

# The Centre FORCED TO CLOSE THE DOOR

For over a decade, The Centre was the only neighbourhood house funded by the City of Melbourne. Then, owing to municipal boundary changes in 2008, the City of Melbourne took on responsibility for partially funding three more community centres. As a result, four community centres were to be funded out of a program that originally funded just The Centre. With no overall increase in the amount of money allocated to the program, the new base level of funding for The Centre beginning 1 July 2009 was to be 71 per cent lower than what it had been the previous year.

The Centre argued that the funding cut was too abrupt, and the decision was reviewed. The City of Melbourne decided not to increase the base amount of funding for The Centre, but it did provide for some 'transitional funding' to assist The Centre to adjust its new base level. A total transitional funding amount of \$300,000 has been provided over three years to have The Centre reach the new base funding amount in 2013. As a result, The Centre was able to operate throughout 2009–2010, minimising the disruption to program delivery, whilst preparing for a dramatically changed future.

Coming into the 2010–2011 financial year, and with the step down in transitional funding, The Centre has had to cut hard on expenditure. Some programs have been scaled back, others have been dispensed with. Staff hours have been reduced, and some positions will be cut altogether as staffing levels drop from 4.28 EFT (equivalent to full-time) to 2.28 EFT. Ultimately there will be only 1.5 EFT staff positions.

To the public, perhaps the single most noticeable difference has been the change in opening hours, which has impacted the ability for The Centre to function as a drop-in centre for socially disadvantaged and marginalised people.

The tragedy at the heart of the situation is that community needs are very high at present, and it is not entirely clear where the difference of perspective between The Centre and the City of Melbourne lies. There doesn't appear to be a dispute between us that there are community needs to be

addressed in North and West Melbourne. There doesn't appear to be a dispute that The Centre has the experience, skill and will to help deliver services to address community needs. Where The Centre and the City of Melbourne appear to be at odds is in the way that value for money is determined.

The model that The Centre has to date operated under has seen 4.5 equivalent full-time staff deliver support and management for over 300 volunteers, including tutors for 100 children in their homework program. The volunteer base produces the *North and West Melbourne News*, accessed by 5000 people in the local area, and contributed to delivering Spring Fling last October.

Additional activities include organising and delivering bus trips and community lunches for hundreds of socially disadvan-

tagged people throughout the year. The Centre is also a point of referral to other services for many needy people, in want of legal or financial help, emergency relief and accommodation. Many have substantial health issues, relationship concerns, or difficulty with childcare or aged-care support.

The Centre has built a reputation for being able to provide an answer, but is now in a position where it must manage a reduction in services to match its new level of base funding. Where it will end up and what it will look like is very much an open question at present. What is obvious to all is that the process of managing the defunding is difficult, stressful, and taking its toll on The Centre.

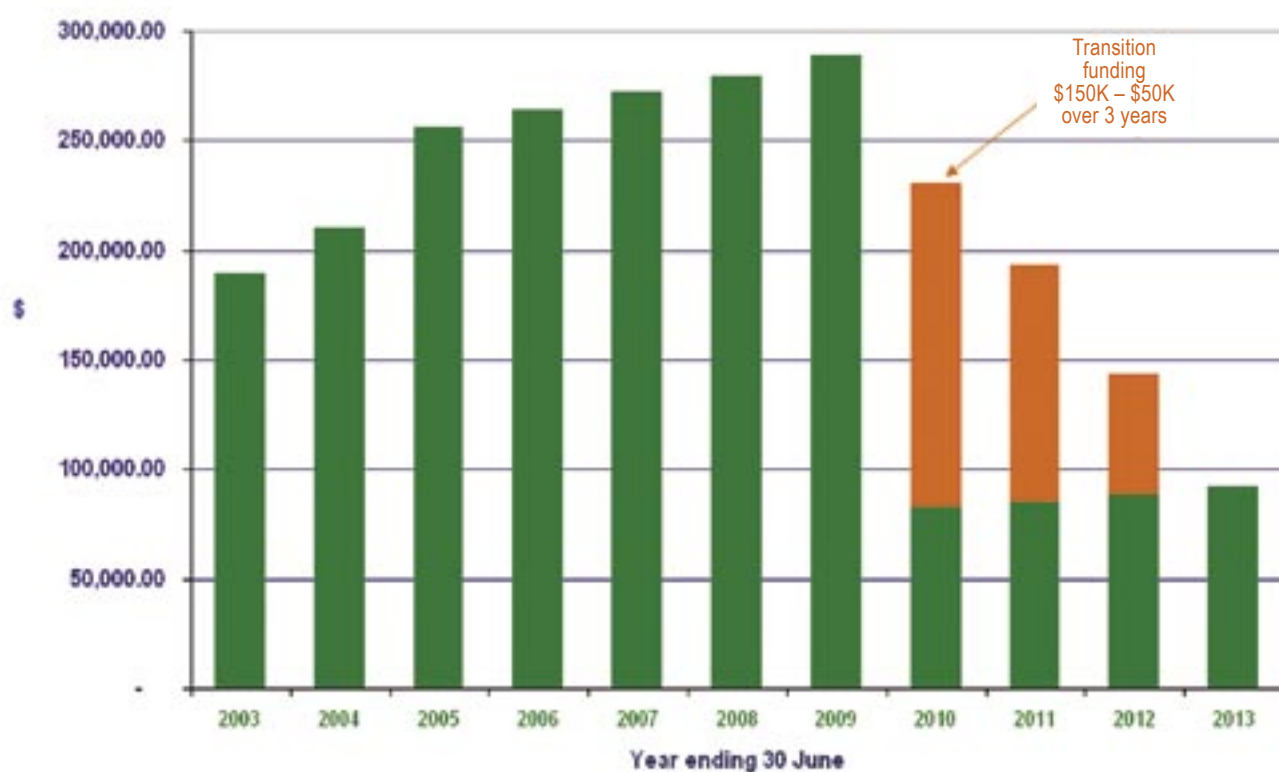
The Centre's Director, Thea Bates, has been a dedicated advocate of policy and

program development, applying her skills to addressing homelessness and strengthening the Global Homework Program. She has tirelessly sought to find sustainable ongoing funding, or find other ways to meet critical community needs with new sources of money. She, and all of the staff at The Centre, deserve our full support to continue to be able to do their great work, with the resources they need.

*You can support The Centre by becoming a member and by contacting City of Melbourne councillors. Their details are available at The Centre, in all council publications and at <[www.Melbourne.vic.gov.au](http://www.Melbourne.vic.gov.au)>.*

**Karl Hessian**  
Chair, Committee of Management  
The Centre

City of Melbourne annual operating grant to The Centre (nominal)



## also in this edition...

**Page 3:** The Comic's Lounge gets behind the Victorian and Queensland flood victims and Dousta Galla Community Health shows its commitment to culture and diversity.

**Pages 4 & 5:** The North and West Melbourne News is now ONLINE. See how you can get *Online and Interactive* and have your say in your community.

**Page 6:** North Melbourne Language & Learning receives funding which will create a new entrance to the Neighbourhood House and Learning Centre.

**Page 7:** Camp Quality: Caring For Children With Cancer *plus* a 'unique view' of the rental market in Melbourne and Letters to the Editor.

**Page 8:** The *News* introduces a new column for avid gardeners and also on this page see who the 2006 census says is the average person in North and West Melbourne.

**Page 9:** North and West Melbourne Association update.

**Page 10:** Don't poison your pets with chocolate *plus* a no sweat way to get around by bike and the Youth and Education book reviews.

**Page 11:** Hotham History Project *plus* North Melbourne Primary School wins film award.

**Page 12:** The Centre's courses for Term 2.

**Page 13:** A keen Kangaroo's fan gives his view of how the team will fare in 2011.

**Page 14:** The Bad News and the Good News on climate change.

**Page 15:** Interview with comic Hung Le.

**Page 16:** Take a trip to Athens with local resident, Tom Kramer.

## NOTICEBOARD

**The North and West Melbourne News**

is a quarterly publication produced by volunteers from North and West Melbourne and the inner city. It is now in its 33rd year of production. Readers' contributions are welcomed. Where relevant the *News* may seek alternative opinions in the interests of balance. Contributors' opinions are their own, however, and the *News* takes no responsibility for them. We reserve the right to edit or omit articles considered unsuitable or when space is limited.

**Finance**

The *News* is a non-profit organisation working as a program of The Centre. Funding is by way of a limited quota of advertising, sponsorships, subscriptions and occasional donations.

**News subscriptions**

If you would like to receive the *North and West Melbourne News* by mail, the rate is \$10 for four copies sent anywhere in Australia or pro rata for part of the calendar year. The *News* is distributed free throughout North and West Melbourne. Further copies are available from The Centre and the North Melbourne Library.

**Advertisement sizes and rates**

60 mm W x 92 mm H    \$50 plus GST  
124 mm W x 92 mm H    \$100 plus GST  
188 mm W x 92 mm H    \$150 plus GST  
252 mm W x 92 mm H    \$200 plus GST  
A charge of 25 per cent may be added for advertisements that require designing.  
*Community announcements are published free of charge.*

**Please note:** Advertising rates are subject to review.

For more information phone 9329 1627 or email <nwmnews@centre.org.au>.

**Volunteers**

The *News* welcomes new volunteers. If you have skills in writing, drawing, photography, archiving, subediting and proofreading, computer technology or design and layout, please consider joining the team. We have several vacancies at present — see below.

**Production Coordinator:** Allan Hood  
**Content Coordinator:** Position vacant  
**Advertising Coordinator:** Janet Graham  
**Section Editors:**  
Arts & Entertainment: Position vacant  
Community: Amanda Vandenberghe  
History: Kate McDonell  
Noticeboard: Janet Graham  
Politics & Environment: Jennifer Boyce and Tom Kramer  
Sport & Health: Position vacant  
The Centre: Linden Smith  
Travel & Food: Position vacant  
Youth & Education: Kate McDonell  
**Production team:** David Apostol, Janet Graham, Rene Heeps, Allan Hood, Jim Weatherill

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Rotary Club of North Melbourne



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### Please deliver contributions, letters and feedback to:

North and West Melbourne News  
58 Errol Street, North Melbourne 3051  
Email: [thenews58@gmail.com](mailto:thenews58@gmail.com)  
Telephone: 9328 1126

### Copy deadline for June 2011 edition: Wednesday 18 May

Publication date: Thursday 16 June

### Deadline for September edition: Wed 10 August

Publication date: Thursday 8 September

### Deadline for December edition: Wed 9 November

Publication date: Thursday 8 December

Website: [www.centre.org.au](http://www.centre.org.au)

Online edition: <http://nwmnews.drupalgardens.com>

### Deliver the News in North or West Melbourne!

Your help would be much appreciated to fill a few gaps in our network.

The *News* is published four times a year and delivery takes about one-and-a-half hours per issue. A trolley or pram is a useful aid.

We currently need help in North Melbourne, especially for the streets near the Queen Victoria Market, and there is another area near North Melbourne Primary School which needs a deliverer.

To volunteer please contact:

**Helen Lew Ton • 9329 9757 • [hmlewton@gmail.com](mailto:hmlewton@gmail.com)**

### Passover celebrations in Melbourne for 2011

Passover begins on Monday 18 April and ends on Tuesday 26 April.

A number of Passover activities will take place across Melbourne.

For any queries or assistance related to Passover activities or other Jewish matters please contact the  
East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation on 9662 1372.

### North Melbourne Library to host Beyond Zero Emissions presentation

This is your opportunity to hear Australia's pathway to 100 per cent renewable, sustainable energy explained in layman's language. Beyond Zero Emissions has produced the award-winning *Zero Carbon Australia Stationary Energy Plan*.

**Free entry, light refreshments**  
**Tuesday 29 March**  
**7.00pm – 8.30pm**  
**More information: Marg Gaita, 9328 5357**

### North Melbourne Book Group 2011

**20 April** *The Lost Mother: A Story of Art and Love*  
by Anne Summers  
**18 May** *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*  
by Muriel Barbery  
**15 June** *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*  
by Barack Obama

**Wednesday 7.00pm**  
**No bookings required**  
**More details: 9658 9700**  
**North Melbourne Library**  
**66 Errol Street, North Melbourne**

### Waterwatch Training — Free Water Testing Event

**Date:** Saturday 26 March 2011, 9.30am – 4.30pm

**Location:** Sports Centre behind Trin Warren Tam-boore wetlands at Manningham Reserve, Parkville (Melway 29 C12)

Interested in learning how healthy your local creek, wetland or river is? Can frogs, platypus or native fish survive in your waterway?

