

The CAN Report — and the beginning, and later demise, of community participation in planning



The CAN Plan's vision for enhancement of the town hall surrounds

Source: Citizens' Action Plan for North and West Melbourne

Jack Lewis

"In the early 1970s Melbourne's inner suburbs were being strangled by unchecked growth. Roads were clogged by vehicles, pollution was increasing, historic areas were being destroyed, and the poorer residents were being displaced."

This was the opening paragraph of an invitation by the Hotham History Project and the North and West Melbourne Association (NWMA) to a talk given last year by Jack Lewis on the *Citizens' Action Plan for North and West Melbourne*, widely known as the CAN Plan or the CAN Report.

The background to the planning problem

The CAN Report was written in response to an invitation by the state government to all interested parties to participate in the development of a long-term Strategy Plan for Melbourne in early 1973.

This was unusual because up until then resident associations, including the North Melbourne Association (NMA), the Carlton Association and the Kensington Social Action Group, had been fighting the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) over its planning policies.

These involved compulsory acquisition of private property and bulldozing of historic buildings, which the HCV described as 'slum clearance', in order to replace them with 'modern estates' with multistorey towers and walk-up flats made of a far stronger but visually dull material — reinforced concrete — to house Melbourne's growing population.

In doing this they were also destroying local communities and creating ugly monuments that still dominate the skylines of North Melbourne, Flemington, Carlton, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Richmond, Prahran and South Melbourne. Displaced residents were forced to live high above the ground away from their private gardens and look down on concrete car parks.

At the same time the older building stock was being reassessed by the general public. This included academics who preferred to live close to institutions and migrants who were accustomed to small allotments within close-knit communities. They found the terrace houses and cottages could be easily improved to suit their needs.

The City of Melbourne Strategy Plan

The Strategy Plan was the brainchild of Rupert 'Dick' Hamer, the new premier of the Victorian state government, who had replaced the abrasive and despotic Henry Bolte on his retirement in late 1972. Hamer was a 'small-L' Liberal who wisely sought to avoid the confrontation that had occurred whenever building renewal was mentioned.

He pressured the Melbourne City Council into agreeing to employ a town planning consortium called Interplan Pty Ltd led by an astute Melbourne architect/planner named Peter McIntyre. Peter's architectural firm had already designed two multistorey tower blocks

in Nicholson Street, Carlton, and had worked well with Hamer when he was minister for local government.

Most associations were cautious about the Interplan invitation, but the NMA, led by Maurie Crow, attended the first meeting and decided to galvanise local support with the help of Maurie's dynamic wife, Ruth, to produce a report that would show the government how to work with the community for the benefit of all.

Interplan had produced a clever double-sided poster titled *Tentative Goals, Objectives and Policies* inviting a response to 'four possible futures' for Melbourne: maximum centralised growth; proportional growth; specialised growth; and maximum decentralised growth. The policies for each option were explained under six headings: work and employment; transport; entertainment, recreation and culture; housing; public services; and environment.

Continued on Page 7

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 37th 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.

Articles should be submitted by email to nwmnews@centre.org.au. Please use minimal formatting and do not embed graphics in documents. Photographs should be sent separately as JPEGs.

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Spanish Language Fiesta, North Melbourne!



Be part of the celebration for North Melbourne's first-ever Spanish Language Fiesta! Mixing music, art, food and literature, it promises to be a vibrant, fun-filled day out for the whole family.

Catch the team from the North Melbourne Library who will be launching their new collection of Spanish children's books and find out about their reading programs, or bring some of your own books to exchange at the community book swap.

Expect a full day of music and entertainment on the Little Errol Stage and learn some new moves from a local dance school while admiring the costumes. Also, make sure you check out our pop-up Spanish Cinema in between tasting a variety of delicious street food and enjoying a sangria.

Also not to be missed are The Centre's craft corner where you can make your own maracas, a language wall where you can read and share quotes in both Spanish and English, and the Fiesta Photo Booth where you can snap a memento of the day.

Saturday 23 April, 10.00am – 6.00pm
George Johnson Lane, North Melbourne
Free, but gold coin donation appreciated

Christmas carolling with Errol's Angels

Pamela Every



Just before Christmas, Errol's Angels performed a beautiful repertoire of carols old and new to a very appreciative crowd in Errol Street. The audience, including Santa Claus himself, were provided with word sheets and needed no encouragement to join in the singing.

This was the Angels' final performance under the leadership of Emily Hayes, whom the choir farewelled after eight years of wonderful service. We welcome Maryanne Clements, who became the new choir director starting in Term 1 this year.

New Errol's Angels members are always welcome. All you need is an enthusiasm for singing.

The choir meets on Thursday evenings from 7.00 to 9.00pm during school terms at the Maternal and Child Health Centre, 505 Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne. For further information visit www.errolsangels.com or call Kath on 0408 564 213.

Easter Services in North and West Melbourne



St Alban's, Anglican

55 Melrose Street, North Melbourne

Saturday 26 March 7.00pm to 8.30pm

Easter Vigil Service

Sunday 27 March 10.00am to 11.30am Easter Day Service

St James Old Cathedral, Anglican

Corner King & Batman streets, West Melbourne (opposite Flagstaff Gardens)

Palm Sunday 20 March 10.00am Holy Communion

Maundy Thursday 24 March 8.00pm Foot-washing and Holy Communion

Good Friday 25 March 10.00am Passion Reading

Easter Sunday 27 March 10.00am Holy Communion

St Mary Star of the Sea, Catholic

Corner Victoria & Howard streets, West Melbourne

Saturday 19 March 6.30pm Vigil Mass

Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) 20 March 10.30am Sunday Mass; 12.00 noon Sunday Mass (in Lithuanian) ☐ palms will be distributed at each Mass

Monday 21, Tuesday 22 & Wednesday 23 March 12.30pm Weekday Mass

Holy Thursday 24 March 7.30pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday 25 March 10.30am Stations of the Cross; 11.15am

Seven Words of Our Lord on the Cross Sermon; 12.00 noon

Holy Rosary; 3.00pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion

Holy Saturday 26 March 8.00pm Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday 27 March 10.30am Mass of Easter; 12.00 noon Mass of Easter (in Lithuanian)

St Mary's, Anglican

Corner Queensberry & Howard streets, North Melbourne

Palm Sunday 20 March 8.00am Eucharist; 10.00am Sung

Eucharist with Procession; 8.00pm Tenebrae

Thursday 24 March 8.00pm Maundy Thursday Liturgy

Friday 25 March 10.00am Good Friday Liturgy

Saturday 26 March 9.00pm Great Paschal Vigil

Easter Day Sunday 27 March 8.00am Eucharist; 10.00am Sung Eucharist

St Michael's, Catholic

456 Dryburgh Street, North Melbourne

Details unavailable at time of going to press

Saints Peter and Paul, Ukrainian Catholic

35 Canning Street, North Melbourne (corner Canning & Dryburgh streets)

Holy Thursday 28 April 9.00am Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great and Vespers; 7.00pm Matins of the Passion and reading of 12 gospels

Good Friday 29 April 9.00am Royal Hours; 6.00pm Vespers and

procession with Christ's burial cloth, veneration and Matins

Holy Saturday 30 April 9.00am Divine Liturgy of St Basil the

Great and Vespers; 6.00pm Solemn celebration of Christ's

Resurrection, Matins and blessing of Easter baskets

Easter Sunday 1 May 8.00am Divine Liturgy (recited); 10.00am

Solemn Pontifical Divine Liturgy with blessing of Artos

Uniting Church, Mark the Evangelist

51 Curzon Street, North Melbourne

The congregation meets in the church hall, 4 Elm Street

Palm Sunday 20 March 10.00am

Maundy Thursday 24 March 7.30pm Eucharist and foot-washing

Good Friday 25 March 10.00am

Saturday 26 March 8.00pm Easter Vigil

Easter Day Sunday 27 March 10.00am Eucharist and reaffirmation of baptism



Anzac Day Monday 25 April 2016



The Legion of Ex-Servicemen & Women together with The Centre invite the North and West Melbourne community to join in a ceremony to commemorate Anzac Day.

**The ceremony will take place on
Sunday 24 April at 2.00pm
at the North and West Melbourne Cenotaph
(corner Hawke Street & Victoria Street)**

After the ceremony, refreshments will be served at the Legion's clubrooms located behind the North Melbourne Town Hall in Little Errol Street.

