neighbourhood I have lived in for more than 30 of the past 45 years. There is so much I can say about one of the best suburbs in Australia to live. The wonderful streetscapes of Victorian houses, Royal Park, the Zoo, the University and even a train station! Great friends, caring neighbours and a village we have all called home.

In 2017 we celebrated 50 years as an association joined by then Lord Mayor Robert Doyle and Adam Bandt our then federal MP for Melbourne. It was an interesting event but highlighted the gap between our association, the council and our great friends across the road at the University.

The Parkville Association was named to include all in Parkville. We are not just a residents' association but inclusive of all that live, work and study in Parkville.

Our War Memorial lists many who died in the First World War, sadly many were students studying pre-war at the university.

We have built the bridge and through the good work of the University and Colleges we have a great friendship with Janet Clarke Hall (JCH), Ormond, the University and very importantly our nearest neighbour Trinity. We have two committee members from Trinity and JCH and held our traditional "Party in the Park" at Trinity last year.

We have a station. The uni wanted to name it University, some Haymarket and others after the hospitals. We fought and won and it is named after the suburb it resides in! They wanted to close Grattan St but with help from the council it is operating superbly. We also had a VCAT case, which was tough but fully funded by residents and did not move forward, now being further heritage protected.

The support from members and other residents has been superb. Why not, we are a family of Parkvillians. We chat in the street or over a drink in Naughtons. We care for Royal Park ... council, do not let it become a giant sports field! Most of us love walking through to Carlton through the University or down to Queen Victoria Market. It is a truly wonderful inner-city village.

To Sean and the team at *Inner City News*

thank you for giving us the ability to communicate with all residents and, of course, the city.

To the team at Town Hall, a big thank you to Sally Capp and Nick Reece. Two very approachable friends who with the great team have helped our work enormously. Sally introduced a group called the Presidents of Residents that meets quarterly and also initiated neighbourhood partners. Nas Mohamud has held the role for a long time and is a dear friend.

To all that follow, everyone at the City of Melbourne is there to help if you work with their teams as friends, they are incredible to team up with but always respect them!

Not only is the 10 years up but Kereth and I have bought a great apartment only three blocks away but in Carlton. Still the city and close enough to keep in touch with our dear friends in Parkville. We will miss you all, but Parkville will be forever in our hearts!

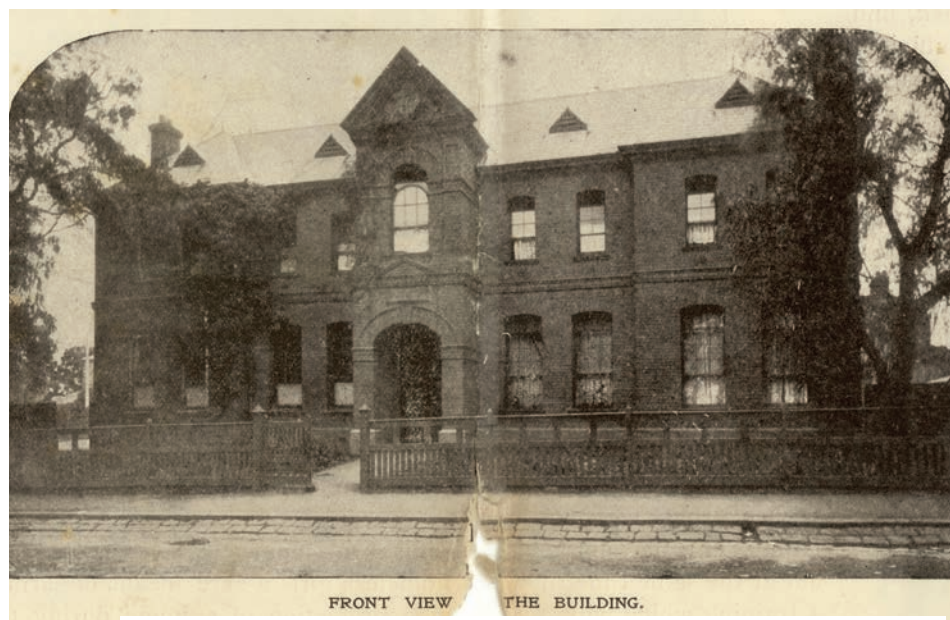
Rob and Kereth ●

Rob Moore

PRESIDENT
PARKVILLE ASSOCIATION



EAST MELBOURNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



FRONT VIEW THE BUILDING.
Servants Training Institute. Brochure. Archives of Holy Trinity Church, East Melbourne.