Healthy Waterways Waterwatch Melbourne run FREE river-health training sessions for anyone wishing to help improve waterways by regular water testing.

It's fun, free and very easy to do! No experience is necessary; all equipment and lunch are provided. Bookings essential. Phone Jane Bevelander on 9380 8199 or email <[jane@mcmmc.org.au](mailto:jane@mcmmc.org.au)>.

## Celebrating Life Events

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### The Funeral of a loved one

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[ann.wilkinson@internode.on.net](mailto:ann.wilkinson@internode.on.net)

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Member Civil Celebrants Graduate Association (Monash)

## Easter Services in North and West Melbourne

### St Alban's, Anglican

**55 Melrose Street, North Melbourne**

Good Friday 22 April 9.30am Meditation on the Stations of the Cross; 11.00am Ecumenical Stations of the Cross, starting here  
Easter Day 24 April 10.00am Service of Holy Communion

### St James' Old Cathedral, Anglican, corner King & Batman streets, West Melbourne (opposite Flagstaff Gardens)

Good Friday 22 April 10.00am Passion Reading  
Easter Sunday 24 April 10.00am Holy Communion

### St Mary's, Anglican

**Corner Queensberry & Howard streets, North Melbourne**

Palm Sunday 17 April 8.00am Eucharist; 10.00am Sung Eucharist with blessing of palms and procession

Maundy Thursday 21 April 8.00pm Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper (vigil until midnight, starting again at 8.00am)

Good Friday 22 April 10.00am Celebration of the Lord's Passion, followed by Ecumenical Stations of the Cross

Holy Saturday 23 April 9.00pm Easter Liturgy, including the Service of Light, Vigil, Renewal of Baptismal Vows and the First Mass of Easter

Easter Day 24 April 8.00am Eucharist; 10.00am Procession and Sung Eucharist

### St Mary Star of the Sea, Catholic

**Corner Victoria & Howard streets, West Melbourne**

Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) 17 April Sunday Mass 10.30am (in English), 12.00 noon (in Lithuanian) — blessed palms will be distributed at each mass

Holy Thursday 21 April 7.30pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday 22 April 3.00pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion

Holy Saturday 23 April 8.00pm Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday 24 April Mass of Easter 10.30am (in English), 12.00 noon (in Lithuanian)

Divine Mercy Sunday, 1 May, Sunday Mass 10.30am (in English), 12.00 noon (in Lithuanian); 1.30pm Divine Mercy Devotions begin

### St Michael's, Catholic

**456 Dryburgh Street, North Melbourne**

Wednesday 13 April 9.30am & 7.30pm Lent Reconciliation

Holy Thursday 21 April 6.00pm The Lord's Supper

Good Friday 22 April 3.00pm Veneration of the Cross

Holy Saturday 23 April 6.00pm Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday 24 April 10.15am

### Saints Peter and Paul, Ukrainian Catholic

**Corner Canning & Dryburgh streets, North Melbourne**

Divine Wednesday 20 April 7.00pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts and Parastas; confession from 6.00pm

Divine Thursday 21 April 9.00am Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great and Vespers; 7.00pm Matins of the Passion and the reading of the 12 gospels

Good Friday 22 April 9.00am Royal Hours; 3.00pm Vespers and procession with Christ's burial cloth, veneration and Matins

Divine Saturday 23 April 10.00am Divine Liturgy; 6.00pm Solemn celebration of Christ's Resurrection, Matins and blessing of Easter baskets

Sunday 24 April (Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ) 8.00am Divine Liturgy, recited; 10.00am Solemn

Pontifical Liturgy with blessing of Artos

Bright Saturday 30 April 9.30am Divine Liturgy and Easter

Parastas for all the deceased members of the parish

St Thomas's Sunday 1 May 8.00am Divine Liturgy; 9.30am

Divine Liturgy followed by community sharing of Easter food

### The Eighth Day (a Baptist Community)

**4 Miller Street, West Melbourne (cnr Curzon & Miller streets)**

Good Friday 22 April 9.00am Life Taken or Life Given?

Easter Sunday 24 April 5.30pm The Hope of all Creation

### Uniting Church, Mark the Evangelist

**51 Curzon Street, North Melbourne**

*The congregation currently meets in the Hall, 4 Elm Street.*

Passion Sunday 17 April 10.00am Procession with Palms, Eucharist

Maundy Thursday 21 April 7.30pm Eucharist, Foot Washing

Good Friday 22 April 9.30am Reading of the Passion; Ecumenical Stations of the Cross, commencing 11.00am at St Alban's Church, concluding at the Ukrainian Cathedral

Saturday 23 April (Easter Vigil) 8.00pm The New Fire, Renewal of Baptismal Vows and Eucharist

Easter Day Sunday 24 April 10.00am Easter Eucharist, Renewal of Baptismal Vows

Sunday 1 May (Mark the Evangelist's Day) 10.00am Eucharist

— celebratory Brunch to follow the service

## Saint Mary's Anglican Church

Corner Queensberry & Howard streets, North Melbourne

## ANNUAL PARISH FAIR

- a joint activity with St Mary's Kindergarten -

**Saturday 7th May 2011 10.00am – 2.00pm**



# Doutta Galla shows its new colours and commitment to culture and diversity

Sunday 6 February saw Melbourne’s GLBTI (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex) community come together for the annual Pride March along Fitzroy Street in St Kilda. Doutta Galla Community Health was a strong presence at the event, with staff, family and friends proudly walking under the new logo. Thousands of people lined the parade route and cheered and clapped Doutta Galla along the way. Doutta Galla has offices in North Melbourne, Kensington, Moonee Ponds and Niddrie. Doutta Galla CEO Caz Healy said: “This is the third time Doutta Galla has participated in the Pride March. At Doutta Galla we are committed to working and consulting with the GLBTI community.

“The Pride March is one of many community-based events where we can reach out and promote much-needed services and connect with communities to address specific issues and needs.”

With over one hundred organisations and thousands of spectators, the Pride March finished at Catani Gardens on the St Kilda beach with festival celebrations continuing throughout the afternoon.

Doutta Galla Community Health



Doutta Galla Community Health supporters who participated in the annual Pride March

Photo: Jim Weatherill

# Comic’s Lounge hosts flood relief fundraiser



Since it opened in North Melbourne 10 years ago, The Comic’s Lounge has supported a number of charities by hosting fundraising gigs for victims of natural disasters.

In his time with the Lounge, Stephen Lee, the events manager, has called on many

of Australia’s most professional (and generous!) comedians to donate their time and energy to providing laughs to patrons while helping those who have suffered in natural disasters somewhere in Australia.

As their contribution to the Queensland and Victorian flood relief effort, The Comic’s

Lounge held a star-studded fundraiser on Sunday 13 February at their popular venue in Errol Street, North Melbourne.

The show had an impressive line-up of 16 comedians out of the 25 or so whom Stephen contacted, including Peter Helliard, Mick Molloy, Glenn Robbins, Tom Gleeson, Dave O’Neil, Marty Fields, Hung Le and Bev Killick. With the Adelaide Fringe Festival due to open on 18 February, fewer comedians than usual were available to help out in Melbourne and the Lounge was able to hold only one show this time.

The Comic’s Lounge seats 400 people. At \$30 each, that adds up to a considerable donation to the charity recipients. One hundred per cent of the takings from this event went to flood victims, with The Comic’s Lounge providing marketing expertise, tickets and the use of their venue as their contribution to the fundraiser.

Channel Ten and several breakfast radio shows also helped to publicise the event and the show was a sell-out. Many people who arrived without tickets were disappointed but

some willingly dropped a donation into the collection bucket before leaving.

Other charities also benefit from The Comic’s Lounge’s generosity. A number of tickets are given to a stable of charities for the Wednesday and Thursday night shows, and those organisations are able to keep 100 per cent of the takings from the tickets they sell. Beneficiaries include the Red Cross, Camp Quality and the Variety Club, which raised funds for buses to transport school-aged children to other schools after their schools were burnt down in the 2009 bushfires.

With its history of supporting disaster relief and helping charities to do their work, The Comic’s Lounge is likely to grow as more people attend performances through donated tickets and enjoy a great night out.

Leanne Yeung

Read about comedian Hung Le, a regular at The Comic’s Lounge, in the Arts & Entertainment section of this edition.



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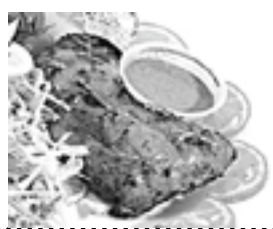
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Last edition we revealed our all new online edition at:

<http://nwmnews.drupalgardens.com>

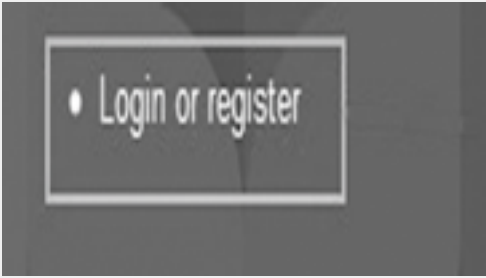
The online edition is more than just a digital version of the print edition, you can post

### Your Voice Online by Michael Burville

comments, access an online forum and even add your own article or photos directly to the

site. This is your site and we need you to join .

So to that end and with the aid of some handy dandy screenshots, in this edition I would like to show you how to join the site and add your first story.



1

**Step 1:** Click on 'Login or register' in the top left hand corner



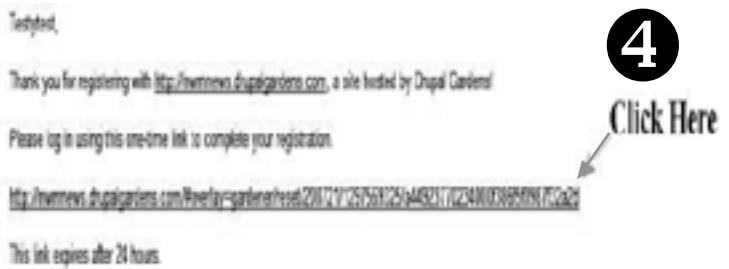
2

**Step 2:** A login window will pop up. After you have signed up this is where you also login with your username and password. To register click on 'Not a member?'



3

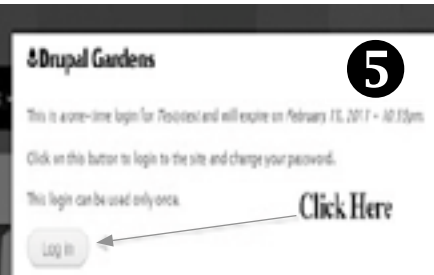
**Step 3:** Complete your desired username (usually just your first and last name) and your email address. Then click create account



4

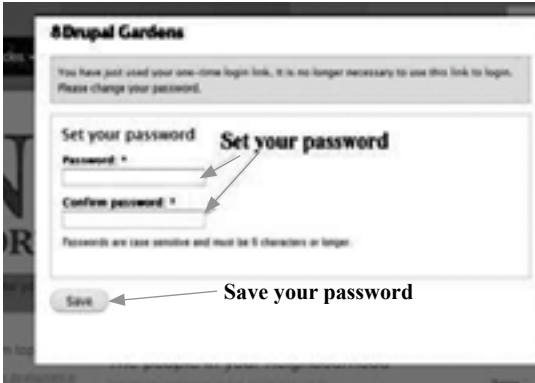
Click Here

**Step 4:** You will be sent a registration email from the site. This will appear in your inbox check your spam folder. Open the email and click on the long link (the second one in the email)



5

**Step 5:** Click on Log in and you will then see a screen where you can set your password then click Save



6

**Step 6:** You are now logged in and can add comments or use the forum.



### DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE IN NEED?

**Ozanam House,  
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*Working with homeless men in Melbourne since 1953*

Ozanam House provides crisis supported accommodation for homeless men over the age of 18 years with complex needs.

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If you know someone who is homeless, in crisis and needs assistance please call VincentCare Community Housing on Tel: 9304 0100 or 1800 618 468 (toll free)



**VincentCare**  
Victoria

### أتعرف شخصا يحتاج إلى مد يد العون إليه؟

**أوزانام هاوس،  
شمال ملبورن**

*نقوم على دعم الرجال المشردين في ملبورن منذ عام 1953*

يقدم أوزانام هاوس السكن الطارئ المدعوم إلى الرجال المشردين ممن هم أكبر سنا من 18 عاما ولهم احتياجات معقدة.

نحن نسعى إلى توفير بيئة آمنة مأمونة وداعمة تمكن المقيمين لدينا من معالجة المشكلات التي أدت إلى أن يصبحوا مشردين بفعالية.