Fears for safety on local public transport network

Stephanie Filaktakis

Despite the Victorian Government’s initiative in welcoming more than 900 protective service officers in 2011, Victorians still fear for their safety on Melbourne’s public transport, notably at train stations.

Abuse, drunk and disorderly behaviour, harassment and vandalism account for most crime that occurs at Melbourne’s stations.

Crime Statistics Victoria recently revealed the number of offences recorded at railway stations in Victoria. The statistics show the majority of offences occur at Albion, Craigieburn, Glenroy, Tottenham and West Footscray stations.

The biggest jump in crime at train stations between October 2012 and October 2015 included St Albans with 19.2 per cent, Sunbury with 61.9 per cent and West Footscray with 50 per cent.

Commuters have also come forward with their concerns about safety on public transport.

Helen Ho from Keilor said she would feel safer if police or protective service officers were more visible.

“When I travel from the city to home late at night it’s quite deserted, and when there are no PSO’s on the platforms it can get pretty scary just walking to my car,” she said.

Tina Truong, a 26-year-old woman from

Craigieburn, said even carriages should be manned because of the amount of violence that occurs.

“I feel safe during the daytime. At night, though, any time after 9.00pm feels scary and I’ve been harassed by those intoxicated or on drugs.

“I would feel safer if there were PSO’s on carriages; cameras don’t deter,” Tina added.

No word is out yet on whether the State Government plans to change its policy on protective service officers. However, Victoria Police are dedicated to ensuring passengers have a safe journey and offer the following suggestions to help individuals feel safe and comfortable on trains:

- Develop a safety plan
- Ensure your valuables are concealed
- If you are carrying a schoolbag, shopping bag, handbag or briefcase, make sure it’s on your lap if you are seated or between your feet if you are standing
- When out at night, try not to travel alone, but, if you do, stand in the yellow safety zone where the emergency communication system is located on platforms; if on a train, move closer to other passengers
- Above all, if you see something, report the incident or person.

Anyone who witnesses offensive behaviour should contact Crime Stoppers Victoria on 1800 333 000 or dial 000 in an emergency.



Commuters concerned about safety on Melbourne’s trains Photo: sourced from Wikimedia

Golden moment for Nancy

June McIntosh

Born on Melbourne Cup Day 1921, Nancy McIntosh finally got the chance to hold the coveted trophy. Nancy was all smiles when her great-nephew, Sam Brown, visited a few weeks ago.

Sam and his brother Adrian are part-owners of the 2015 Melbourne Cup winner, Prince of Penzance, and they knew their Auntie Nancy would love to see the cup.

“Most of the extended family had a few dollars on it,” Nancy said. “It was such an exciting win.”

Nancy was born the year Sister Olive won

the big race and her father wanted to name her Olive. “I was such a fair-haired baby Mum wouldn’t let him call me Olive, especially as my maiden name was Brown,” she laughs.

Nancy has lived in the same North Melbourne house since she was a young girl and consequently has become a well-known identity in the area. A number of family and friends joined her to share the moment and hold the solid-gold cup.

This year Nancy’s 95th birthday falls on Melbourne Cup Day, so she is hoping the Prince can do it again. What a wonderful birthday present that would be!



Nancy McIntosh with great-nephew Sam Brown and the coveted Melbourne Cup Photo: June McIntosh

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North and West Melbourne Association

With reviews of local heritage policies and heritage places currently in progress at Melbourne City Council, heritage is a topic of lively debate at Association meetings.

Local heritage policy review

The Association sent a submission to the City of Melbourne's Urban Strategy division in support of detailed submissions written by the Hotham History Project and other residents. Our position is summarised as follows.

The NWMA has an active history in attempting to preserve heritage in North and West Melbourne. This experience has raised our awareness of shortcomings in the treatment of heritage in the Planning Scheme and how this policy has been implemented by the City of Melbourne and VCAT.

We do not believe the revisions to the Planning Scheme being considered as part of this review will do anything to improve the protection of heritage and what remains of our 19th-century infrastructure. It may, in fact, work to its detriment.

Two cases on which we have taken issue with council action illustrate this — one directly and one at VCAT. The first issue related to the unauthorised demolition of a two-storey heritage-graded house at 187–189 Stanley Street, West Melbourne, and the second to an unprecedented decision by the council to demolish a unique two-storey double-fronted house at 132–134 Roden Street, also in West Melbourne, which the Association took up at VCAT.

Considering the distinct style and unusual proportions of this house, in our view its D grading was completely inappropriate and it should have been graded at a much higher classification. Both cases demonstrate shortcomings in the Planning Scheme or its implementation.

We feel that the council has once again let the community down with its consultation process. Earlier consultations promised further workshopping of the developed policy statements and documentation before their adoption by council. This has not occurred.

If the heritage policy is to have any credibility with local communities, both now and in the future, significant improvements must be made to the policy and its associated documents.

The status of heritage — a recent example

As an example of the current attitude to heritage, below is a summary of questions posed by the NWMA and the City of Melbourne's responses regarding the demolition of 187–189

Stanley Street.

How can a heritage-graded building be demolished without a planning permit from the City of Melbourne?

No. 187 Stanley Street is within a Mixed Use Zone and is covered by Design and Development Overlay Schedule 29 (DD029). This site is D graded and sits within a Level 3 streetscape in the City of Melbourne Heritage Places Inventory. However, it does not have heritage protection as it is not covered by a Heritage Overlay. Planning permission was therefore not required to demolish the building.

Why can a permit issued by a private building consultant allow the demolition of a heritage house?

Under the legislation, private building surveyors have the power to assess building plans to ensure they comply with the *Building Act 1993*, the Building Regulations 2006, the Building Code of Australia and any planning permit condition under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Why was this house, in an intact historic streetscape, not covered by a Heritage Overlay?

When the North and West Melbourne Heritage study was conducted in 1983, 187 Stanley Street was graded D within a Level 3 streetscape, as noted above. However, with the introduction of the new-format Planning Scheme in 1999, it was not included in the Heritage Overlay area.

Reviewing the level of heritage protection in West Melbourne is a priority for council, and a heritage review of every property in the West Melbourne Structure Plan area is being conducted by an independent heritage consultant.

The West Melbourne Structure Plan, which council is currently developing, aims to establish a vision that reflects the needs and aspirations of the people who live in, work in and visit the area. Council encourages the NWMA to participate in developing this plan to ensure that members can contribute. Find out more by visiting www.participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/westmelbourne.

89–95 Lothian Street, North Melbourne

In October 2014, Melbourne City Council decided to allow the demolition of the heritage-graded warehouse at 89–95 Lothian Street, and the construction of a five-storey apartment block in its place. Local residents, who opposed the plan, went to VCAT seeking



The Victorian house at 187–189 Stanley Street (behind the tree) before it was demolished

Photo: sourced from City of Melbourne's i-Heritage database

to have the council's decision overturned.

Late last year the tribunal handed down its decision, in favour of local residents, overturning council approval. In the decision, VCAT member Rachel Naylor found that such a large apartment block would be markedly out of scale with the surrounding single-storey homes and that the design of the building was not consistent with the character of the area.

The member also found that the council had, by mistake, failed to properly consider the heritage implications of demolishing the existing warehouse when it decided to approve the plans. The NWMA was thrilled to see local residents have such a great win at VCAT, despite being opposed by both the property developer and council.

The adjoining section of the warehouse, known as 97–101 Lothian Street, is also the subject of a development proposal.

Matters took a dramatic turn, however, when a fire broke out in the building in the early hours of 24 January. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade and police attended the scene promptly but there was considerable damage to the roof and interior, exposing asbestos. Fortunately no one was hurt and no nearby dwellings were affected by the blaze.

Baptist Church development site and Trust Deed 5510

The original Crown grant stated that this land (at 621 King Street, corner Hawke and Curzon streets) should be used for "a place of worship". This restriction to land usage was also faithfully reflected in 'Baptist' Trust Deed 5510. From their careful research of records extending back to the 1860s, supported by two separate legal opinions from specialist lawyers, concerned residents believe this restriction continues to apply.