The Servants Training Institute

On the western side of Berry St, East Melbourne, there once stood a large red brick building known as the Servants' Training Institute.

It came into being following the 1872 Royal Commission into Industrial and Reformatory Schools, which condemned on several grounds the industrial school system for its care of neglected children.

To improve the system children were increasingly placed with foster families, under regular supervision by honorary local Ladies Visiting Committees. Some of these women had the idea that girls coming out of the industrial schools or foster homes would benefit by training in the domestic arts in order to more easily find work.

A committee was formed, with Mrs Moorhouse, wife of the Bishop of Melbourne, as president. The institute was initially established in The Vaucluse, Richmond until such time that it received a grant of land.

The Berry St land was granted in 1882. Fundraising began in earnest. Mrs Austin of Barwon Park promised £700 on the condition that another £1400 was raised by the end of the year.

The architectural firm of Grainger and D'Ebro was instructed to draw up plans for a suitable building, and the Servants' Training Institute was born.

It opened in 1883. It was described by the matron's assistant as "Gaunt, bare, square, and grim" "with a hard, red front". It had 16 rooms, including two large dormitories and a schoolroom. The initial intake was 28 girls

generally between the ages of 12 and 15. The government paid the sum of 5s (50c) weekly for the upkeep of each trainee, with the remainder raised by private subscription. Two hours every day was devoted to ordinary school instruction, and during the rest of the day the girls were trained in cooking, plain sewing, laundry, and housework. The girls wore a uniform of dark blue serge with white apron and hat.

At the end of their training the institute found placements for the girls, but they remained under its supervision. Their wages were deposited in a savings bank and became available to them at the age of 18, when they were free to do as they pleased.

The institute struggled from the beginning. It failed to attract trainees in the numbers hoped for. Presumably the girls, and their families, thought it better to find a job on leaving school rather than wasting time with more lessons. Financial support also fell short of the mark. Then adding to the existing problems was the reduced demand for domestic staff after the end of the war. The institute finally closed in 1923.

The building was used by a number of different charitable institutions over the following decades but was eventually demolished in 1976. ●

Sylvia Black

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La Mama unveils autumn line-up with dark comedy, mystery and moral unease

La Mama will stage a trio of new productions across April and May, with its Carlton venues set to host an Australian premiere, a surreal thriller and a sharp new black comedy.

Leading the April program at La Mama HQ is *Spare a Thought* for Jana Wendt, Nicola Watson's Patrick White-shortlisted play, which will have its Australian premiere from April 8 to 26. Directed by Anne Browning, the work follows three old friends who reunite for a luxurious bushland Airbnb getaway centred on self-care, wine and reconnection, only for

the weekend to descend into a contemporary moral dilemma as a storm closes in outside.

Watson said the play explored "the performativity of ethics: what we say we should do vs what we are willing to do vs what we actually do", while Browning described it as a "refreshingly honest window" into the collisions that arise when people try to hold on to both moral certainty and personal comfort. The cast includes Alexandra Aldrich, Tess Masters, Rebecca Bower and Rosie Traynor.

Running alongside it at La Mama Courthouse from April 8 to 26 is *Head | Thorax | Abdomen*, a new work by James Hazelden described as a Kafkaesque thriller

and darkly surreal mystery. Inspired by a real-life moment when Hazelden found himself trapped in a VCA stairwell without an access pass or phone, the play weaves together three seemingly separate narratives into what La Mama calls a single unsettling puzzle.

Hazelden said the work examined modern anonymity and trust.

"We interact with anonymous people every day – phone calls, text messages, online – but we can never be sure who we're really talking to," he said. "This play examines the willingness with which we give up our privacy and spill our secrets."

The autumn season then shifts

into May with *STUCK*, Megan Twycross' new black comedy, which runs at La Mama HQ from May 6 to 24. Set in a small-town supermarket deli, the play centres on two nameless women locked in a battle of wit, will and survival under fluorescent lights and refrigerator hum.

Directed by Susie Dee and starring Caroline Lee and Eva Seymour, *STUCK* explores female expectation, generational tension and the question of whether people can really choose differently. Twycross said the work had been shaped by both regional Australia and her own experience of motherhood, while Dee described it as "exact and unflinching". ●



From Carlton's patchwork quilt to centre stage: celebrating Elle Morrell's 10 years at CNLC

When Elle Morrell applied for a job at Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre (CNLC) 10 years ago, she had a confession to make, at least to herself.