إذا كنت تعرف شخصا مشردا، أو يمر بأزمة ويحتاج إلى المساعدة فالرجاء الاتصال بخدمات SVDP للإسكان على الهاتف 9304 0100 1800 618 468 (مكلمة مجانية)



**VincentCare**  
Victoria

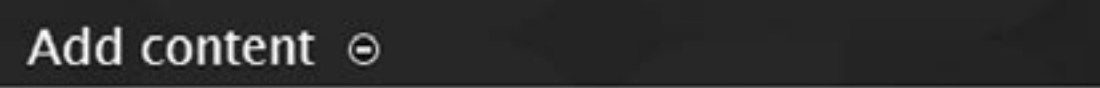
# and INTERACTIVE



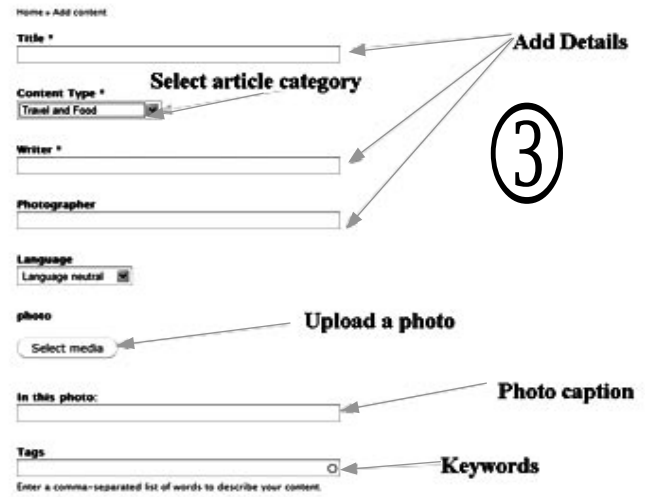
## Adding articles to the North and West Melbourne News Online

If you want to be able to add articles, notices, letters to the editor or photos directly to the *News Online* you require special access. You can email me at [mburville73@gmail.com](mailto:mburville73@gmail.com) to request it. Once you have this access and login to the site you will see a grey content bar at the top left of the screen.

**Step 1:** Click on add content



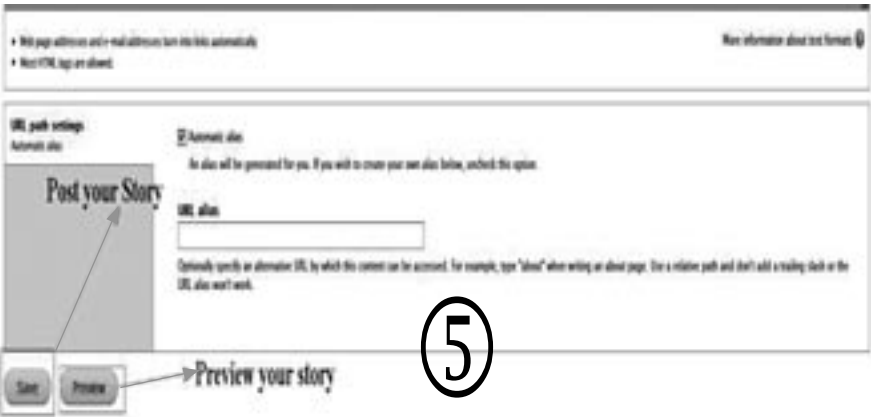
**Step 2:** Click on 'Articles'



**Step 3:** Fill in the details. You need to select which section you want the article to appear in. You can also upload an image to go with the article by selecting 'add media'. This is very similar to attaching an image to an email.



**Step 4:** The interface for adding a story is similar to Microsoft Word with many of the same formatting buttons. It does not have the advanced features of Word. If you are copying and pasting from a Word document many features may not work. It is best to type your story straight into the body text window.



**Step 5:** When you are ready you can either 'Preview' your story first or go straight to 'Save' to post it online. After your story is posted you can edit or delete if you need to.

### The North and West Melbourne News is YOUR newspaper

The online edition gives you a spontaneous and interactive way of having **your say** in **your community**.

You can access the *News Online* at:  
<http://nwmnews.drupalgardens.com>

Have your Say

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Friday 9.00-9.00  
Saturday 8.00-4.00

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**2 May 2011**



# Embracing Distance: Looking to the Future

North Melbourne Language & Learning (NMLL) is the lucky recipient of a City of Melbourne Arts Grant. The project named *Embracing Distance: Looking to the Future; Evolving from the Past*, will create a new entrance to the Neighbourhood House and Learning Centre. The Arts Grants are an innovative way for The City of Melbourne to increase community participation in the cultural life of the city and encourage imaginative and creative use of public space.

Melbourne sculptor Rosa Tato has been commissioned by NMLL to collaborate with students and produce the art work. Rosa's work is represented in public and private collections in Australia, China, Spain, The Netherlands and the USA. In her work

she draws inspiration from history and the diverse cultures that surround her. The patterns and motifs of her sculptures are informed by people, places and encounters. Her practice is a way of identifying, connecting and embedding the power and importance of memory in an artwork.

Rosa will run a series of workshops where a group of NMLL students will share photos, personal objects of cultural significance, stories of homeland, migration and settlement experiences. These encounters will reflect community aspirations and inform the distinctive design for the artwork.

The new sculptural entrance is planned to be installed in May this year followed by a community celebration.

NMLL is located on the public

housing estate in North Melbourne and has been working with the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities of the area for over 21 years. Accredited and pre-accredited English, Computer and Vocation courses are offered to adults.

*Natalie Warren*

- There are many volunteering opportunities at NMLL. Listed below are some of the ways you could be involved:*
- Classroom helper in the English classroom
  - Baby Book Borrow program
  - Gardening Group
  - Walking Group
  - Knitting for Charity Group
  - Administration assistance
  - I.T. and data entry
  - Special events and displays
  - Board of Management
- Please contact: Natalie Warren  
nwarren@nmll.org.au, www.nmll.org.au  
9326 7447 0428 120 660

Melbourne sculptor Rosa Tato. Her work is represented in public and private collections in Australia, China, Spain, The Netherlands and the USA.

Photo: courtesy North Melbourne Language & Learning



## Now taking Enrolments for 2011

*Don't miss this opportunity to study with your local Neighborhood House and trusted Registered Training Organisation, North Melbourne Language & Learning.*

**English as a Second Language**

You may be eligible for government-funded training to improve your English language skills in these courses:

- Course in ESL
- Certificates I, II & III in ESL (Access)
- AMEP Courses – Free English classes (510 hours) for eligible new arrivals

**Introduction to Computers**

This course is ideal for those who have little or no experience with computers, and will cover a range of topics:

- Computer basics, mouse skills, using keyboard
- Introduction to Microsoft Office 2010
- Introduction to Internet and Email

**Heading to Work**

This is a vocational preparation course for people who want to learn about:

- The culture of the Australian workplace
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**JAMIE DADDO**

*f only they saw  
The sights we know  
Perhaps they'd be more*

*Its hardest to draw  
Correct conclusions  
When the major portion  
of the picture is still  
in the unfinished  
part of an incomplete  
puzzle*

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# Caring for children with cancer

Camp Quality, the children’s family cancer charity, has 13 local offices around Australia and their Victorian Programs are run out of their office in North Melbourne.

From the North Melbourne office Camp Quality runs approximately 26 fun recreational programs a year that look after Victorian children living with cancer and their families.

Camp Quality’s Program Coordinator, Tara Richards says: “Camp Quality’s Recreation Program is designed to provide fun therapy opportunities for children living with cancer and their families. At camp, cancer takes a back seat so kids can ride waves, ride horses, abseil down cliffs, paddle down rivers and slip down giant waterslides. A day, a weekend or a week in a fun and optimistic environment can make all the difference to a child’s outlook and ability to deal with cancer. Camp Quality offers camps tailored to specific age groups, as well as Family Camps and activity days”.

“Whilst we are based in North Melbourne, we look after families all over Melbourne and Regional Victoria. Our central location helps us to be reached by many of our families and volunteers. The proximity to the Victoria Market is convenient too, not just for staff lunch breaks but to source crazy costumes, interesting activity and amusement items for our camps and fun days! It’s also really important for us to be close to the hospital”.

Every fortnight, the children in the oncology ward at the Royal Children’s Hospital in Parkville get a special visit from Giggle! Giggle is Camp Quality’s remote controlled robot puppet on a bike. Camp Quality believes that laughter is the best medicine. Giggle is designed to bring fun and laughter to children, parents and staff by providing fun therapy.

Camp Quality Fundraising Coordinator, Yvette Stanley, knows that children look forward to a visit from Giggle, “Giggle

is an essential tool to break the boredom of hospital for children. Children identify with Giggle and interact with him through jokes, songs and games and most importantly, Giggle takes the children’s minds off cancer for a while. Giggle is a critical part of Camp Quality’s commitment to be there for the entire cancer journey from diagnosis, through to treatment and remission”.

Camp Quality also integrates with the community through their Performance and Education Program which has helped more than 3 million school children and teachers learn about the challenges of living with cancer through uplifting performances, full of laughter and optimism. In 2009/10 the Performance and Education Program reached 255,706 primary aged children and 35,158 high school children.

The McDonald’s Camp Quality Puppets educate primary school children about cancer and promote anti bullying messages. These puppets were created 23 years ago to educate children about what it’s like to live with cancer. Through the puppet shows kids learn how to be supportive and understanding of a classmate or family member living with cancer. The performance facilitates discus-

**Camp Quality:**  
providing  
fun therapy  
opportunities for  
children living with  
cancer and their  
families

*Photo: courtesy  
Camp Quality*



sion and encourages children to ask questions in a fun and safe environment.

Camp Quality also takes their Performance and Education Program to high schools. *The Teenage Alchemist* is written specifically for teenagers. It explores the personal conflicts and inner-crises that emerge as a result of a cancer diagnosis, as characters Xanthe and Joshua deal with living with cancer in very different ways. The themes are broad reaching and include self-image, negativity, fear, hope, and, most importantly, courage. This edgy play is an opportunity to encourage teenagers to put things into perspective and make positive life choices. After rave reviews in New South Wales,

*The Teenage Alchemist* recently began performing in Victoria with one of their very first shows being performed to students from years 7–10 at Collingwood College.

Camp Quality has been operating since 1983 and supports children (up to 18 years) living with cancer and their families.

*To support Camp Quality, join them on Thursday, May 12 for the Camp Quality Supper Club 2011; an evening of vintage glamour, filled with luxury and laughter that will astound your impeccable taste. For more information visit: [campquality.org.au/supperclub](http://campquality.org.au/supperclub)*

## A ‘unique view’ of the Melbourne rental market

Tales of shonky marketing and downright lies *still* reflect property marketers’ common practice, despite local, state and federal legislative guidelines to protect the consumer, because the real-estate industry’s customers are primarily property owners.

Sure, most non-owning industrial, commercial, rural and domestic property consumers lease their sites from estate agents, contracting to pay exorbitant rents that scuttle their chances of ever saving for a property of their own, but they’re not fundamental clients, merely end-users.

And it’s those end-users at whom the lease industry targets its advertising campaigns: residentially, most single-fronted houses are photographed with wide-angle lenses for both street and interior images, thereby giving an unrealistic impression of spaciousness.

Potential renters are welcomed to inadequate ‘dining’ space, where the sink is set into a benchtop and the third stool is placed opposite. This often provides a total plate depth of merely 20 centimetres, or roughly eight inches. And the fourth stool — oh, there’s no room for chairs here — is set against the wall of a laundry or the base of second-storey stairs.

Then there’s a plethora of ‘open-plan entertaining’, which means lounge, dining,

kitchen and ‘study alcove’ are all set within one room frequently measuring less than five square metres, which makes for great space efficiency — until human beings attempt to inhabit the area.

Many of these open-plan efforts ‘spill’ externally onto a merbau, red gum or Huon pine deck extending perhaps one metre — too shallow for anything more than a card table and stool.

Then there’s the ‘classic Californian bungalow’, those forlorn old family homes comprising a good percentage of agents’ rental lists. Often displaying desperately rotting weatherboards and minimally supported by crumbling baseboards and compromised foundations, their interiors present little better. Sure, they *may* have been commercially cleaned, but cracked plaster, dangerously uneven floorboards and decrepit bathing facilities are never welcoming.

And all this disgrace is grossly exacerbated by rental prices that are dreams — dreams of property gold for agents and owners, but dreams of hell for ‘house-proud’ renters, and house-pride is an attitude both agents and owners commonly seek.

These ‘opportunities too good to miss’ — for agents’ turnovers, that is — are eternally depressing and usually demand at least one solid week of tough housework

by new tenants to make them fit for occupancy. Naturally, this is done *after* the lease is signed and the bond and initial rental paid, but *before* moving in.