This matter has been raised with The Eighth Day Baptist Community Property Ltd, the developer, and with council and a number of authorities. Meanwhile workers are seen furiously building a sales office on the site — not a place of worship!

NWMA meetings and contact

Ordinary general meetings take place at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of the month in the Dewey Common, Bastow Institute, 601 Queensberry Street (enter from Union Street). All are welcome. Email info@nwma.org.au for information or catch up on recent events and minutes of meetings by visiting the website at www.nwma.org.au.



Fire broke out in a heritage warehouse in Lothian Street on 24 January Photo: Jane Poynter

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Opera, footy and getting your starting note

Rosalynd Smith

Young opera singer Jeremy Kleeman has lived in North Melbourne since January last year, but has wanted to live here for years.

“I’m a passionate supporter of the North Melbourne Football Club, have been since I was a kid, so I wanted to move for that reason,” he explains.

“I’ve always loved the area. It’s close to the city, but it seems like a country town almost. I ride my bike to Victorian Opera. You can get everywhere on your bike from here.”

Jeremy spoke to me over a coffee at the Hot Poppy, full of enthusiasm about his plans for the future and the challenges of forging a career as a singer of opera and classical music.

With bachelor and master’s degrees from the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and numerous awards and scholarships, Jeremy is well on his way. He is already a graduate of Victorian Opera’s Developing Artist Program, and continued this association in February when he appeared in *Voyage to the Moon* with two of Australia’s most renowned opera singers, Emma Matthews and Sally-Anne Russell.

Jeremy has been busy in the past few years performing in a variety of styles — music theatre and oratorio as well as opera.

He has been at it for quite a long time. “At school I sang. I’ve been singing since I was about 10 really quite seriously, and I was in the Australian Children’s Choir. At high school (Box Hill High) we did a lot of music as well. I played the trumpet and did all the school musicals, and studied singing at school too.”

He loves the range of music he now gets to sing, but says he came to it through performing on the stage. From there he discovered oratorio and concert repertoire, songs, all sorts of beautiful music.

Opera and musicals have always been Jeremy’s favourites, but he says the unexpected things can turn out to be the most enjoyable, citing a concert he sang in at the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival last year.

“I hadn’t really thought too much about it, but it ended up being one of the most magical things I did all year.” It is no surprise that this was a concert with a strong dramatic element — a retelling of Australian opera star Dame Nellie Melba’s story through song and readings from her colourful memoirs.

Jeremy’s next major project is Bach’s great choral masterpiece, the *St Matthew Passion*, in which he is a bass soloist with the Melbourne Bach Choir, performing at the Melbourne

Recital Centre on Good Friday, 25 March, and also in Newcastle the previous weekend.

“What draws me to it is that it’s a grand story as well as arguably Bach’s masterwork,” he says.

“The *St Matthew Passion* is a work I’ve been wanting to perform for a while and it’s exciting to have two performances coming up. It’s the first time I’ve done it and actually I bought the score last year, sort of hoping that I’d get to do it, and just after I bought it, suddenly these two opportunities came up — it’s quite amazing!

“At the same time, I haven’t auditioned for Opera Australia yet. I’ve been waiting until I feel I’m at the stage they would consider me for the Young Artist Program, and I feel I’m almost there. I’m planning to audition for them later this year, and I’m hoping that will lead to more opportunities here in Australia.

“I’d love to sing overseas, but Australia is where I’d love to do most of my singing if I can.”

Jeremy considers himself fortunate that in Australia there actually are a lot of avenues for young singers to get the funds that they need to go overseas. “The opportunities present themselves if you’re ready for them, I think,” he says.

“I’ve been very lucky to not have to have another job. Victorian Opera is really good at helping young singers find their feet in the profession and they’ve taken me under their wing and given me just enough work to be able to live off so I can spend most of my time developing my own craft.

“And the Melba Opera Trust too — I’ve been very lucky to have both them and Victorian Opera supporting me; it’s meant that I haven’t had to spend time doing other things. I’ve been able to focus on my singing.”

The Melba Opera Trust funds specialist training for young singers and provides mentorship in career development as well as performance opportunities for its scholars to put into practice what they have learned.

Another interest of Jeremy’s is performance psychology — a field that applies not just to athletes. “It’s quite a difficult thing to get up and perform all the time and be expected to deliver,” he finds, “so I’m interested to read about studies that have gone into the best ways to prepare yourself mentally.”

When Jeremy is not performing, studying with his teacher, Raymond Lawrence, learning new music or listening to other singers, he manages to fit in a little teaching. He has a couple of singing students. One of them lives in Townsville so Jeremy teaches via Skype.



Young opera singer Jeremy Kleeman says he loves living in North Melbourne
Photo: sourced from Facebook

I asked Jeremy about highlights of his career so far, and the answer was not what I expected. He told me the story with obvious relish.

“At the start of last year the North Melbourne Football Club had put a call out for people because they were going to do a new recording of the club song. They got Tim Rogers, who’s a rock legend and a big North Melbourne fan, to coordinate it all and I sent them an email when I found out about it and said, ‘Look, I’m an opera singer and I’d like to sing on this recording if I could’.

“They said, ‘Sure, come along’, and it turned out they only had about 10 people that weren’t actually players or staff there doing it, so it was quite exciting to be in the room with all the players.

“I found it quite interesting because they didn’t even give us a starting note for the song. It was just ‘Go’, and we all just launched into it. I was like, where’s the melody here? It was quite an experience singing with all the players, I’ve got to say, and I was very pleased that I did it.”

Jeremy is expecting he won’t have to worry about getting the starting note for his *St Matthew Passion* concerts this Easter.

Rosalynd Smith is a North Melbourne resident and president of the Melbourne Bach Choir.

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Eddie Zammit's wonderful world of T-shirts

Claudio Palmeri

The deal was to meet on the corner of Collins and Elizabeth streets at 4.30 in the afternoon. As a professional, I had read many articles and researched Eddie Zammit, the T-shirt guru, online.

Removing the veneer of professionalism and being the teenager that I am, I was overwhelmed with excitement that I was going to have the opportunity to meet one of my biggest inspirations, face to face.

His mannerisms and charm took me by surprise, friendly and very inviting. He was happy to do the interview in his apartment.

The space resembled a gallery filled with artwork from many facets of life, all with amazing stories; Eddie was ready to tell me them all with enthusiasm, as if they had happened just yesterday. Instantly, I was knocked out with an overload of creativity and a greater appreciation for art.

Eddie attributes his passion for art and T-shirts to a book he opened in Year 9. In it was the description of an art director as "one who executes, supervises, or coordinates designs, illustrations, and layouts to be used in printed matter".

In that instant he knew what path he would take. He also took an interest in T-shirts at around 15 years of age. Not surprisingly, like many teenagers, Eddie did not like what his mum would buy for him.

As his T-shirt collection grew, he noticed that the focal point of conversation with his friends was his T-shirts.

Eddie remembers clearly that one of his favourite T-shirts in the early days was relatively plain and featured a barcode design but, instead of the numbers you generally find under the barcode, it had the word "shoplifter".

Yet what was really brilliant about this T-shirt, according to Eddie, was that the designer had "installed a mechanism in the sleeve that would beep every time you went through the security gates at a retail outlet; it actually set the alarms off". It was at this stage that Eddie realised that "it was more than just a T-shirt, it was a conversation point".

For Zammit a T-shirt is not just a top you wear when everything else is in the wash or not ironed. A T-shirt can be a way of expressing who you are, it can talk for you, it can give your life colour. A T-shirt symbolises art, history and memories on fabric.

Eddie maintained his own design company for over 13 years and worked as the art director on over 600 magazines and exhibitions before beginning T-world, "the world's only T-shirt journal".

Eddie refers to T-world as a reference guide, a journal, not a magazine. It's a "documentation of a culture, that I document personally".

"It is a visual diary that should be shared from details, swing tags, packaging, everything that makes up a good T-shirt."

Eddie is passionate and dedicated and has worked for a long time in the industry to gain the respect of T-shirt and design aficionados.

His first exhibition featured only nine T-shirts. Yet continuing to work Zammit believed in his own talent and his dedication to his craft never ceased. In time his perseverance



Eddie Zammit, the T-Shirt guru

Photo: sourced from Facebook

and dedication led him to hold exhibitions for Mambo and other designers at the National Gallery of Victoria. From there, Zammit's success only continued to grow.