WORDS BY
TONY MILNE

"I thought I might be organising knitting groups and mahjong sessions," she admitted with characteristic honesty. "I think many people don't appreciate all we do, and that every neighbourhood house is different."

Elle arrived at CNLC with an unusual path behind her. She had spent most of her career in the environment and climate change sector, including a stint living and working in Arnhem Land, where something shifted for her.

She became interested not just in the environment itself, but in building community resilience and helping people thrive in the face of change. Her long-term ambition was to open her own migrant and refugee centre. Working at a neighbourhood house first seemed like good preparation.

In my three years working alongside Elle, I have come to know her as an ambitious big-picture thinker with deep connections into community. She always had one eye on the horizon and the other firmly on the people in front of her, and that combination is rarer than it sounds.

Carlton had been Elle's home since she was 17, and she saw its contradictions clearly.

"I came to call it the socio-economic picture of Carlton as a patchwork quilt," she said.

Alongside wealthy residents and businesses, she saw real disadvantage and isolation. She noticed that while Carlton's Italian community had built roots and belonging over generations, a new wave of migrants was arriving to find those doors not yet open. Eritrean, Vietnamese, Chinese and Somali families, looking for a foothold in a new country.

That observation shaped a decade of work. One of Elle's proudest achievements was co-designing and opening Open Door, CNLC's satellite office at the bottom of Carlton's public housing towers, which at its peak served more than 3000 residents.

She also drove major environmental work on our grounds, including establishing a



native bush food garden to bring Australian flora into the inner city, and led a significant partnership with the University of Melbourne to address digital inequity, distributing refurbished laptops and building digital literacy programs for community members experiencing disadvantage.

But it is often the human moments that stay with you. Elle still lights up talking about a group of Harari women who formed a catering business and partnered with King and Godfree to bring their menu to the rooftop bar.

"It was impressive to see how the women worked hard to make it a success," she said. "Being welcomed into mainstream Australian culture while also promoting their own."

That is community development in its truest form: invisible until it blooms.

"It is all about listening and caring for people," Elle said. "To identify innovative and practical outcomes that can change people's lives."

After 10 years, Elle is stepping into an entirely new world, theatre stage management. It is a bigger leap than it sounds, but knowing Elle, the skills will transfer seamlessly.

She spent a decade juggling programs, events, crises and community relationships, and she managed our much-loved Harmony Day festival with the kind of calm, behind-the-scenes mastery that theatre actually runs on. She is already thinking about how the arts can create change and improve lives, a question that feels very Elle.

"It has been an absolute privilege," she said. "I feel like CNLC gave me lots of opportunities to follow my own direction. I will miss CNLC an awful lot." ●



The future of Lygon St is no laughing matter!

The Carlton Residents' Association (CRA) has had a long-standing interest and involvement in Lygon St as the activity spine of the Carlton community.

WORDS BY
MARTIN BRENNAN

Lygon St has had its ups and downs but through reinvention and the commitment of traders and residents to its commercial and community roles.

We all have an investment in Lygon St. We can be proud of what has been achieved over generations of social and cultural change, but complacency and a lack of public infrastructure investment threaten the long-term viability of Lygon St.

While Lygon St continues to seek out a toe hold in the City of Melbourne's social, cultural and culinary calendar most attention is on the viability of the CBD.

The recent wave of new restaurants along Lygon St with their long queues will however be short-lived and whilst we can get a laugh or two, we need a long-term plan for the future of the Lygon St, not a short-term comedic hit.

The CRA has proposed and has been supported by Carlton Inc. in a rejuvenation of the street, its mobility, amenity and attractiveness.

The plan will herald in a new era for Lygon St and will attract the local community and a wider visitor community to spend time enjoying the pedestrian and trader friendly environment.

So, what is the problem or, more importantly, what can be done to ensure the future vitality and sustainability of Lygon St and its role as Carlton's activity spine?

Lygon St currently has an excessive amount of through traffic that impacts on traders, shoppers and pedestrians alike.

The noise and size of vehicles also has a deleterious impact on pedestrians, shoppers and diners.

Parklets introduced during COVID were a welcome addition to the street and have provided restaurants with outdoor environments. But they have been ad hoc in their location and design.

We need to address the future needs of the street in an integrated and sustainable way so that we all can continue to have an economic, social and environmental investment in our street.