Usually unrenovated, the majority of those proverbial dumps are still single-storey. When desperation forces prospective tenants ‘up-market’ — i.e. ‘up-cost’ — renovated properties are often presented with added second levels accessed by steep stairwells that should only be marketed to gymnasts. But even an athlete would have done a backflip at the \$650 per week demanded for a three-bedroom house with a mountainously steep, 18-step staircase with no handrail — and they wanted two months’ bond!

There *are* okay places for rent, but they’re few and far between and ridiculously expensive. We were told of an acceptable place in Parkville. The notice spruiked: *‘Exceptionally clean and spacious, with three bedrooms — each with built-in robes — and the master’s has its own en-suite; there’s a delightful dining room that views parkland trees, a lock-up garage and rear courtyard.’* With an extra storey inflating the asking price to \$825 a week, it was acceptable only to the agent.

*Katrina Kincade-Sharkey*

### Letters to the editor

#### Biolinks

I recently won a competition in “Over the Fence” a publication by the Department of Human Services who asked for our new year environmental ideas. My idea was for: “A Victorian initiative to create *biolinks* — a restoration of indigenous vegetation in public and social housing areas involving tenants, promoting bird life and strengthening the ecosystem”. For example: a bush tucker garden, a small grassland, fence climbers, shrub plantings and bird ponds.

I have been encouraged by the Department of Human Services to pursue this idea with the participation of tenant peers as part of the Victoria in Bloom garden competition or alternatively ahead of Housing Week this year. If any tenants would like to form a group there are grants available for Housing Week or if there are any tenants who would like to become involved please contact me:

– Sandra Simpson  
email: [simpsonsandra0@yahoo.com](mailto:simpsonsandra0@yahoo.com)  
or phone (03) 9348 9680

#### Used Stamps

Thanks to all those great people who dropped off their used stamps at The Centre last year. Keep up the good work of recycling. If you don’t have time to tear them off the envelopes just bag them up and I will tear them off for you.

– Marian Mooney, February 2011

New Feature !!

the News  
Garden Patch

Welcome to the North and West Melbourne News gardening column. In this new column I will be providing tips and advice for your home vegetable garden as well as ideas to get your kids involved in your gardening.

Before starting, let me introduce myself. My name is Natasha Grogan, I grew up in a suburban Melbourne household in which my parents maintained a functional garden filled with Camellias, Japanese Maples and ferns. We never grew fruit or vegetables, although I have a vague memory of a pot of parsley trying to grow outside the back door of the family home. So it was a surprise to my family when I returned from a year in London in my early 20s, and announced that I was determined to start a career as a food-growing gardener.

While working as a nanny in London I had cared for a little girl whose parents fed her only organic produce. I was fascinated by the benefits of growing and eating organic food and began to research the topic and seek work in the field.

I soon made the decision to combine my two passions: organic gardening and working with children. With an advanced diploma in Steiner Education, a Bachelor of Primary Education and a Diploma in horticulture under my belt I set about chasing my dream: to establish a business teaching children to grow and enjoy organic produce in their own back yard.

I volunteered at the Collingwood Children’s Farm and worked on my own

Autumn:  
Time to plant those vegetables

garden patches at home. Each season I was growing and harvesting food I had never seen grown before. I enjoyed watching eggplants spring from delicate purple flowers and walking out my back door to pick basil, parsley, and coriander leaves to add to my salad.

Naturally, I also made all the first-time-gardener mistakes and learnt from them: never plant mint in a garden bed, don’t over fertilise lemon trees in pots, and prune your tomatoes so as not to have six stakes to one plant!

I also commenced work as a Garden Specialist with the Stephanie Alexander Foundation and was thrilled to have the opportunity to use my skills and to be a part of a foundation that had the same hopes for young children that I did.

My weeks were filled with gardening and children, and I loved every moment. Some families were beginning to build their own veggie beds at their homes and were asking advice. Others were keen to get their kids involved but didn’t have the time to dedicate themselves. It was these families that I was most keen to help and so I established my own business, “The Sage Garden”, to offer a series of home-based programs to educate and encourage children to grow fruit, herbs and vegetables in their own backyards.

It has been a great pleasure for me to assist families to transform their backyards and introduce their children to the joys of growing their own food. I hope to share some of that fun with you in this column.

**Autumn Gardening**

Autumn is a great time to stand back and assess your garden. Ask yourself these questions:

- Do I like the design?
- Have my plants been receiving enough sun and water?
- What would I like to grow this year?
- How can I get the most out of this space?

Take your time answering and then prepare yourself to make some changes in the near future.

**What to grow in Autumn**

Choose food your family enjoys eating. Now is a good time to plant vegetables such as beetroot, broad beans, broccoli, carrots, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnips, silverbeet, and turnips. Try and buy heirloom varieties, the children and I at North Melbourne Primary school have been enjoying heirloom eggplants that are purple and white striped.

**Gardening activities for kids**

A great activity to engage children outside the garden is to start a garden calendar, recording planting dates and when they expect to harvest the crop. Conversations around the dinner table about what your family plans to harvest that week and how it will be cooked is a fun way to introduce the idea of ‘from garden to table’.

At this time of year another fun way for kids to help in the garden is bug hunting. Cabbage moths and their bright green caterpillars have started appearing in my garden



Eggplants emerge from delicate purple flowers which appear on the plant as it grows  
Photo: Snoop Mitchell

already. Encourage your children with competitions to collect as many of the caterpillars as possible and then leave the caterpillars in the open for the birds to enjoy for lunch!

I look forward to writing in the next edition of the news, and helping you with ways you can improve your soil over the cooler months and informing you about good companions for winter vegetables. Remember the best thing to do is get out there and see what is happening in your own garden.

See you in the dirt.

Natasha Grogan

These are the people in your neighbourhood

I have travelled widely and lived in some of the worlds largest cities including Tokyo and London but I find myself always coming back to Melbourne. One of the biggest things I love about the city is the diversity and richness of the inner suburbs. Inner city Melbourne is not defined by one income level or race. These suburbs are a mix of the whole city population.

In the few years I have been back from Japan I have seen the battle lines being increasingly drawn between residents, Melbourne Council and property developers looking to capitalise on the suburbs close proximity to the city with multistorey apartments.

North and West Melbourne is potentially a frontline in this war. In early February Melbourne Council moved unfavourably against three developments earmarked for the suburbs and this is just a snapshot of the battles to come.

Even the strongest critics of development will acknowledge that you can’t stop progress entirely but at what point does development impact negatively on community. Just how much is too much?

That’s not a question that can be answered quickly and easily. What is clear though is that North and West Melbourne is changing. With the Australian Bureau of Statistics gearing up for a new census in 2011, the time seems right to reflect on what the 2006 census told us and just how different North and West Melbourne is today.

Based on the median data and percentages in the 2006 census (compiled at demographiconline.com.au) if the ‘average’ citizen of North Melbourne had a facebook profile it might look a little like this:

**Name:** Joe Average (50.67%) Male)  
**Age:** 29 (median)  
**Relationship:** Couple no children (48.8%)  
**Birthplace:** Australia (48.6%)  
**Employment:** Employed (91.6%)

**White Collar** (82.5%)  
**Income:** \$400 to \$700 per week (36.8%)  
**Residential:** Renting (57.3%) and Apartment (56.5%) for \$222 a week (Median)  
**Education:** University (42.7%)  
**Other:** Owns one car (42.5%)  
**Drives to work** (38%)  
**Living at same address a year ago** (68%)

Does that match you or someone you know in the community? It doesn’t match me. That’s stats for you. Looking at averages and top percentages doesn’t really paint the whole picture.

The City of Melbourne “Economic and Demographic” profile released in April 2010 looks at how North and West Melbourne compares to the Melbourne Local Government Area (LGA). Have a look at the chart on the right for a summary.

The report goes into a lot more detail and if you are interested you can view the full reports at <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutMelbourne/PrecinctsandSuburbs/>.

Here are a few things that stood out for me in this data taken from 2006:

**North Melbourne**

- The area has a higher median age than the municipal average;
- North Melbourne has a high proportion of children aged under 12 years

Key Characteristics	North Melbourne	West Melbourne	Melbourne LGA	Data Source
Population	10,859	3589	89,759	Population 2008
Young people aged 12-25	21%	29%	36%	ABS 2006 census
Older people aged 60+ years	11%	6%	9%	ABS 2006 census
Residents born overseas	40%	31%	42%	ABS 2006 census
Most common LOTE*	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	ABS 2006 census
Weekly income < \$250	28%	17%	26%	ABS 2006 census
Weekly income > \$1000	18%	21%	23%	ABS 2006 census
Bachelor degree or higher	33%	31%	33%	ABS 2006 census
University Students	18%	14%	21%	ABS 2006 census

\* Language other than English

- North Melbourne has the municipality’s largest number of school students
- The area has one of the highest proportions of overseas born residents
- Housing costs in North Melbourne are the lowest in the Melbourne Local Government Area;
- Median incomes in North Melbourne are among the municipality’s lowest;

**West Melbourne**

- West Melbourne has the smallest (2 per cent) concentration of students (people attending an educational institution) living in the Melbourne Local Government Area
- Over 17 per cent of West Melbourne residents earned an income under \$250 per week

- The proportion of its population aged over 60 years (in 6 per cent or less than 200 people) is the municipality’s smallest

Now I’m no statistician and I know pulling stats out of a report is hardly strategic but I would suspect to see some significant changes in that data when the 2011 update comes out. Rental prices for one.

Clearly a community can’t be defined by stats and numbers. When the 2011 census results come out I will be keen to see whether that tiny \$300 per week flat still counts as the lowest housing costs in the area and just how much impact new development has had on the people in our neighbourhood.

Michael Burville





# North & West Melbourne Association

## 2010 in review: More of the same in 2011?

Last year was a busy year for the North and West Melbourne Association. A necessary focus on planning issues was coupled with broader efforts to contribute to the social fabric — as well as the built form — of our area. The following paragraphs pick out a few examples.

### January

The Association made a submission to the Hon Richard Wynne, Minister for Housing, on the proposed redevelopment of La Trobe Close.



The submission expressed our concerns about the quality of the consultation undertaken and the planning process surrounding the development. Specific issues included excessive height and built form, lack of regard for important heritage buildings on the site, the failure to lead the way with good environmental practice and the impact on traffic and parking. The Association also opposed the demolition of viable social housing on the site, and the sale of part of the development on the private market, and supported the construction of a community-based childcare facility incorporating a shared open space on the site.

### April

The Association held its AGM on Saturday 17 April 2010 at the City of Melbourne Bowls Club in the Flagstaff Gardens. The meeting was well attended and those present enjoyed a thought-provoking and engaging presentation from Professor Michael Buxton.

### June

On 8 June 2010 the Coalition of Residents and Business Associations – Melbourne (CoRBA) met with the then federal member for Melbourne, Lindsay Tanner, at his Melbourne electorate office.

A previous meeting had canvassed issues associated with Melbourne City Council reform. CoRBA was heartened by Mr Tanner’s views on the need for reform. The matter had been raised with Richard Wynne, Victorian Minister for Local Government, who advised that the government was satisfied with the current council structure and electoral system and did not intend that any review would take place. Mr Tanner undertook to discuss the matter further with Minister Wynne and to write again requesting a comprehensive review of the MCC, including the electoral system and council structure. Several other matters affecting individual CoRBA members were raised, including:

- La Trobe Close and the use of federal stimulus money to provide social housing in a way that excluded community input and good planning practice
- the housing scheme on the Carlton Public Housing Estate
- generally unsatisfactory consultation with the community by the council.

### August

On 18 August 2010 a public meeting was held in West Melbourne regarding the Zagame development at 559–577 King Street, West Melbourne. Following a letterbox drop, the meeting was attended by 51 local people. Although Association members were in attendance, most attendees were not Association members. The group passed the following motions unanimously:

- that this meeting supports the redevelopment of mixed-use area sites to include medium-density residential/mixed-use development, as promoted in the West Melbourne Structure Plan
- that this meeting condemns the proposed high-rise developments in the area covered by DDO (Design and Development Overlay) 29 (including Zagame, 87–101 Roden Street

and 141–149 Roden Street) that exceed the recommended height limit of 14 metres (four storeys)

- that this meeting condemns absolutely the fact that this height level is ‘discretionary’, where that term has no constraints and is at the whim of the ‘responsible’ authority, whether that be the council or the Minister of Planning or VCAT.