Eddie curated the world's largest T-shirt exhibition at the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch, which was visited by as many as 230,000 people.

However, according to Eddie, the hardest exhibition so far was the one in Melbourne in the Industrial Hall, which saw him camping out in his exhibition space over 10 days.

During the day, people would come over and help out. However, it was the night-time that Eddie dreaded the most. His dedication and commitment paid off, though, with over 86,000 people seeing the show. As he says: "You are only as good as your last project."

Today, Eddie Zammit is one of the most sought-after art directors globally. Along the way he also happened to collect a lot of T-shirts — one turned into two and two turned into over 7000. The collection remains ever growing with Eddie receiving over 100 T-shirts a week. So what does he do with so many tees?

Eddie believes "it is an obsession turned passion and that there is a difference between a hoarder and a collector because I have gone on and done something with the collection".

"Any T-shirt could be cool; even the worst T-shirt could be potentially cool if it's on the right person, at the right time," he says. "T-shirts are not as exclusive as the sneaker culture. T-shirts have longevity and in 2013 the T-shirt celebrated 100 years."

Eddie believes that, despite 100 years in the

making, "we are only at the start of the T-shirt culture".

When you speak to someone like Eddie, it is always interesting to find out what or who inspires them.

Eddie grew up with four things that influenced his type of aesthetic and these were: *The Muppet Show*, *Sesame Street*, *Lego* and *Star Wars*. A few years ago Eddie was lucky enough to live out his childhood dream by actually getting to *Sesame Street*.

After a chance encounter with a friend led to an invitation to visit the set of the famous childhood show, Zammit couldn't resist meeting Jim Henson's colourful creature creations. Following on from his visit to the set, Zammit managed to pitch the idea of collaborating with *Sesame Street* on a massive 40th-year anniversary exhibition of *Sesame Street*'s T-shirts, which was wildly successful.

When you talk to Eddie, it is hard to believe that someone so young has achieved so much. Eddie sees the dream and goes for it.

You can sit back and say "wow, he was lucky". But luck has little or nothing to do with it. Eddie's perseverance, determination and enthusiasm are infectious and the few hours we spent together talking filled me with a drive to succeed and the knowledge that anything is possible, even figuring out how to get *Sesame Street*.

If you're interested in learning more about Eddie Zammit and T-world, head to www.t-world.com.au/ and be inspired.



Eddie Zammit with Big Bird

Photo: sourced from T-world

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The CAN Report — and community participation in planning

Continued from Front page

The respondents were required to choose which option they preferred and the answers would determine the design of the plan.

The CAN Plan team

Maurie Crow, a tall, quiet, unassuming, bespectacled lawyer in his late 50s who worked for the Clerks' Union, and Ruth, an extremely effective organiser, lived in a unit in the Hotham Gardens Estate. They were socialists and members of the Communist Party and thus acutely aware of the misuse of power by the privileged. They co-opted young professionals, artists, workers, students and anyone interested in the local community to become involved in any way they could.

Participants included Jack Lewis, a self-employed architect and university tutor, who helped Maurie develop the concepts of the report on his kitchen table several times a week and produced graphs, maps and sketches; and Dr Peter Milner, a mechanical and electrical engineer and lecturer at Melbourne University, who undertook traffic surveys and devised the staged transport plan in his Curzon Street unit.

Others produced ink drawings and the attractive green graphic on the report's cover, distributed documents and acted as helpers. Meanwhile Ruth typed the ever-changing drafts until the final 105-page document was ready for printing in August. It was issued in October. The report was an instant success, with copies being ordered by action groups, academics and local councils all over Australia.

To the surprise of the CAN Plan team and the NMA, Interplan responded positively to the report. It invited Maurie Crow to attend further meetings and indicated it would adopt some of the suggestions, integrating them with its own ideas.

The CAN concept

The basic philosophy behind the CAN Plan was simple. Human values were the most important. All members of the community had to be treated equally irrespective of age, gender, nationality, ability, religion and race.

Neighbourhood activity areas had to be protected and easily accessible to all by foot and by public transport without undue disruption by vehicular traffic. Vehicles that were not directly involved with activities within the area were to be directed around the perimeter on major roads. Roads within the area were to be made discontinuous to discourage through traffic.

The general building stock was to be kept intact while new development was allowed only in Melbourne's CBD, or close to public transport stations, or on undeveloped or underutilised land. Mixed uses were permitted where the uses were compatible. All buildings

of historic significance were to be protected. Renovation and sensitive redevelopment of existing buildings of all types (houses, shops, factories etcetera) was favoured over their demolition and replacement.

Height limits were to be established to ensure the scale of development was in keeping with surrounding buildings. The natural environment was also to be protected and enhanced.

These principles were then applied to North and West Melbourne. Three main neighbourhood activity areas were identified: the town hall centre in Errol Street, the Melrose Street 'village' and the Huntingfield centre at the corner of Abbotsford and O'Shanassy streets. Each was to have upgraded communal facilities. Schools and kindergartens were to be located away from roads with heavy traffic.

Underutilised land was identified where more intensive development could occur. On larger tracts, high-density multistoreyed residential units could be built. Heavier industrial uses could be located in certain areas near roads but away from residential areas. Plans showed the proposed road network.

The same was done with areas and infrastructure that adjoined the North and West Melbourne area and influenced it. These included the Melbourne CBD, the transport system with its rail yards, nearby suburbs such as Parkville and Carlton containing educational, health and research institutions, the Moonee Ponds Creek, Royal Park and sporting facilities.



Ruth and Maurie Crow, the drivers of the CAN Report
Photo: courtesy Julie Muir

When the second Interplan *City of Melbourne Strategy Plan* double-sided brochure appeared under the title *Concept for Final Goals and Action Plans*, Maurie Crow was disturbed because it misunderstood some of the basic CAN concepts. He rapidly produced a 20-page document titled *CAN's Counter-Proposal to Interplan*.

This spelled out: "Proposals which CAN endorse", "Proposals which CAN reject", "A more human solution to problems posed by Interplan" and "CAN's proposal summarised". It offered specific solutions concerning the 'compact



Queen Victoria Market in 1973 as depicted in the CAN Plan

Source: Citizens' Action Plan for North and West Melbourne

CBD', mixed-use area, housing and preservation, and neighbourhood activity centres and traffic, to achieve a more sensitive plan.

Despite the perceived flaws in the Interplan brochure, at the end of this document Maurie generously wrote:

"Finally, despite the differences between CAN and Interplan, one significant contribution that the Interplan team has made to planning in general, has been the persistent way in which they have encouraged participation in planning by the public at different levels ... a somewhat novel experience in Melbourne ...

"Thanks are extended to officers of Interplan for their courtesy and for unfailingly making themselves available for meetings and discussions whenever requested."

It took a year for the massive 356-page final *MCC Strategy Plan Report* to be completed and published.

In the following decade most of the policies the Strategy Plan recommended were implemented by the state government and Melbourne City Council. These included: continuing the process of consolidating major development in the CBD; permitting lower levels of development in areas where public transport was excellent; the creation of a city square; the creation of the Bourke Street Mall; and the eventual covering of part of the railway yards, allowing for the construction of Federation Square.

Other projects that augmented the strategy were the completion of the underground railway loop and the construction of the Ring Road, which encouraged industries to move away from the inner area. Vacant shells of industrial buildings thus became available for apartment development in the mixed-use areas.

The relevance today

Some of the policies of the Strategy Plan are still relevant but its intentions have been seriously compromised. This change began

with the Kennett-led Liberal state government in the early 1990s and the creation of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to resolve disputes between developers and those affected.

The State Government and the Melbourne City Council have lost the will to provide and enforce adequate planning controls in terms of both quantity and quality. Enormous projects with substandard accommodation are being erected without consideration of those directly affected (potential occupants or adjoining owners) or the general good of the community (inadequate parking, increased traffic, insufficient public open space and so on).

Developers lodge ambitious proposals in the expectation that they will be pruned. This particularly applies to building heights, where set limits are commonly grossly exceeded where they exist. Greedy developers are represented by barristers at VCAT, which individuals and community groups like the NWMA cannot afford. This is unfair and undemocratic.

As for community participation, it barely exists. Government departments are secretive despite laws that require freedom of information. Unaware citizens attending any VCAT session, council planning meeting or NWMA meeting will be shocked and depressed to learn what is occurring.