The CRA has therefore proposed that Lygon St become a one-way street each way, that footpaths be widened to three metres and kerb parking replace the existing parklets. The wider footpaths will accommodate outdoor dining areas, so it is a win-win for traders and the community.

The rejuvenation would allow for extra low plantings and improved street cleaning. The changes would play an important role in prioritising the street's heritage value and its role as an activity centre.

New street furniture can then provide public seating and glass screens can be designed to be a window on to the Lygon St world.

The CRA has also advocated for the part closure of Faraday St outside the Kathleen Syme Library in support of walking, cycling, public transport and traffic calming. This will add to the library's amenity and its functioning as a community hub. It would also encourage access to Lygon St from the University.

Ideally the road closure would extend beyond Cardigan St thus creating a parkway from Swanston St to Lygon St for residents and students.

While the CRA acknowledges the new bluestone paving of the footpath on the east side of Lygon St between Queensberry and Pelham streets, it is but a small step in what is needed to ensure the rejuvenation of Lygon St and its future. We owe it to previous and future generations.

So, let's get serious about the future of Lygon St. ●

Green groups slam closure of "key" agencies

The closure of two "key" East Melbourne-based environmental agencies will "silence expert voices and strip away independent safeguards for nature," according to green groups, which accuse the government of being "scared of independent expert advice".

WORDS BY
JENNY DENTON



As part of a sweeping review of the Victorian public service, the government has passed legislation dismantling the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC)

and Victorian Marine and Coastal Council – "key institutions" in the protection of habitats and wildlife, according to several Victorian environment groups.

The two councils, both based at the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) in East Melbourne, provided independent, evidence-based advice that underpinned how Victoria's parks and habitats were planned for and protected, according to the Victorian National Parks Association, The Wilderness Society, Environmental Justice Australia and the Victorian Protected Areas Council.

Cutting them had left nature "without the expert guidance and community input it desperately needs," they claimed.

The VNPA's Matt Ruchel told *Inner City News* VEAC was a "world-leading" organisation, which had more than 50 years played a central role in shaping millions of hectares

of national parks and protected areas across the state. It wasn't mentioned in the Silver review of the public service, he said.

The two councils together had probably cost the government less than \$2 million a year, he estimated, claiming closing them was "a false economy".

"It's clear the environment's not a priority for the Allan government," Mr Ruchel said.

The changes – which came on top of "massive cuts to nature staff" last year across DEECA, Parks Victoria and the Victorian Fisheries Authority – passed parliament with the opposition's backing on March 19, in a bill that included a range of other cuts or mergers of public entities.

Greens MP for Melbourne Ellen Sandell told the parliament the legislation set out "to demolish, gut or merge public entities which play crucial roles" in protecting the environment at a time when Victoria was "in

an extinction crisis".

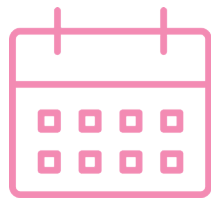
The loss of VEAC fundamentally left "vital decisions on the management of public land down to short-term political pressure rather than expert advice," Ms Sandell said.

The government has justified abolishing the agencies by saying it would "reduce duplication".

While some of VEAC's functions are due to be transferred to the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability, the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council has been abolished entirely, the green groups noted, claiming it left no dedicated voice to hold the government accountable on issues like coastal erosion, algal blooms, oil spills and climate impacts on the state's coasts.

Victorian Protected Areas Council's Dr Geoff Wescott said that the government appeared "to be scared of independent expert advice and community input". ●

WHAT'S ON April



Experience the inner city buzz this month with festivals, markets, exhibitions and more.



LYGON STREET MARKET

Celebrate Easter Sunday at Lygon Street Market, Carlton. Browse handmade art, crafts, gourmet food, meet local makers, enjoy Italian treats and a vibrant community atmosphere.

Piazza Italia (Argyle Square), Carlton

SUNDAY 5 APRIL, 10AM – 3PM



HOT CROSS BUNS BUT MAKE IT GELATO

This Easter, GLO Gelato and Luna Bakery in Carlton team up for a limited-edition gelato jar, blending Italian milk chocolate gelato with Luna's chocolate hot cross buns.

GLO Gelato & Luna Bakery, Lygon St

UNTIL 5 APRIL OR UNTIL SOLD OUT



THE LISTIES

Festival favourites The Listies are back by POOP-ular demand. Gratuitous, ridiculous and always hilarious, family comedy doesn't get any better than this.