As with other planning issues, the status of the West Melbourne Structure Plan in the Planning Scheme is of prime concern. We have been led to believe the plan is an ‘associated’ document in the scheme but has not been ‘incorporated’ into the scheme. Given the extraordinary efforts contributed by many, including members of our Association, to support the development of the plan, and the many hours spent in consultations and in reviewing and providing comment on documentation, we would appreciate some clarity.

The document appears to be peripheral to major developments affecting this area. We are uncertain of the status of the West Melbourne Structure Plan in the Planning Scheme and we are concerned about the extent to which its vision for the future of the area can be effectively implemented.

### September

The North and West Melbourne Association provided a response to the draft Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) 2010 developed by the City of Melbourne.

We raised concerns about the limited opportunity for detailed consultation with communities and the treatment of communities within the statement, exacerbated by general unrest with the council and the Planning Scheme, as well as the apparent takeover of planning decisions by the state. The Association has long had concerns over the structure of the council and the way it is elected. These concerns are not alleviated by the process and consultation around this review of the MSS.

Specifically, we expressed concern about the lack of continuity with the existing MSS and incorporated documents, the status of structure plans, the substantial recategorising of areas, including an apparent shift from stable and industrial use to urban renewal, the lack of open-space opportunities and the omission of appropriate heritage classification.

### November

On Thursday 4 November more than 20 people gathered at 46 Villiers Street to be photographed for a *Leader* newspaper article about poor developments. The Association is supporting the council in opposing the Villiers Street development at VCAT. The proposal consists of an eight-storey building with 15 units and no car parking provided on-site on a small block of land between an ‘A’ graded heritage building and a single-storey building (currently North Melbourne Physiotherapy Clinic).

On Saturday 20 November a protest rally was held outside the Zagame car dealership at 559–577 King Street, West Melbourne. A crowd of over 80 attended, many holding placards to inform both the Zagame staff and passing traffic of the issues relating to this development.

Ten storeys are proposed, in a Design and Development Overlay zone that is supposed to be limited to four storeys. Car horns sounded their support. A resounding “No” greeted the questions:

- Do we like the development, including 10-storey ‘boomerang’ and 259 units?
- Should the authorities allow the proposal to go ahead?
- Has the City of Melbourne done enough to support the West Melbourne Structure Plan?
- Does this proposal respect the requirements of DDO29, keeping the height limit to four storeys?

We invite all readers to join in this action. More information can be found at: <<http://www.nohighrise.com/>>

## January 2011

For some months West Melbourne residents had been watching — and listening to — excavators and jackhammers demolishing the ‘hump’, used until the 1990s to shunt freight carriages by means of gravity along the railway line at the bottom of Hawke Street. The redundant concrete ‘hump’ structure has been removed to make way for infrastructure required by the Regional Rail Link.

Two tracks dedicated to the new regional line will run mainly along the existing rail corridor at surface level from Sunshine, through Footscray and North Melbourne and into the new platforms 15 and 16 at Southern Cross Station, on which work began in late 2009 and is still underway. This section of the rail link will separate regional trains from metropolitan trains for the first time. The \$4.3 billion project includes up to 50 kilometres of new track and two new stations in the west at Wyndham Vale and Tarneit.

The Regional Rail Link Authority has not yet decided whether the country trains will stop at North Melbourne, which presumably would require two new platforms to be built. The Dudley Street bridge will be widened by the construction of new decking at the Docklands end to accommodate the two new tracks. This will involve temporary closure of Dudley Street.

On 25 January 2011 the Melbourne Times reported that “An increasingly familiar story is playing out in North Melbourne; residents are fighting to conserve an inner-city park while state and federal governments rush to install public housing on the site to meet skyrocketing demand. At La Trobe Close last week trucks carted away large trees to make way for a 196-unit public housing development funded by the federal government’s stimulus package. “Former planning minister Justin Madden gave approval for the development last year, but residents had been hopeful that a change of government could offer a reprieve and an opportunity to preserve more open space. “Acting on their behalf, Melbourne MHR Adam Bandt arranged a meeting with new Planning Minister Matthew Guy last week, but the discussion had to be delayed. “ ‘What we’ve been asking for since day



one is essentially for them to press the pause button on the development and have a further round of consultation, because the message we’ve been getting is they’re happy for the development to go ahead but in a way that maintains the open space,’ Mr Bandt said. “Residents say they support public housing in the area but are concerned about the need to dedicate land to services such as childcare, and open space.”

## February 2011

The Association has agreed to join forces with the La Trobe Close Collective and make a joint approach to new Housing Minister Wendy Lovell and new Planning Minister Matthew Guy in an effort to redeem the current situation and achieve a sustainable outcome for the entire site.

City of Melbourne Council papers and minutes do not suggest any slowing down of the stream of planning applications around North and West Melbourne that are of concern to the Association. Two examples are:

- 108 Ireland Street, West Melbourne — an application to construct a four-storey addition above an existing three-storey building. The proposed building comprises 51 one- and two-bedroom dwellings, a food and drink premises, eight car parking spaces and 43 bicycle parking spaces. The site is located in a mixed-use zone where DDO28 sets a preferred height limit of five storeys. Key issues are the height and scale of the building and the waiver of the car parking requirements

- 141 Roden Street, West Melbourne — an application to construct a six-storey building containing 62 dwellings with car and bicycle parking. The preferred height under the DDO is four storeys. The planning scheme technically requires a total of 124 car parking spaces (based on two spaces per dwelling). The proposal provides for 62 spaces. Key issues are building height, amenity, parking and traffic.

## March 2011

The Association is disillusioned by the prevailing mindset underlining the planning performance of this council, especially in regard to applications located on the northern edge of the area covered by DDO29. The reasons are as follows:

- Continued support of the previous State Government policy of maximising residential development wherever possible, often at the expense of existing neighbourhood character and amenity
- Council’s shelving of the West Melbourne Structure Plan. With much time, goodwill and resources devoted to its preparation, it provided a clear direction and rationale for future development in the area. It was, and is, an outstanding statement of planning principle and strategy. Its alleged use as a reference document is nowhere apparent in planning decisions

- Council’s interpretation of the DDO as stipulating a preferred, rather than a maximum, height
- Consideration of DDO criteria for design objectives and built-form outcomes which seems to be overly responsive to developers’ applications and pays minimal attention to issues of scale, amenity, heritage and neighbourhood character.

*Madeleine Scully*

*The North and West Melbourne Association website is at <<http://www.nwma.org.au/>>. Meetings are held at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of the month in the upstairs meeting room at the North Melbourne Library.*

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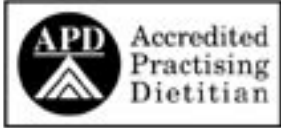
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# Riding these streets

The time for change in our everyday transportation decisions is now. And it all starts with you pulling that old mountain bike out of the shed, changing a tyre or two, investing in some nifty protective gear and mustering up some potential peddle power. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Maybe not for some. Maybe not at all, but there is another way to be a more environmentally friendly commuter without breaking a sweat.



Owner of Urban Commuter, Allen Birrell  
Photo: David Apostol

Picture waking up to an unusually bright, warm Melbourne day: the sun is streaming through the window, morning flora and fauna are charming the skies and surroundings, yet you need to get to work. Bah! So the daily grind calls. If you're an inner city North Melbournian and have a 2–5 km daily trek to work, you have a few “non-carbon-fossil-fuel-burning-ruin the planet” options. The first being to walk. This is a rather convenient method (your feet are usually available, don't require validating, emergency repairs or get caught in traffic jams!). However distance traveled in x-amount of time is significantly reduced with the following options.

Let's explore option two: bike riding. Now this is a speedy method as you can sneakily utilise pedestrian footpath rules as well as possess some form of vehicle credibility on the roads. However the North Melbourne hills are deceptively steep and things can get a little sweaty when you have to climb these hills.

Sweat for some of us can mean a less than favourable transport choice, which leads us to option three: the tram. Fast, sweat free (depending on how crowded the tram is at the time) and relatively inexpensive. Onto

a winner, right? Well for the most part, except for the fact that you are missing out on that precious warm Melbourne morning. So what's left, aside from the fuel guzzling, noxious four wheeler you have waiting for you in your gararage? So glad you asked... enter Urban Commuter, the electric bike specialist.

“Electric bikes are a part of a long term solution to more sustainable transport options”, states former CEO, Allen Birrell turned electric bike enthusiast. Allen opened his first Urban Commuter store in Perth after a “surprisingly pleasant” guided bike tour throughout Paris in 2009. Allen admits to originally hating the idea of cycling, but once he hopped on his first electric French designed ‘EasyBike’, he never looked back. Soon after he promptly introduced the concept and brand to Australia. He has now opened two additional stores in Sydney and Melbourne.

From first glance, Urban Commuter looks like a regular retail shop front and being an avid “sometimes to always” bike rider myself, I confess to having had some form of cycling cynicism prior to entering. However, the minute I took off on my “test ride”, true excitement of this novel product began to set in.

As the West Melbourne store is located on a decent steep rise on Victoria St., the hand throttle was quickly and easily utilised. I sped up the hill that I would normally be panting and struggling on and with great ease began to pedal. I knew at that moment this was something special indeed. I felt the power of a motor bike in a tight, light and savvy push bike!

All models are fitted with a three-way power control system, consisting of traditional pedal power, a power assisted pedaling system (PAS) and a handle bar mounted throttle control, giving you the choice to make use of one or all three power options as you ride.

According to Allen, the market is very much divided amongst two main demographics; *GenY* and *Baby Boomers*. *GenY* are interested in a viable eco-transport method when traveling distances just that fraction too far out to rely on traditional cycling. *Baby Boomers* are also getting interested in “greener” transport yet limited by a lower level of physical fitness. Given that there is a model especially designed to cater for your taste, energy level, road or hill you ride on, it seems that just about anyone can operate one of these electric beasts.

Another niche market these bikes cater for are those who have lost their license. All bikes are powered by a motor of 200 watts or less, which means they are a drivers' license free option for all Australians.

The prices of these intelligent “pushies”

# Chocolate toxicity in pets



Dr Andrew Kapsis examining a Lort Smith patient  
Photo: courtesy Lort Smith

While recent studies have shown that chocolate may be beneficial for our health, it is important to know that chocolate can be toxic, and sometimes even fatal for animals. So with Easter eggs already hitting supermarket shelves, it's a timely reminder that we make sure that all chocolates, cakes and other chocolate coated goodies are out of reach of our pets.

Chocolate toxicity is a common poisoning as it is highly palatable and attractive to most animals, just like their human counterparts. It is also readily available in many of our homes. Chocolate is made

from the beans of the cacao tree and contains a substance known as theobromine which can be toxic to pets. Toxicity levels manifest within 1 to 2 hours of ingestion, so it's important to seek urgent veterinary assistance if you suspect your beloved animal is affected.

Mild signs can include vomiting, diarrhoea and restlessness, however in higher doses chocolate can cause severe life threatening signs. These include heart arrhythmias, hyperthermia, muscle tremors, seizures and even death.

As a guide, the following amounts may cause moderate signs of poisoning in an animal weighing 10kg:

- 110g of milk chocolate
- 35g of dark chocolate
- 14g of cooking chocolate

White chocolate contains an insignificant source of theobromine although we do not encourage this as a treat.

Treatment is aimed at preventing further absorption of the chocolate and medication is administered to control the tremors or seizures. Vomiting may be induced in animals that are not already seizing to empty the contents of the stomach. In severe cases, the stomach may need to be flushed out under a general anaesthetic, so it is important to remember that although chocolate is one of our favourite treats, it's definitely not something for our pets.

*Dr Andrew Kapsis*

*For donations or information please call: (03) 9328 3021 or visit www.lortsmith.com.*

*Article originally published in Probian March 2011 issue*

range between \$1500–\$4000, which is fairly reasonable considering all models come with a generous warranty period and repairs are carried out by our very local Pony Bikes (conveniently situated around the corner on Capel St).

Urban Commuter... “A greener, cheaper and smarter option”, says Allen.

“Hop on one of these nature-friendly rides to get you about town”, says me!  
*Athina Koutouleas*

*For more information about electric bikes visit: <<http://www.urbancommuter.com.au>>*

## YOUTH & EDUCATION

### book reviews


**Anna and the French Kiss**  
Despite the seemingly innocuous title of this book, I was persuaded to read it on the recommendation of one of my favourite authors (John Green) and I was not disappointed. I dare anyone not to fall in love with the charming yet real Etienne St Clair and his hilarious group of friends as they learn to take control of their own lives, while exploring the beauty of the city of lights. Anna and Etienne are the most realistically drawn couple I've read in a while, and the way their love develops so slowly and gradually, with the attendant misunderstandings and hurdles, the reader cannot fail to be swept along with them.