On the local community level the scene is more optimistic. There is hope that the Errol Street shopping precinct will eventually be improved. The recent NWMA survey clearly indicated that residents, shopkeepers, workers and visitors wanted trees in the street, safer tram stops for the disabled, a public toilet catering for both sexes, and traffic signs and other measures to control speeding vehicles.

These are relatively easy to implement compared to the planning issues that require more urgent and meaningful attention. The fact is that our government representatives at all levels have let us down. If the situation could be improved in the 1970s, surely it can be tackled now.

Notes:

1. The history of community participation in Melbourne planning is described in *Trendyville: the battle for Australia's inner cities* (2014), by Renate Howe, David Nichols and Graeme Davison.
2. The CAN Report and other documents written by Maurie and Ruth Crow are available in the *Crow Collection* at Victoria University in Footscray.
3. A memorial plaque dedicated to the work of Maurie (1915–1988) and Ruth Crow (1916–1999) was unveiled in the Royal Park Australian Native Garden on 16 September 2000. It states: "Activists in social and environmental planning. They inspired, guided and encouraged our communities in seeking to make a better world."
4. The main hall at the Melbourne Arts Centre is dedicated to former Liberal state premier Rupert Hamer.



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UnitingCare Hotham Mission delivers a number of programs focussed on education, early intervention, food security, and asylum seeker support. Volunteers are being sought to assist with educational support, transitional programs, community development initiatives and in-house support. For more information, contact the programs manager, Beth Stewart-Wright, at beth.stewartwright@hothammission.org.au, or visit the Hotham Mission website.

www.hothammission.org.au



Magical mystery tour ends in West Melbourne

Aaron Rowan-Bell

As if out of nowhere it has appeared. Bernard's Magic Shop, long a feature of the CBD and a Melbourne icon, has magically made its way to a new home in West Melbourne.

Yet for once the question of how this happened is not shrouded in the sense of mystery that tends to accompany the world of magic. This is one of those rare opportunities where a magician is willing to reveal their secrets. This is the story of Bernard's Magic Shop.

Ever since it opened its doors in 1937 Bernard's Magic Shop has been helping magicians get their start in magic.

Today it is the oldest and one of the few remaining magic stores in Australia.

Kristina's love of magic, however, came long before her involvement with the store. Her interest in magic began at a young age but remained a dormant passion for many years. It wasn't until a friend introduced her to magic conventions that she became embroiled in the art and its community.

Starting with an audition as a magician's assistant, Kristina, who goes only by her first name, has had a performing career lasting over 20 years. She has toured Australia and overseas visiting places like Hong Kong, Fiji and Singapore, as both assistant and magician.

When Gerald Taylor offered Kristina the famous Bernard's in 1992 she thought: "If I didn't take it, who would?"

To run a store like Bernard's "you have to love magic", says Kristina, and it was that same love of magic that caused her to move Bernard's to its new home on Victoria Street in West Melbourne.

With rental prices spiking in the CBD Kristina had to pull a rabbit out of her hat, so she made the move to West Melbourne to ensure that this piece of heritage would be around for years to come.

Besides rental prices another issue facing Kristina and other small businesses today is the growing market for niche products on the internet.

Kristina assures any potential magicians that while it may sometimes be quicker to jump online than to take a trip to your local magic shop she is happy she is there to give the advice customers wouldn't otherwise get online.

Sixteen years ago Kristina started the Bernard's Junior Magicians Club. With 'YouTube magicians' being a growing trend Kristina felt that sometimes kids were being taught to focus too heavily on the trick and not enough on the performance aspects of the art.

The aim of the Bernard's Junior Magicians Club isn't to teach kids magic but to take the magic they already know to a performance level. To help them transform from someone who is capable of doing a card trick into a performing magician.

Bernard's has a long tradition of producing performing magicians. Perhaps the most famous of those was Alfred Gertler, though most would remember him by a different name.



Kristina, owner and operator of Bernard's Magic Shop

Photo: Aaron Rowan-Bell

"The whole Bernard's thing came about when Lionel Aarons and Bill Johns named the shop after their friend Bernard, who was always lucky," says Kristina. "Twelve months later they sold it and Alfred Gertler bought the store."

"He thought rather than changing the name he would take on the name Bernard. So that is how he became Bernard the Magician, and was on *The Tarax Show* with Happy Hammond and Ron Blaskett."

The Junior Magicians Club meets at Bernard's on the first Saturday of every month except January, and competitions are held in December.

Kristina says that as a child she found it hard to make inroads into magic because it was so male dominated, and is proud that the Junior Magicians Club has a strong showing of girls. In fact, five out of the six trophies given away at last year's competition were taken home by girls.

No longer surrounded by smoke and mirrors, for the residents of West Melbourne the world of magic is just a short walk away.

Bernard's Magic Shop is at 355 Victoria Street, West Melbourne, and is open Monday to Saturday.

Recollections of great days at the old pool

Bill Hannan

Laurie Davies was born 100 years ago. He lived his early life in Munster Terrace and remembered spending many hours enjoying himself at the North Melbourne Pool.

Years passed and when his brother, Jim, was caretaker at the pool in the 1950s Laurie taught swimming to local schoolchildren. His memories of the pool are among the archives of the Hotham History Project.

These are the recollections of Laurie Davies.

I started swimming at the pool when I was about seven years old. That was in 1923. The pool was just concrete, not tiles, and had an asphalt surround. I remember kicking and scraping the top of my foot against the side and it took weeks for the abrasion to heal.

The pool had a brick wall in the front and corrugated iron walls all around. There was no chlorination or purification of the water then. The entrance was in Macaulay Road.

The hours of opening were from 10.00am until 5 or 6 o'clock. There wasn't much patronage during the day because everyone was working. It was still the era of the 48-hour week and most people worked on Saturday until lunchtime.

At the pool, it was men only except on Tuesday afternoons when girls were allowed in. Us boys were emptied out at midday.

The pool was never opened at night-time.

On Sunday mornings the pool would be emptied and we'd be allowed in free to scrub the moss off the walls with brooms. When it was refilled we'd get a free swim.

At that time, there was only one attendant, George White, who was a former Victorian boxing champion. Togs weren't required and we swam naked.

A few years later, the attendant was Bob Rankin, who was a butcher who had lost some of the fingers on one hand. He worked for the butcher shop in Happy Valley and lived in the

big brick house on the south corner of Erskine and Abbotsford streets.

In the late 1920s or early '30s, the pool was tiled. Mixed bathing came in and there were other changes. They built a chlorination plant and housed it in a shed at the end of the pool and as well as that they put in two diving boards with a cyclone wire fence to keep the boys and girls separate.

The dressing shed for the girls was built on the eastern side, nearer to Dryburgh Street. It had a painted weatherboard wall, which got lovely and warm. We weren't allowed over there. We were on the football side — the chilly side.

When the pool that Laurie Davies enjoyed reached the end of its life, it was replaced after some years by the present pools, which remain substantially unchanged from that time.

Contributed by Bill Hannan from material in the archives of the Hotham History Project.

Some upcoming events for the Hotham History Project

Wednesday 16 March, 7.30pm, at the Metropolitan Meat Market
Workshop/display led by Peter Johnson titled 'Arbiter of Style: The Talented Mr George Johnson'

From quite humble beginnings George Johnson rose to become the most prolific designer of theatres and halls in Australia during the late 19th century. At his peak he was designing projects in four different colonies at once.

This display will explore some of George Johnson's works including two heritage buildings that grace the streets of North Melbourne — the Hotham Town Hall (today's Arts House) and the Metropolitan Meat Market.

Saturday 7 May, 2.00pm, starting at North Melbourne Library
National Trust Heritage Festival walk, 'Raze or recycle: repurposing heritage buildings'

North Melbourne has a vast array of heritage buildings, but quite a few no longer have their original purpose. Join North Melbourne Library and Hotham History Project for an easy walk to discover these buildings, a highlight being the magnificent Melbourne Meat Market.

Website: www.hothamhistory.org.au



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More than a game for the League of Geeks

Kane Webb

The independent games industry has been booming over the last 10 or so years.

Yet its more modest origins go back to the early 1990s, when it was strictly PC orientated and distributed only via shareware.