Melbourne Museum

4 – 19 APRIL, 1PM – 2PM



GAME MAKING

Join this workshop and create a cupboard full of DIY games to take home and play on the holidays. Lots of fun ideas and all materials are provided. Ages: 5 – 12 years.

Kathleen Syme Library

TUESDAY 7 APRIL, 10.30AM – 11.30AM

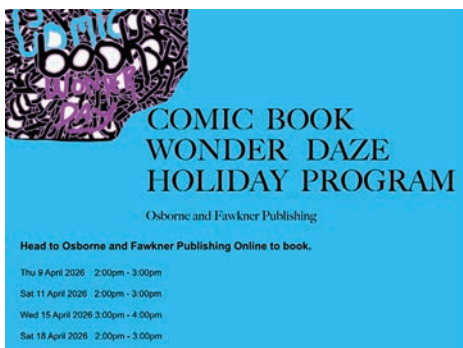


TO BE RETURNED

To Be Returned at The Torch explores the emotional journey of First Peoples artworks from prison, highlighting complex returns and fostering connection between artists, families, and audiences.

The Torch Project, Carlton

UNTIL 11 APRIL, 10AM – 4PM



COMIC BOOK WONDER DAZE EASTER HOLIDAY PROGRAM

Comic Book Wonder Daze offers teens and young adults creative workshops, prizes, and publishing opportunities through interactive comic drawing sessions.

East Melbourne Library

9 – 18 APRIL, 2PM – 3PM



LAND OF THE LOST: HOLIDAY PROGRAM

Full-day writing program for ages 8 – 12 exploring portal fantasy, magical worlds, and sensory storytelling through imaginative adventures in mysterious realms.

Story Studios Australia, Carlton

MONDAY 13 APRIL, 9AM – 3PM



MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL

Celebrating 40 years, with a month-long, citywide program featuring favourites, rising stars, international acts, family shows and hundreds of performances.

Melbourne Town Hall

UNTIL 19 APRIL



THE MAKERS AND SHAKERS MARKET

The Makers and Shakers Market returns to the Royal Exhibition Building with 185+ Australian-made stalls, workshops, tastings, kids activities and special celebrations for its ten-year anniversary.

Royal Exhibition Building

18 – 19 APRIL, 10AM – 4PM



SONGBIRDS

Songs, rhymes and stories will engage your budding bookworm's mind and introduce them to the fun and rhythm of language. Age: newborn to 18 months.

East Melbourne Library

UNTIL 10 DECEMBER, 10.30AM – 11AM



SWINGING 60s

This exhibition explores 1960s Victoria, showcasing music, fashion, protest items, instruments, and Barbie memorabilia, highlighting youth culture, rebellion, and social change.

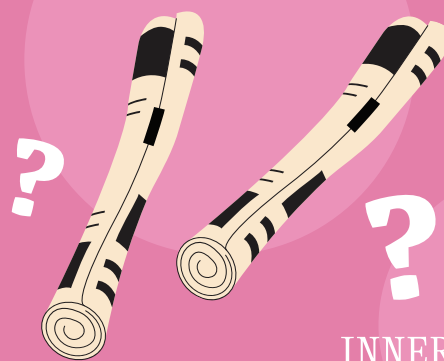
Old Treasury Building, East Melbourne

UNTIL DECEMBER, 10AM – 4PM

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INNER CITY NEWS

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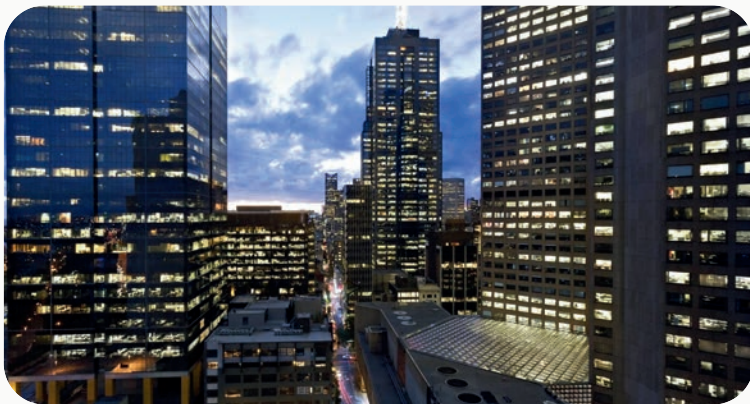


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