**Worldshaker**  
A future-history steampunk story with a revolution and a love story? Who could say no? One of the upper-deck elite on the juggernaut Worldshaker, Col's journey from sheltered boyhood innocence to the knowledge of adulthood and the shocking truths this reveals about his world, is a surprisingly realistic one. Col is not the instant hero, as he wavers between the cowardice of wanting things to remain simple, and his growing conscience. The intricacies of his world, and his growing

relationship with a below-decks slave or “filthy” named Riff is engaging and well told.

**The Carbon Diaries 2015**  
A chilling near-future glimpse of climate catastrophe, which still retains a sense of humour, and a sense of (punk) style. Laura Brown just wants to be a “normal” teenager: be in a band with her friends, pass her exams, get the cute boy next door to notice her. All this is made more difficult by the new UK Carbon Rationing system. Each citizen is allotted a number of carbon points for each month for lighting, heating, television, cars and other high-carbon activities. Those who overspend (like Laura's sister Kim's two secret trips to Ibiza) are sent to a Carbon Offenders program, which soon becomes HQ for a black market carbon points scam. Through severe droughts and terrifying floods, while her mum joins a lentil cult and her dad is obsessed with the family pig, Laura still manages to hold onto her sanity, and find love where she least expected it.

*Kate McDonell*

A black and white photograph of Wayne Lynch, a man with a mustache, working on a piece of jewelry at a workbench. Various tools and jewelry pieces are visible on the table.

# Wayne Lynch

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HISTORY

# A grip on the past



The Hotham History Project Inc is a group of residents and friends of North and West Melbourne who are interested in exploring the history of this fascinating old part of Melbourne.

Committee meetings and activities are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the North Melbourne Library. Occasional historical walks and other events are also conducted on Saturday afternoons.

See <[www.hothamhistory.org.au](http://www.hothamhistory.org.au)> for our events and publications.

My uncle Neville Govett—who died several years ago—left us with some tapes of his reminiscences that came to light when I was tidying up this summer. He especially enjoyed remembering the days of the cable tram system, one line of which ran through North Melbourne and followed the same route from the city to Flemington Road as the present-day number 57.

He used to drill us in the details: the system was silent, the trams frequent and as graceful as swans sailing through the streets of our city. The timetabling was efficient and the early trams coloured according to the routes they followed. The colour coding for the North Melbourne and South Melbourne routes was green.

In other parts of the world there was often just one car but those in Melbourne had both a dummy or grip car and a saloon car. The cables were about an inch in diameter and made of six steel strands wrapped round a core of hemp. Neville could demonstrate well the making of the cable and had photos of the process which are now held at the State Library of Victoria.

The cables were powered by engine houses built for the purpose and moved along under the road for about 20 hours in the day. The gripman (in the grip car) operated a lever attached to the mechanism that caught hold of the moving cable. Thus the tram was carried along with the gripman in control. He would release the hold on the cable to stop the tram or

coast around corners—like the one at Queensberry and Abbotsford Streets where the building that once operated as an engine house for the system still stands, converted into modern-day apartments.

“According to Neville, trams were not the only objects drawn along by the cable.”

There was a game that we called ‘Cable Chasey’. What young larrikins did at the time, they would attach a tin to one end of a four-foot length of stout string, sometimes wire, and attach a small weight to the other end. Then they would go along to a place they found suitable, kneel down on the road and hang or suspend the string itself until finally it would catch around the cable. Away would go the tin, along the track, pursued by the youngsters responsible.

Who would outrun the tin? The tin would go along without a problem until such time as the tram came to a curve. Cables did not go round curves. They went straight out at a right angle or a left angle, whichever was the case. So the string would break and the tin would lie idle on the road until the winner retrieved it or someone kicked it out of the way. Passers by often saw a tin or two careering down along the tramline.

Not very often there was another consequence. A piece of the string or if they had used thin wire, a fragment of wire would be carried on to the engine house and go through the prong fitted to detect any defect on the cable. This



would set off the alarm and the engineers would have to stop the cable to sort it out. Such an incident might have caused a delay of two or three minutes.

I remember asking about the short delay but Neville was sure that was the case so if it is wrong, it is because he did not know.

He had another similar story: “In the days when I was a boy, there would often be a Great Soapbox race. A kiddy would have a cart on four wheels which he would guide with his feet or ropes. Another lad might push him along to get him started. He would race against others. Now what I heard but cannot confirm because I did not see it for myself is that two boys were smart enough to put a stout piece of wire down the slot of the cable tramline. They actually hooked on to the cable and were pulled along, just like a cable tram. Young larrikins.”

The earliest of the trams were lit with four oil lamps, one in front of the grip car (which could also be called the dummy), one above the gripman’s head and two in the saloon car. Coloured glass showed the route colour at night.

The North Melbourne cable tram route ended at Flemington Road following the route of the tram that runs through North Melbourne. However from as early as 1906 you could continue your journey out to Essendon on

an electric tram run by the North Melbourne Tram and Lighting Company. Cable tram services across Melbourne were phased out from 1923 on with the last cable trams running in 1940. As it picked

up speed on its last downhill trip along Abbotsford Street, Horrie MacEwan, Happy Valley’s famous butcher, rode on the last North cable tram with an unlikely number of passengers and much cheering.

If you want to see some of these early trams, go to Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot or the Tramway Museum Society of Victoria at Bylands. If you want to see Neville Govett’s silent movie (now provided with a commentary) go to: <<http://video.google.com.au/video?docid=1530173140708137073#>>

Lorna Hannan, for the Hotham History Project.  
Neville Govett’s stories as quoted were transcribed from one of his tapes.



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YOUTH & EDUCATION

## Italian program at North Melbourne Primary School wins film festival

Congratulations to students at North Melbourne Primary School for winning the Western Metropolitan Film Festa for the second year in a row!

Their short film titled *Stravaganza* was made by students in grades 5 and 6 and explored a new and delicious pasta sauce that was created with the catchphrase “Buona e semplice per tutta la famiglia” (‘Tasty and easy for the whole family’).


Terry Lawless, the Assistant Regional Director of the Department of Education’s Western Metropolitan Region, and language consultant Chris Bozin presented the prize — a flip camera — to the students at a special assembly.

Amanda Williams  
North Melbourne Primary School

Actors and editing team with Terry Lawless, Chris Bozin and Italian teacher Amanda Williams Photo: Nicky Weaver



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THE CENTRE



# Centre Programs

## term 2

# 2011

The Centre's community learning program for term 2  
All courses are ten sessions, but you can join at any time for a reduced cost.

Language Program

For those interested in travelling overseas immerse yourself in a new culture with travel phrases and confident conversation basics. Also suitable for beginners who wish to order confidently in restaurants and enjoy fun speaking and listening activities.

**French for Travellers/Beginners**  
**Time:** Tuesdays 6:30 – 8:00  
**Venue:** The Eighth Day Baptist Church  
4 Miller Street, West Melbourne  
26 April – 28 June  
**Cost:** \$200/150

Fitness Program

**Yoga**  
*Our classes are taught by accredited teachers.*  
**General**  
**Time:** Mon 7.30 – 8.45  
**Venue:** The Meat Market  
5 Blackwood North Melbourne  
25 April – 27 June  
**Cost:** \$155/140  
**Teacher:** Katie De Aruyo  
This Hatha Yoga class is suitable for all levels. It incorporates postures, breathing, meditation and relaxation.

**Beginner**  
**Time:** Wed 7.45 – 9.00  
**Venue:** The Meat Market  
5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne  
27 April – 29 June  
**Cost:** \$155/140  
**Teacher:** Renate  
This is for those who wish to learn the basic principles of Hatha Yoga. It covers yoga philosophy, postures and breathwork.  
**Intermediate**  
**Time:** Wed 6.15 – 7.30  
**Venue:** The Meat Market  
5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne  
27 April – 29 June  
**Cost:** \$155/140  
**Teacher:** Renate  
A class for students who have completed two terms of Beginners or one year of yoga practice elsewhere. This class will go into the deeper and more subtle aspects of yoga.  
**Pilates**

Join our Pilates classes run by Maria and Sue, fully qualified and experienced physiotherapists from City North Physiotherapy. You may be asked to attend an initial screening to assess which class is more suitable for you.

**Beginner**  
**Time:** Thursday 7.30 – 8.15  
**Venue:** The Meat Market  
5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne  
28 April – 30 June  
**Teachers:** Maria Zuluaga & Sue Gertzel  
**Cost:** \$180/165  
Working on mats, this class involves gentle stretching and strengthening exercises to develop your core strength.  
**Beginner Plus**  
**Time:** Thursday 6.30 – 7.15  
**Venue:** The Meat Market  
5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne  
28 April – 30 June  
**Teachers:** Maria Zuluaga & Sue Gertzel  
**Cost:** \$180/165  
This class deepens the stretching and strengthening of core muscles that was started in Beginner. A great class for you if you are recovering from and injury.

**Computers**  
**Basics**  
**Time:** Saturday 10 – 12 noon  
**Venue:** The Centre  
7 May – 28 May  
**Teacher:** John Louey  
**Cost:** \$35  
“How do I switch it on?” Learn to use your computer confidently. If you have little or no experience with computers, this class is for you. The class has small numbers and is adapted to the interests of participants.

**Beginner**  
**Time:** Friday 9 – 11  
**Venue:** North Melbourne Library  
29 April – 1 July  
**Teacher:** Nicole  
**Cost:** \$100/\$50  
Gain confidence and understanding in the practical use of computers. The course will cover Windows, word processing, the internet and email, spreadsheets and multimedia.  
**Beginner Plus**  
**Time:** Friday 11.30 – 1.30  
**Venue:** North Melbourne Library  
29 April – 1 July  
**Teacher:** Nicole  
**Cost:** \$100/\$50  
Build on skills learnt in Beginners Course. You will be introduced to more advanced features of Microsoft Office and overall PC management.  
**Intermediate**  
**Time:** Friday 2.00 – 4.00  
**Venue:** North Melbourne Library  
29 April – 1 July  
**Teacher:** Paul Murray  
**Cost:** \$100/\$50  
Start broadening your abilities in areas of office skills and multimedia.

**Art Program**  
**Calligraphy**  
**Time:** Tues 7.30 – 9.30  
**Venue:** The Centre  
26 April – 28 June  
**Teacher:** Stephen Wright  
**Cost:** \$105/\$95  
Learn how to make beautiful cards, envelopes, and scrapbooks with your new found writing artistry. Explore different scripts, illumination and family trees. Ask for a materials list when you enroll.

**Arty Farty Institute**  
**Time:** Tues 1 – 3  
**Venue:** The Centre  
26 April – 28 June  
**Teacher:** Nikita Burt  
**Cost:** \$50/\$15  
Bring your inner artist to this friendly and supportive group who explore the creative process. In a relaxed informal and supportive environment you can create and explore your artistic self working with a variety of media, (paint, clay, and textiles) to create an individual project. No experience is needed, just a touch of curiosity!

**Art Warriors**  
**Time:** Tues 3.45 – 5.15  
**Venue:** The Centre  
26 April – 28 June  
**Teacher:** Nikita Burt  
**Cost:** \$100/\$80  
Kids aged 7 – 11, bring your enthusiasm and imagination! This playful class will explore a variety of artistic techniques and

processes. Explore your imaginative realm and build on your own natural creativity. Recycle, invent and create! Suitable for Grades 1 – 5 and children must be signed out by a parent or nominated guardian.  
  
*Must have a minimum of ten students to run at this cost.*

**Girls Create!**  
**Time:** Monday 4.00 – 5.30  
**Venue:** The Centre  
2 May – 27 June  
**Teacher:** Nikita Burt  
**Cost:** \$110  
Through construction of an Artistic Journal, young women aged 11 – 15 have the opportunity to draw, paint, sew, assemble words, inspirational images and quirky observations. Discuss issues which concern, delight and need advocacy through your art! A collaborative project will emerge from group interests.  
*Must have a minimum of ten students to run at this cost.*

**Digital Photography and Photo Editing**  
**Time:** Wednesday 6.30 – 8.00  
**Venue:** The Centre  
27 April – 29 June  
**Teacher:** Amanda Novak-Knight  
**Cost:** \$120  
The perfect short course for beginners. Learn to understand the operation of your digital camera and how to take better pictures. Bring your own digital camera and learn different photography techniques. Learn how to download to your computer, email, burn onto cds and edit and manipulate them. You will learn basic manipulation techniques which will enable you to cut out objects in photos, combine images together, change backgrounds and photo effects. It will cover basic digital photo retouching techniques such as smoothing skin, softening wrinkles and removing blemishes.