With the evolution of gaming, however, came higher user expectations, and combined with the advent of fully 3D graphics it became harder for smaller games development teams to keep up.

To this day it still remains an incredibly lengthy and difficult task to produce a video game within a small team, although advancements in digital distribution methods, cheaper licensing fees for pre-made game engines, a much wider range of platforms to develop for and crowd-funding have certainly made it easier.



Some characters from indie game *Armello* designed by Melbourne's League of Geeks

Photo: sourced from League of Geeks

A growing number of influential, award-winning games are being produced and distributed by small teams all around the world as production becomes less costly and time-consuming.

One notable example, Supergiant Games' 2011 action role-playing game *Bastion*, inspired Trent Kusters to form a small team of his own to try and achieve similar success.

At the time he was a lead designer at Torus Games, one of Australia's oldest and most consistently stable major game development studios. He worked on already-licensed titles that offered little to no creative input, and wanted to make an original game of his own design from the ground up.

Along with Torus co-workers Ty Carey, Blake Mizzi and Jacek Tuschewski, they formed the Melbourne-based independent game company League of Geeks and began brainstorming.

Production on what would later become known as *Armello* began in the form of a board game, which they developed on paper and refined at their weekly meetings.

Their original plan was to have a digital

multiplayer board game ready to ship for the iPad in six weeks. This timeline ballooned as the game became increasingly complex in design.

It took approximately a year of play-testing before they were even ready to begin working on the digital version of the game. Only, none of the four founders were programmers, and they had no money to pay anyone to do the work that they couldn't.

With this in mind, they developed a points system whereby freelance programmers and artists could contribute to the workload in exchange for a share of the profits once the game was released.

Despite its fair share of halts on production due to unforeseen circumstances over the following years, League of Geeks carried on with their vision and utilised a successful crowd-funding campaign that raised over \$300,000 to help them produce the game full-time.

This led to their porting the game from the tablet to PC, and it was featured on online games distributor Steam's Early Access release platform in January 2015. The completed version of the game was released for mobile, tablet, PC, OS X, Linux and PS4 on 1 September last year to positive reviews.

League of Geeks' office is located at the Arcade, a not-for-profit, collaborative workspace in Southbank created specifically for game developers and creative companies.

They share the building with a multitude of other independent game companies as members of the Game Developers' Association of Australia. The GDAA advocates on behalf of its members to industry stakeholders including governments, publish-

ers and industry advisors to promote, grow and attract investment in the Australian games development industry.

The independent games industry can be an extremely competitive place. Luckily, with a cooperative approach, Melbourne's games

designers are ready to take on the next level.

For information on upcoming projects by League of Geeks check out their website at www.leagueofgeeks.com/. For more about the collaborative design space at the Arcade go to www.thearcade.melbourne/.



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COMMUNITY

Impressive, for very good reason

Katrina Kincade-Sharkey

You'd guess this vibrant, politicised person had worn his adopted name most of his knowing years; and he has, although only formally registering it in New Zealand's Greymouth in 1992.

And this bloke wears his name well, exceedingly well. Very Impressive is stylishly loud, occasionally excessively loud in appearance, yet one of those gentle souls few know really well — not most of us, anyway.

Recognised around Melbourne town's inner regions as much for his lofty locks of soft pink or green or purple or orange actually, his hair colour reflects whatever mood's taken him that month. Very Impressive is known by this community — and by his cohorts at The Centre — as a truly caring gem.

He saunters in bang on time, flicking away droplets of autumn rain.

Very is a drag queen supremo who adores a late afternoon glass of decent bubbly, but is oh-so-frightfully-correct about it. "The best time I ever had drinking champagne was when [the film] *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* came out," he says.

"I was in Nelson, New Zealand, on the north-west of the South Island, and, if you came to the opening night dressed in drag, they gave you a champagne cocktail. Now, I'd never had a cocktail — which is just champers and a sugar cube — but because I was so splendidly attired in my drag, they gave me four!"

His ginormous blue-green eyes sparkle.

Very moved from his native New Zealand to Sydney in late 1996 to meet a brother "no one ever told us existed". "He was adopted out before Mum and Dad were married," he says, looking away.

We've dined at Ample and the Howard Street lunch crowd's moved on, yet he now stares intently away, across empty tables to a languid coffee machine.

"We're all one year apart. There's my two sisters, Deone and Julie, and I'm in the middle of the girls, with our older brother, Blair,"

he says proudly, noting their family name is "Greer, as in Germaine the magnificent".

That Sydney trip was the launch of Very's true comfort with his personal predilections: "I'd been living there for about two weeks and was shopping in Newtown one day when I sat on this massive timber/metal throne on display at a second-hand furniture business. Well, the owner got a shock, thought I was a mannequin and employed me on the spot!"

"You see, I'd previously been a mannequin in Christchurch and knew how to hold a pose," he grins, adopting a stupendous stance in the bistro. "Anyway, that job lasted six or seven months and I was living a glorious life with an entire wardrobe of sumptuous costumes."

Yet this lean model's youthful life had obviously demanded more purpose: "I became involved in a forest blockade against Sydney City Council's 'mega-tip' on the Bendalong Road State Park between Nowra and Milton and Ulladulla, the decommissioned warship harbour."

Very launches into a tirade of controlled, knowing abuse against people — accredited members of our allegedly civilised society — who compromise the environment.

"There was this plan by a self-made millionaire, Ian Malouf, in 2011 to open the biggest waste dump/landfill in the Southern Hemisphere at Sydney's Alexandria ... and it was obscene," he groans, remembering operators who blamed their employees for breaching strict landfill guidelines, then ignored clean-up orders over several years.

Our environmental activist lobbied the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage about odours from the landfill site. A surprise inspection in April 2011 found a pipe connected to infested leachate, which was pumping it into a stormwater drain.

Then, responding to further lobbying in June of that year, OEH inspectors again visited the site and found that Boiling Pty Ltd, a company owned by the millionaire's wife, Larissa Malouf, had 170,000-cubic-metre stockpiles of waste contaminated with asbestos. Other pollution breaches dated back to 2002, when Mr



Very Impressive lives up to his name

Photo: Jim Weatherill

Malouf's company, Alexandria Landfill Pty Ltd, was ordered to clean up leachates after residents complained about the stench.

"Interestingly," Very remembers, "that Alexandria Landfill site was also bought from Sydney City Council in 2000 and was developed as a recycling facility; dozens of complaints regarding stench from effluent were received by OEH."

"In 2007, another property, at Marulan, was found with 1300 cubic metres of asbestos-contaminated soil levelled and spread across it," he continues. "That property belonged to Mr Malouf's mother-in-law Kathleen Hopkins's company, Kathkin Pty Ltd, as trustee for his five children."

"It's probably ancient history now, but Malouf was photographed attending a \$5000-a-head fundraiser for the Liberal Party at the home of John Symonds. When it was revealed that Malouf, who is also a property developer, had been in attendance, the NSW Labor Party general secretary, Sam Dastyari, referred the \$5000 donation to the Electoral Funding Authority for investigation."

"There was nothing decent about those she-nanigans, nothing."

Very then vividly tells of a dead tree in Ulladulla at the front of a property where the owners wanted their view unimpeded. "Our view of their ugly house should have been completely impeded! Anyway, they poisoned this massive ghost gum and it took several years to be removed, so what remained was just this large, dead white tree — a sacrilege," he moans, the regret still deep.

Significantly self-educated in horticulture from extensive reading and astute TV viewing, Very shares some favourite mentors: Douglas Adams, author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and Mark Carwardine, who wrote *Last Chance to See* with Adams. Those guys travelled the world looking at endangered species, looking at them before they disappeared, before they became extinct.

"*Last Chance to See* was revised as a TV series by Stephen Fry and Mark Carwardine

two years ago and it's definitely worth a repeat showing. They showed us those species' beauty before it was lost to our world," he says, voice trailing as he looks away.

We've been joined at this luncheon appointment by Very's close acquaintance, the exceptionally well-behaved Yarndi 'the Magnificent Wonder Dog', a seven-year-old Cairns terrier/corgi cross adopted from North Melbourne's Lost Dogs' Home.

Yarndi's obediently close; he's known his prime carer since 26 November 2014: "He's a loving dog, but not silly, and he has a delightfully dappled fawn coat that looks like Russian fudge."

Yarndi sits peacefully at Very's feet throughout our extensive discussion, showing no hunger pangs at our meals' delicious aromas, more proof of his owner's care.

Turning 48 in June, Very Impressive's life has patently moved on from his New Zealand youth, but bred a glorious education in life. "The most memorable position I had in New Zealand was attempting to be a politician, to truly represent people," he says.

"I ran for mayor of Christchurch in '92, when I ran second against the incumbent mayor, Vicky Buck, whose husband was a major housing developer, which I thought was highly inappropriate."

"Then in '93 I ran for the McGillicuddy Serious Party in the rural conservative seat of Ashburton, south of Christchurch, where I received some 600 votes from no campaigning."

"I'd picked up [the potentially fatal] viral meningitis as a teenager and was very ill and people were saying then it was a reoccurrence," he grimaces, no doubt reliving the pain of the lumbar puncture procedure used to confirm meningitis.

Anyhow, that was the end of Very's New Zealand pollicie notions and the start of his awareness that he needed a new life here. Everyone who knows this bloke is glad he settled in our part of Melbourne. Say "Hi" next time you see his flaring locks — you'll be glad you did.



Very with his beloved Yarndi the wonder-dog

Photo: Jim Weatherill

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Time: Tuesday (four sessions)
5pm – 6pm Children & Youths
6pm – 7pm Adults
Cost: \$90 / \$55 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne

Centre Adventures (Day Trips)
Time: Fourth Tuesday monthly
9am – 5pm

Cost: \$35 / \$25 concession*
Meeting Point: 58 Errol St, North Melb

Drop-in Morning Teas
Cost: \$4 per session
Time: First Tuesday monthly
10.30am – 12 noon
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

**Errol’s Angels Community Choir and
Beginners Singing**
Time: Thursday 7pm – 9pm
Membership: \$160 / \$100 concession* per
term
Venue: Maternal & Child Health Centre,
505 Abbotsford St, North Melbourne

**CONTACT THE OFFICE FOR DETAILS
ON:**
**Discovery Walks – Art, Architecture and
History Walking Group**
Ready, Steady – Walk Docklands
Volunteering

FOUNDATION SKILLS
Career Planning and Advice *NEW*
Time: Monday 10am – 12 noon
Cost: \$90 / \$55 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Global Homework Program
Primary (Grades 4 and 5)
Time: Wednesday 3.30 – 5pm
Secondary (Grades 7–12)
Time: Tuesday 3.30 – 5pm
Cost: \$35 / \$25 concession*
Venue: North Melbourne Library
Open (Grades 4–10)
Time: Thursday 3.30 – 5pm
Cost: Free to City of Hobsons Bay
residents
Venue: Hobsons Bay Altona Library

**Management Studies: Business
Communications or Compliance
Frameworks *NEW***
Time: Wednesday 12.30 – 3.30pm
or 6pm – 9pm
Cost: \$133 / \$105 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Financial Literacy
Time: Monday 1pm – 3pm
Cost: Free for concession card holders,
others \$55
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Job Seeker Skills
Time: Monday 1pm – 3pm
Cost: Free to those sleeping rough
Venue: Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation
Basic Skills
Time: Friday 1pm – 2pm
Cost: Free to those sleeping rough
Venue: Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation

Return to Study and Study Support *NEW*
Time: Tuesday 1pm – 3pm
Cost: \$90 / \$55 concession*
Meeting Point: 58 Errol St, North Melb

Self-development Short Courses: *NEW*
**Legal Fundamentals: Aged Care Law or
Contract Law**
Social Media for Marketing
Setting up a Small Business Online
**Understanding Workplace Documents and
Processes**
**Writers’ Workshop (creative writing and
editing)**
Time: Wednesday 6pm – 9pm
(two sessions)
Cost: \$90 / \$55 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

**EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT**
**Asthma Management or Anaphylaxis
Management**
Time: 9am – 4pm quarterly
(two sessions with pre-reading)
Cost: \$125 / \$105 concession*

Dates: 8 April, 4 July
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

**Core Skills for Work – Vocational
Preparation**
Time: Monday 10am – 12 noon
Cost: \$133 / \$105 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Education Support (Teacher’s Aide)
Time: Wednesday 9am – 3.30pm
Cost: \$1225 / \$250 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Event Management
Time: Monthly and term options
available
Cost: \$65 / \$55 concession*
or free internship *NEW*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Journalism, Media and Printing
Time: Monday 1pm – 3pm
Cost: \$133 / \$90 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Training and Assessment – Certificate IV
Time: Monday 6pm – 9pm
(11 sessions)
Cost: \$1595 / \$375 concession*
Train the Trainer
Time: Monday 6pm – 9pm
(three sessions)
Cost: \$475 / \$375 concession*
**Upgrade to TAE40110 from old BSZ40198
and TAA40104**
One-day workshop
Date: 6 April
Time: Wednesday 9am – 4pm
Cost: \$475
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

**INFORMATION, DIGITAL MEDIA
AND TECHNOLOGY**
Information, Digital Media and Technology:
First Steps
Time: Monday 10am – 12 noon
One Step Further
Time: Friday 10am – 12 noon
Cost: \$125 / \$90 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Computer Skills: INTEL® Easy Steps
Time: Wednesday 1pm – 3pm
Cost: \$125 / \$105 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Drop-in One to One Sessions
One-on-one training arranged with instructor
Time: By appointment, bring your
own device(s)
Cost: First four hours \$90 and
thereafter \$55 per session
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Introduction to Technology
Bring your own iPad or iPhone or laptop to
class to learn.
Time: Wednesday 10am – 12 noon
(four sessions in group setting)
Cost: \$90 / \$55 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Active and Healthy
Time: First, second and third Tuesday
monthly#
10am – 12 noon
Cost: \$35 / \$25 concession*
Venue: North Melbourne Library

Pilates:
Beginners
Time: Thursday 5.30 – 6.30pm
General Class
Time: Tuesday 5.30 – 6.30pm
Tuesday 6.30 – 7.30pm
Tuesday 7.30 – 8.30pm
Wednesday 9am – 10am

Intermediate
Time: Thursday 7.30 – 8.30pm
Intermediate Plus
Time: Thursday 6.30 – 7.30pm
Antenatal / Postnatal Pilates
Time: Tuesday 7.30 – 8.30pm
(five sessions)
Wednesday 11am – 12 noon

Pilates – Men’s Health *NEW*
Time: Subject to demand
Exercise for Older People *NEW*
Time: Wednesday 10am – 11am
Cost: \$185 / \$135 concession*
Venue: The Meat Market and
Little Errol Street

ART AND CRAFT

Art and Craft: Create and Communicate
Time: Thursday 10am – 12 noon
or 1pm – 3pm
Cost: \$90 / \$55 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Performance and Theatre *NEW*
In 2016 The Centre will be developing a
performance piece allowing people to speak
out about issues that concern them in our
community.
Times and dates will be negotiated with
interested participants.
Cost: \$90 / \$55 concession*

Photoshop and Your Photography
Time: Thursday 10am – 12 noon
or 1pm – 3pm
Cost: \$133 / \$90 concession*
Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

* subject to conditions
subject to staff–student ratios

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POLITICS & ENVIRONMENT

Council clash coming to Melbourne in October

Lachlan Marr

The ostentatious and extravagant US election cycle is currently dominating the global media landscape. Meanwhile, at a national level, the formative issues of the Australian federal election are beginning to take shape.

Yet with all the glitz and glamour of the American elections and the spectre of the Australian federal election looming it's easy to forget the impending Melbourne City Council election, which will take place on Saturday 22 October.

While the local city council might not boast the same cavalcade of celebrity politicians as some foreign elections, our council does feature its own cast of colourful characters.

In the top job, there is Lord Mayor Robert Doyle, who comes from a pioneering political family, his great-great-grandfather having served as mayor of Melbourne way back in 1861.

Doyle proved to be somewhat of a pioneer himself in state politics where he was unfortunate enough to set the record for the Liberal Party's worst-ever defeat in a Victorian state election.

Since absconding from the state parliament Doyle has found surprising popularity as the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, having won the title in a tightly contested election in 2008.

Since then he has courted controversy by proposing that Melbourne's buskers should have to audition, advocating the building of a CBD theme park, and suggesting Swanston Street be reopened to private vehicles.