# Centre Programs



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SPORT & HEALTH

# Kangaroos up and about and ‘ready to ignite’

I’ve been a North supporter since I was five years of age. My dad was a huge Melbourne supporter for many years and took me to my first Melbourne game when I was four weeks old.

At that time Melbourne was hopeless. Nothing’s changed and, when I grew up a bit, my uncle and next-door neighbour convinced me to become a North Melbourne supporter. Then Dad bought me my very first membership in 2001.

Living in North Melbourne I feel ‘Kangaroo blood’ running through my veins. I love the club and can remember the good old days in the late ’90s when North Melbourne was a powerhouse with the likes of Wayne Carey and Glenn Archer playing magically in Friday night footy. I did my work experience at the club when I was in year 10 and have continued to volunteer weekly and on match days in merchandise and membership.

Hopefully, 2011 will be a big year for the boys from Arden Street. By the way, if you haven’t seen the new facilities, pop down to Arden Street and check out the development.

North Melbourne has had a hectic pre-season injury-wise, losing a couple of up-and-coming stars in Nathan Grima and Ryan Bastinac as well as senior ruckman Hamish McIntosh.

The Kangaroos recently played an intra-club match at Ballarat and the signs were good. The new recruit from West Coast, Ben McKinley, kicked a bag of six goals and Aaron Edwards kicked five. Boomer Harvey was solid in the midfield and big man Drew Petrie was back from his injury-affected 2010 season, looking very fit.

Sudanese-born player Majak Daw was impressive with his ruckwork and with gradual development should be a star. Look



Players from left: Hamish McIntosh, Ed Lower, Brady Rawlings and Liam Anthony at the family day in February last year

Photo: Janet Graham

out for an interview with Majak in the next edition of the *News*. The much-maligned Daniel Wells seems to be over his osteitis pubis and ready to have a great 2011 season. Wells can be influential but has been plagued with injuries for many years.

New faces who also played were Shaun Atley, who North picked up in the last draft and who was described by Essendon staff as the next Chris Judd, and Cam Richardson, a mature-aged rookie from North Ballarat. Both showed talent and, if they manage to

keep injury-free, could play senior footy from round 1.

On Sunday 20 February North Melbourne played Geelong and Western Bulldogs in the new pre-season round robin. The Roos weren’t expected to win and they didn’t but there were some promising signs. Robbie Tarrant played consistently well in defence and Richardson had plenty of possessions. Daw showed glimpses of brilliance in both matches but is still some way from cementing his place in the seniors.

I’m hoping North Melbourne can at least play finals this year and I’ll be supporting my mob each week at the matches. If you’re a North Melbourne supporter, join up as the club needs you more than ever now, and the future is bright. The web address is <<http://membership.kangaroos.com.au/>>. Become a member and be a part of the future. The Kangaroos are our very own local team.

Joseph Hess

## Get fit at Boot Camp

Kick-start your health and fitness with North Melbourne Recreation Centre’s Boot Camp. Want to get healthy, fit and motivated?

Then Boot Camp is for you. North Melbourne Recreation Centre’s Boot Camp aims to improve your overall fitness through a combination of strength and cardio exercises in a fun group environment away from the gym. We run six-week morning and evening courses to improve your health and wellbeing.

### Who is Boot Camp suited to?

You don’t have to be a gym junkie to participate as we cater to all levels of fitness. It can be a great way for those new to exercise to establish a regular fitness regime, increase their level of fitness and keep motivated with new friends.

Our programs are run by qualified personal trainers to help you reach your individual health and fitness goals in a challenging but fun group environment.

### Benefits of Boot Camp

For those who haven’t exercised for a while or want a kick-start into exercise, Boot Camp is the perfect introduction. Wonderful outcomes from participating in regular exercise through our fun and diverse boot camps can include:

- increased energy levels;
- improved self esteem;
- decreased muscle strength;
- decreased excess body weight;
- regulated blood pressure;
- increased productivity;
- decreased stress levels;
- improved flexibility and joint movement;
- decreased risk of depression
- decreased risk of heart disease, obesity and type 2 diabetes.

### What does a typical Boot Camp session include?

Each session is different and works your whole body including your legs, arms and

core. Exercises include strength training, running, boxing, hill sprints and a whole lot more, so come and experience it for yourself.

The exercises prescribed will help improve fitness and individuals will notice strength gains which aid in increasing muscle tone and reducing body fat. We have a variety of weights on offer to cater to all levels and most exercises have alternatives to either increase or decrease the intensity to suit the individual’s fitness level, injuries or limitations.

*Take the next step in achieving your health and fitness goals with Boot Camp at NMRC. Call 9658 9444 or visit us at <[www.nmrec.com.au](http://www.nmrec.com.au)> to book your place now.*

North Melbourne Recreation Centre  
204-206 Arden Street  
North Melbourne

Briony Williamson



Both morning and evening sessions year round. Boot Camps are run over a six week period with 45 minute sessions two to three times per week.

### When is Boot Camp run?

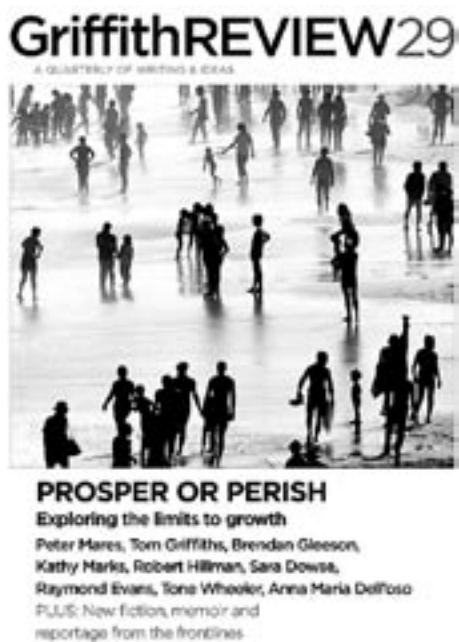
NMRC offers both morning and evening sessions year round. Boot Camps are run over a six week period with 45 minute sessions two to three times per week.

#### 2011 Timetable

Date	Day	Time
Tuesday 15 March – Thursday 21 April	Tuesday and Thursday	6:00pm
Monday 9 May – Friday 17 June	Monday, Wednesday and Friday	6:15am
Tuesday 28 June – Thursday 4 August	Tuesday and Thursday	6:00pm
Monday 8 August – Friday 16 September	Monday, Wednesday and Friday	6:15am
Tuesday 26 September – Thursday 3 November	Tuesday and Thursday	6:00pm
Monday 7 November – Friday 16 December	Monday, Wednesday and Friday	6:15am

# The limits to growth: prosper or perish

## Review



Over six decades, more than four million immigrants have become Australian citizens – about the population of Sydney or Melbourne. The rates of immigration have varied only a little from year to year for decades, hovering just under the one per cent target set in 1945. Yet in recent times political hysteria about a few thousand refugees has threatened to overwhelm a successful population strategy. The approach to multiculturalism that promised inclusion, diversity and equity came under threat. Environmental concerns became a reason to stop new arrivals and frustration about congestion gave way to despair about urban liveability...

So writes Peter Mares in his essay *Monday Morning in Mernda*. Issues of population, immigration and sustainability are key topics of this considered piece about urban sprawl, the opening salvo in Griffith Review's 29th quarterly appeal for sense and perspective in public discourse, *Prosper or Perish*. It's an important opening to an important edition of one of Australia's most respected critical journals, coming as it does at the end of a difficult year for population policy.

A lot was said in 2010 about Australia's growing population and the risks and rewards afforded/offered by migration's constant upward tug. But that is a misleading sentence. "Australia's population growth is in freefall," *The Age* reported on 30 September 2010, "with net immigration slumping 37 per cent year on year in the March quarter to its lowest level in years." These figures tend to support Mares' view that the influence of migration on Australia's population has been overstated. While immigration is a complex issue and its effects on population should be explored, the real issue may be closer to home. *The Age* report continues, "The Bureau of Statistics reports that net immigration plummeted from 98,138 in March 2009 to just 61,780 in the same quarter this year. The plunge in immigration was partly offset by a record number of births, which soared to 303,585 as Australia's fertility rate continues to climb towards an average of two children per woman. By contrast, the death rate has continued its fall to new record lows..."

We're popping out more kids and living longer but immigrants are copping the blame. Why? A lack of understanding about

a clearly complex issue? A deep need to criticise that which scares us? Transference? Simple racism? I don't know, and *Prosper or Perish* steers clear of judgement. What's undeniable is that immigration and immigrants themselves have been unfairly targeted. What's also certain is that migration has always been and will always be a story of people—their histories, motivations, and reasons for living. Some migrate out of necessity or fear, others for love or opportunity. Whatever the reason, there is always a story, and *Prosper or Perish* focuses on the people behind the migration debate. What is it like to adapt, to work menial jobs because foreign qualifications aren't recognised? To be born in Australia to foreign-born parents, with all the difficulties that can cause? To have skin tones darker than most of the locals?

Within its 260 pages, *Prosper or Perish* explores the lives of immigrants past and present, bearing in mind the economic, environmental, political and social limits to growth in a shrinking world. Finding the right balance will require visionary planning and insights from our rich history of immigration, the book argues. And it's for this reason that the collection also addresses issues that might at first thought have nothing to do with immigration or the migrant experience. While writers such as award-winning journalist Kathy Marks walks the reader through the shifting multicultural electorate of Bannellong (contested by John Howard and Maxine McKew in 2007 and by McKew and John Alexander in 2010); Tom Griffith chronicles climate change through the world's melting ice (reading ice shafts like rings on trees). Brendan Gleeson

maps Australia's urban development; Tone Wheeler proposes the introduction of smarter housing design to accommodate future populations (a topic of real interest to those in places like North and West Melbourne, where old and new designs mix so closely). Ryan Heath argues for the right to gay marriage, and James Spigelman argues that universal human rights must protect women from violence, regardless of cultural background. Additional essays, memoirs and reportage provide insight into the stories and lives of immigrants, refugees and expatriates who have fled foreign lands to make a home in Australia. Fiction and a photo essay are also included.

These pieces are thoughtful and contribute much to the debate. What sticks with me, however, is the idea that those of us already here are perhaps more to blame for our predicament than those entering via the customs hall or oft-stated 'back door'. We're already here, and we should be better than we are at planning for an Australia that will continue to welcome new arrivals at hospitals, airports and detention centres alike. And that perhaps is *Prosper or Perish*'s point. We know they're coming, and we already here are booming as well. So how are we going to better accommodate all of us, and how can we better understand those new to our shores?

To purchase a copy of Griffith Review 29: Prosper or Perish go to <[www.textpublishing.com.au](http://www.textpublishing.com.au)> or visit your favourite bookstore.

Tom Kramer

# Climate change: the bad news and the good news

It was keeping me awake at night and souring daily pleasures: that mixture of dread and impotence. I would put off confronting it by distracting myself with front page news: Footballers' Sex Orgy; American TV Star Visits. Then with the relatively bad news: Interest Rates; House Prices. Eventually I would find snippets of the really bad news: Rising Sea Levels; Extreme Weather; Species Extinction; Predicted Food Shortages.

Don't blame the media. They air as much bad news as most people can take before they just stop reading, watching and listening. If we really want to discover the latest expert findings on climate change, we can search the net.

Much of the time most of us are climate change deniers. Not because we don't know the facts, not because we don't care about the future of our children and grandchildren, but because we don't know what can be done about it. We discuss the latest bad news about our environment. 'Isn't it dreadful' we say, then change the subject. Sometimes we vow to act. Sometimes we do—email a politician, plant some vegies, take public transport, use less power. All those things help...a bit. But the truth is we need much larger-scale change if we are to avoid the catastrophic effects of climate change.

We need to re-imagine our future. We need a detailed plan for 100% renewable power generation linked to transport, buildings, agriculture and industries that are truly sustainable. We need a 'roadmap' for reducing our national carbon footprint to zero—within a realistic time frame. Of course we'd like to safeguard our present standard of living at only modest expense.



Wind turbines: just one tool in the plan for zero carbon emissions Photo: courtesy of Beyond Zero Emissions

It would be a bonus if, say over ten years, this sustainable way of life were to cost no more than the present trajectory for an Australian economy heavily reliant on fossil fuels.

The plan must be thoroughly researched, applying the best overseas practices in the Australian context, not pie-in-the-sky stuff. We need proven technology that is commercially available, that is already decarbonising other economies, with scope to add many more cost effective future developments.

Well now for the good news—there is such a plan!

The comprehensive plan for *Zero Carbon Australia 2020* is being mapped out by Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE),

an independent group of engineers based in Melbourne. Working pro bono, with overheads paid by private donations, BZE has completed and published its Stationary Energy Plan in partnership with the University of Melbourne Energy Institute. It was awarded the Mercedes-Benz 2010 Prize for Environmental Research at the National Environmental Awards. It was endorsed by eminent scientists including Tim Flannery, Sir Gustav Nossal, Peter Doherty, Robin Batterham and Mark Jacobson. To find out more go to: <<http://beyondzeroemissions.org>>.

Though it has attracted the support of individual politicians from all major parties, Beyond Zero Emissions is not aligned with any political party or organisation. That

means we can ask them all to take a close look at the first plan, and plans for transport, buildings, agriculture and industry which have been broadly mapped and are now being fleshed out. We can straight-talk to businesses and industries that are poised to take advantage of the manufacturing opportunities and jobs entailed by this research—so Australia can catch up with other countries which look likely to corner future markets. 'We' means you and me as well as BZE.

I heard about this research from my daughter who'd been to a presentation on it. I went to a presentation. I started sleeping better. I hosted a presentation for members of North Melbourne Sustainability Street; they decided to host a presentation for the public. That's how it works—I hope you'll decide to be there.

Margaret Gaita



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# Uni High alumnus dazzles Comic’s Lounge

Personal trauma is effectively lifted, worked and relieved with comedy, explains one of this region’s headline acts — and he should know.

Hung Le has spent two-thirds of his 45 years entertaining people across the world’s comedy circuit with his acute brand of personal experience. Hilarious stage gags are somehow drawn from the stressful flight of three generations of his family from Ho Chi Minh City, then known as Saigon, on the last day of the Vietnam War.

Hung delivers humorous images of that devastation in his act, currently playing at The Comic’s Lounge in Errol Street from Wednesday 16 to Saturday 19 March.

“Most of my stuff is personal experience and, like Chrissy Hines says, it’s all stuff I want to get off my chest,” he says, without a smirk.

On 29 April 1975, nine-year-old Hung Le, his brothers, sisters, parents and grand-parents jumped aboard a prawn trawler to escape the carnage in their city. “We used to live behind the presidential palace because my mum and dad were both artists,” he remembers. “We were terrified of the Communists taking over.

“The war finished on 30 April, but we’d managed to jump on the boat the day before. The Americans picked us up and took us to Subic Bay in The Philippines, where they fed us with a cheeseburger and a Pepsi, then the next morning they flew us out to Guam, to a refugee camp where there were hundreds of thousands of Viet refugees,” he says, his bright brown eyes recalling the crush.

“We went through four ‘placement’ camps — the first one had outdoor tents and no toilet, but the next one did have beds ... By the fourth one it was almost luxury!

“People aren’t refugees on purpose. As a kid the trauma you go through ...,” he says, his voice trailing away. “I really wanted to tell this Vietnam War story from a nine-year-old’s point of view.

“My mum’s brother was studying engineering at RMIT, so he sponsored us to come here and, after time at Maribyrnong Detention Centre, we moved into a one-bedroom flat in St Kilda — that’s one bedroom for all 10 of us,” he recalls, grimacing.

A leading sculptor and painter, Hung’s father had become the youngest Indo-Chinese professor of fine arts at 26 years of age. Much favoured by royal court society, he had been his deaf wife’s tutor when she was a student, and the performer has certainly inherited his parents’ creative genes.

A celebrated violinist, comedian, actor, novelist and playwright, Hung Le has appeared in comedy festivals in Australia and overseas, including his first solo show at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, which he toured in Sydney, Edinburgh, Hong Kong and New York.

Hung’s father, Le Than Nhon, and grand-father painted cars at the former vehicle plant in Port Melbourne: “Then Dad worked on trams as a conductor, but he always sculpted and painted and had exhibitions at the East & West Art Gallery in High Street, Armadale.” That gallery now operates in High Street, East Kew, but managers well remember Than’s stunning works. Several of his sculptures are still on public display in Bourke Street and canvases are displayed in major private collections.

Hung’s performance life began as a child, the former refugee having won a violin scholarship to University High School. “Four friends and I played Christmas carols outside Myer in Bourke Street,” he remembers, fondly. “We were doing classical clowning with music — it was the concert hall for us then and back in the ’80s people were throwing real money at us.

“We then had heaps of school shows because the teachers loved us; we made music fun for their kids. That was the crux of our game — classical joy,” he smiles.

The group won ‘Red Faces’ on the Nine Network’s Hey Hey It’s Saturday in 1987. “We were awarded 10,000 points out of 30,” he gleams. “The judges were footy legend Lou Richards, the cowboy from the Village People and Red Symons. That was fantastic!

“I’m a Uni High boy and I went to Melbourne Uni to do classical music at the conservatorium, but in 1988 we dropped out of uni to go to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. On the way there, we came second in a London busking competition. I was 21 then, and turning 22 at Edinburgh Fringe was the best time of my life.”

Hung Le has been a stand-up comic since 1992 when the global recession hit, some joke for his professional survival, “but my very first gig was a headline and got an encore — with just four jokes!” he laughs.

“For the past four years we’ve [his team of comics] been going to Asia to promote stand-up there. Comedy performance is not part of the culture there, but it’s happening, especially with Muslim people in Malaysia and Singapore, but also with Hindus in Bali and with the Japanese. Koreans and Viets are also coming on board as stand-up tells us so much about our society.



Hung Le plays up his violin ‘virtuosity’

Photo: courtesy Hung Le

“This year I’m publishing a bilingual kids’ book in Indonesia, sort of like a Lonely Planet for kids, teaching them about international cultures and lifestyles. It came about when I was crashing at a friend’s home in Bali; his mum is a book publisher and always helps young artists,” he explains, gratefully.

Titled Jenny and Shoo Shoo’s Great Adventure, it tells the tale of adventurer

Jenny, bookworm Shoo Shoo, the short-sighted, inquisitive parrot Yap Yap and Jolly Good Fellow, a very English tree kangaroo (kangaroos really live in trees in Indonesia!). These four scallywags fly around the world in their hot-air balloon and you can be sure their escapades are comic relief from Hung’s usual scripts.

Katrina Kincade-Sharkey

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## TRAVEL



Athens' famous Parthenon, undergoing further reconstruction



Photos: Tom Kramer

Striking garbage workers meant some streets were piled with refuse.

# Travel and Tribulation

The recent experiences of a colleague's step-daughter caused me to reflect on the nature of travel and the personalities of the places we visit. Passing through Egypt during a months-long global sojourn, this young woman witnessed Egypt's generally peaceful people claim back their country through an unprecedented show of sustained rage whose success surprised even them. What must it have been like to see this, a country that was already a potent presence in the world's psyche revealing characteristics that even some of its citizens admitted had been dormant for too long? We all learned something about Egypt in those 18 days; what was exciting was that we were watching the Egyptians learn something about themselves.

This made me think because my wife and I were in Egypt six weeks before the protests began and thought we'd gotten a fairly good idea of what made the country tick. But Egypt was peaceful in early to mid-December, and a lot can happen in six weeks. Thirty years of oppression spilled into a collective heaving of the nation's soul, and the Tunisians showed the way. By the end of it, a president had been deposed and a future re-imagined. Challenges make us grow in ways even we cannot imagine. This is true for whole countries as well.

These remarkable events altered our view of Egypt and we re-evaluated some of our initial impressions. Our memories took on different meanings. I remember the great halls of the famous Egyptian Museum, looted on January 29 and relieved of several priceless relics including the heads of two mummies. The pyramids, seared on my memory for the remainder of my years, were as wondrous as you'd expect but were free of tourists for the first time in hundreds if not thousands of years when the country ground to a halt. Tahrir Square was nothing but a maddening mess of cars and pedestrians to us; recently it's been occupied by demonstrators, tanks, highly pressurised water and, in mid-February, the site of what must surely have been the largest concentration of brooms in Egyptian history. Tahrir Square is now a place of national significance. Tour guides are reportedly amending their itineraries to include it for when the tourists return. Hopefully it's not too long.



Even the presidential guards couldn't escape Athens' roaming dogs.

We witnessed similar changes in Greece, which we visited immediately after Egypt. There, in Athens, the Greeks were going through a different sort of struggle, one that helped us understand the nature of the people and their country's place within Europe and the wider world. The difference was that we saw it happening first-hand, and so our understanding of the country was more immediate, instead of the gradual changes in our perception of Egypt in the months after we departed.

Athens is famous for its history, but its charms are also cultural, with the language, food, and customs of its people exerting an undeniable power that stretches throughout the world to Greek city outposts such as Melbourne. But the Athens brand was tarnished by the images of rioting citizens and bloodied politicians that were broadcast throughout the world during 2010 and which we confronted in December. Athens was a chaotic mess when we arrived, though the instability seemed fitting for a city built on the often competing presence of previous civilisations, ancient and otherwise. It also offered an insight into the Greek temperament, a sometimes reserved yet still joyful

feistiness ready to stand and defend itself when pushed. Democracy is said to have been founded in Athens, but our perspective as passing tourists as this democracy was tested gave us an understanding of the place we may not have arrived at otherwise—the same way my colleague's step-daughter will always remember Egypt differently to those that didn't see what she did.

Of course, the situation in Greece was far more complex than split lips, thrown rocks and tear gas. In 2010 the term 'austerity measures' took on a new and more fearful meaning for millions of Europeans, as Greece and other countries struggled under the weight of mountains and mountains of piling debt. I had heard about Greece's problems in the months leading up to our departure and had followed it during our two weeks in Egypt. When we arrived in Athens, the city was functioning but with the pronounced limp of less advanced economies. Trains were stalled and driverless, the city's buses silent outside of peak hours. Mail ceased to be delivered. Some streets were piled with garbage, there was more graffiti than usual, and the destitute wandered the streets more openly than perhaps they would have in the past. For them, there was safety in numbers and the numbers had grown. What I hadn't expected were the armies of dogs, which clasped onto us like wisps of hungry smoke. That they knew how to cross streets restricted any one individual's company for longer periods.

Still the city functioned. City workers commuted any way they could (clogging the city's narrow, often citrus-lined lane-ways), Christmas shoppers spent extravagant amounts of money in Athens' boutiques, hair was coiffed and nails were coloured, and locals and tourists alike drank ouzo and tsipouro and ate ridiculous amounts of food. Vast clouds of people staggered, necks craned, up one side of the Acropolis and down the other, looking upon classical history's most famous city oblivious to or ignorant of the pain experienced by so many at ground level. The dogs were their companions at every turn. The Parthenon, wrapped in scaffolding, stood silent sentinel over a city undergoing a reconstruction of its own.

The Aegean Sea, meanwhile, glistened and roiled in the middle distance as it has done for millennia and will continue to do once the crisis has passed.

Not once did we feel unsafe. Even the guy who asked if I'd open my wallet and

show him what Euros look like seemed more harmless than vicious. Parts of Melbourne get worse publicity than Athens was receiving last year, and Athens was in the midst of an economic, political, and social crisis. Tourists were welcomed with open arms, as they would be in a country so dependent on foreign money—ironic, given the state of things.

Despite, or because of, the tarnished edges, Athens charmed me, and sitting on Areopagus Hill with the Acropolis before us and the city all around was one of the highlights of our stay. Some of history's greatest figures no doubt sat on this hill and philosophised about wondrous things. The Apostle Paul delivered one of the New Testament's most famous passages from the Areopagus, and he's not even close to being among Athens' most famous figures (though the speech warrants an inscription, in Greek, on the short ascent to the top). History is everywhere in Athens; right now it's being made. My memories of Athens are all the more vivid because of the challenges of the time.

But it's not just Mediterranean nations struggling. The comparably wealthy United States remains gripped by a recession long since declared over, with many wondering why citizens there don't rally like they do in Egypt and Greece. It must be hoped that recent violence witnessed in both countries will ultimately lead to a lasting peace characterised by corruption-free governance and increasing prosperity for the lower classes. A few less mansions for the ruling elite would also be good.

One of the points of all this is that Australia, flood-ravaged, cyclone-riven and in the grip of marauding heatwaves as it often is, is in comparably good shape. Actually, I've undersold it: Australia is in great shape. If you didn't believe it when Oprah said it, believe it now. Australia is a great place to be. But I will remember fondly my time away, particularly in Greece and Egypt, one country breaking at the seams, the other about to. For as we only truly understand people when we've seen them under pressure, nations too have personalities and these are better revealed to us in times of pain. And despite the challenges, I liked that. Both are countries worth visiting when the calm returns. Egypt, in particular, will be more confident in character, and though I loved it already, that is an encouraging thought.

Tom Kramer