Yet he has also spearheaded a number of successful projects, such as the popular White Night, and he has made a concerted effort to make the city more family-friendly and inviting.

Now Doyle is seeking to set a new record and perhaps to set the record straight on his political acumen by running for an unprecedented third term as lord mayor. If Doyle wins he will be the first lord mayor of Melbourne to serve three consecutive terms.

Doyle's term as lord mayor has been the subject of some scrutiny and not just because of his tense relationship with street performers.

Lord Mayor Doyle has had to stand aside from council deliberations on several occasions due to conflicts caused by his vast pool of election contributors, with several developers, lobby groups and city businesses shown to have contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to Team Doyle during the last election.

One factor that could drastically affect



The Melbourne Town Hall and Melbourne City Council chambers

Photo: sourced from Melbourne Town Hall

Doyle's election success is a recent proposal to change the current voting structure in the Melbourne City Council elections.

As it stands, businesses in the City of Melbourne are required to vote, with corporations operating in Melbourne allocated two votes. Owners of rateable properties are also required to vote, whether or not they live locally.

A recent report on democracy recommended changing this so that only residents could vote. Another recommendation was to allow voting rights for people who work 40 hours or more in the city, which would add over 439,000 voters to the electoral roll.

Such changes would likely see a complete overhaul of the council's make-up, with business-friendly candidates such as Robert Doyle and his team of five councillors incurring the wrath of residents, who tend to be more left-leaning.

Excluding businesses or including workers in the upcoming election would greatly increase the vote share for the Greens party, which dominates most inner-city councils.

Currently the Melbourne City Council includes two Greens representatives. Dr

Cathy Oke also comes from a local pioneering family, her mother having helped start North Melbourne's own Spring Fling Festival.

Rohan Leppert, elected in 2012, is a composer, musician and teacher who was instrumental in Adam Bandt's successful campaign to be elected to the House of Representatives.

Another interesting character on this council is Stephen Mayne, co-founder of political e-zine Crikey.com. Mayne came to the council with a colourful background and a broad range of experience.

The business journalist was formerly Jeff Kennett's press secretary before starting an anti-Kennett website in the midst of the 1999 state election. The fiercely independent shareholder activist continues to write for Crikey.com and advocates good governance in his role on the council.

Councillors Ken Ong and Kevin Louey are the last remnants of John So's once-popular council, while community activist Dr Jackie Watts was the only one on the powerhouse Gary Morgan/John Elliott ticket to see success at the last election.

Compared to the overarching narratives

and ideological battles on display at national and international levels, it might seem that the issues discussed at Australia's third level of government are of little significance.

However, the local council is realistically the most likely way that the majority of Australians will interact with their government. Despite all the supposedly high-minded arguments waged at a national level, the practicalities of day-to-day governance remain the biggest hot-button issues for many people.

Roads, traffic, infrastructure, transport, parking, zoning and planning might not resonate as the most exciting political issues, yet in a lot of cases these are the issues that will have the most direct impact on people's lives.

The good thing is this is also the level of government where people can actually have the most impact themselves. Council meetings are held regularly and community involvement is encouraged. For more information head to www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/.

Be sure to keep yourself informed as the election approaches and you get to have your say in October.

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We are a group of people who live or work in North and West Melbourne, a community that is very much a part of the inner-city life of Melbourne.

We represent our members by canvassing their views, concerns and proposals on issues of community interest to local, state and federal government.

Join us to work together for the future of our community. We meet once a month on the third Tuesday, and everyone is welcome.

- www.nwma.org.au
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- [NorthAndWestMelbourneAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/NorthAndWestMelbourneAssociation)
- PO Box 102 North Melbourne 3051



Overdevelopment is a road to ruin for our city

Ellen Sandell

The inner north of Melbourne, like Kensington where I live, is one of the best places to live and raise a family. The access to community facilities, the diversity and the vibrant arts scene are just some of the reasons we choose to live here. I love that our community will fight to protect our shared spaces and services — the proponents of the East West toll road learnt that the hard way when they tried to build a highway through the middle of our parkland and community! The challenge for us is to protect the livability of our little pocket of Melbourne from those who are looking to make a quick buck at the expense of the community. I have been alarmed by the huge rate of unfettered growth, particularly of poor-quality, small apartments, in inner Melbourne, and the lack of consultation, democratic processes and community infrastructure that goes along with it.

The recent poor decision to remove notice and appeal rights for residents living in parts of North Melbourne and Carlton is just another example of the community being sidelined when it comes to planning. I am especially concerned by the lack of infrastructure planning that goes alongside the increase in development. If the government wants to continue to grow Melbourne’s population — what about the parks, schools, health care and public transport that will be put under pressure? Why is this being ignored? Continuing to build large, poor-quality developments with little regard to public space and community services, simply to maximise developer profit, is a road to ruin for our city. While there are many reasons for this sorry state of affairs, there are two issues I see as real root causes of these problems: political donations from property developers; and businesses receiving two votes to residents’ one vote in Melbourne City Council elections. Last year I attempted to introduce a Bill to Parliament to ban donations by property developers to politicians. It is scandalous that planning ministers get the final say on multimillion-dollar developments, while at the same time both major political parties run on cash handed out by developers themselves. NSW finally banned this kind of corrupting behaviour, but in Victoria the major parties continue to pretend there is no problem — they even voted to refuse a debate on my Bill in Parliament. This year I will also continue to campaign to remove the Melbourne City Council gerrymander, where businesses get two votes while residents get only one, entrenching support for pro-developer candidates and making it incredibly difficult for community-minded candidates to get a say. Another important reason I care so deeply about these campaigns, and about planning, is because of their impact on inequality. My seat of Melbourne has one of the largest amounts of public housing in the whole country, and housing affordability is a critical issue here. The public services we have in North and West Melbourne are especially valuable where residents might not have a

backyard, or may rely on vital public services to survive and thrive. Yet public health services, schools and parkland are under increasing pressure as the population of Melbourne grows. If we keep building new apartment towers without regard to affordable housing and public open space and services, then we risk exacerbating these kinds of social inequalities. The Greens in Melbourne, including myself at state level, Adam Bandt at federal level, and Rohan Leppert and Cathy Oke on the council, have a plan to keep Melbourne livable, and it starts with reining in the influence of property developers. I hope you can join me in calling for reform. What we have here is too valuable to lose. For any issues you’d like to raise with me, you can always contact my office on 9328 4637 or you are welcome to pop in for a chat at 146 Peel Street, North Melbourne. *Ellen Sandell is the Member for Melbourne in the Victorian Legislative Assembly and a representative of the Australian Greens.*

SPORT & HEALTH

Should we be worried about all this Zika business?

Dr Hong Wu

An outbreak of a previously little-known disease, Zika virus infection, has caught the world’s attention. On 12 February the Ministry of Health disclosed that a pregnant woman in Victoria had tested positive for Zika virus, making it the first case of this disease in Victoria. So, should we be worried? Here are some facts about Zika virus and the disease that it causes. Zika virus is spread by infected *Aedes* mosquitoes. Humans can catch the infection by being bitten by these mosquitoes, and unborn babies can catch the infection from their mothers. However, adults and children will not contract the disease from another infected person. What we don’t know is how likely you are to catch Zika if you are bitten by an infected mosquito. Zika virus is not a new discovery. It was first identified in 1947 in Uganda and Tanzania. Infected *Aedes* mosquitoes carrying the virus are found throughout the tropics of Africa, Asia and the Americas.

Before 2015, there had been outbreaks of Zika virus disease in humans in Africa, South-East Asia and the Pacific Islands. Currently, the outbreak is largely in Central South America. *Aedes* mosquitoes can also carry viruses that cause diseases such as yellow fever and dengue. In Australia, this species of mosquito is found in North and Central Queensland, but Zika virus–infected mosquitoes have not been found in our country to date. Australia has had patients with Zika virus in the past. The first case was reported in 2012. As the virus is not found in Australia, these cases were all returned travellers. (See table.) Four out of five people infected with Zika virus will have no symptoms, and they will not even know they are infected! For people who do have symptoms, the majority will have a mild illness and may suffer from fevers, rash, joint pains and conjunctivitis (red, irritated eyes). Typically, the symptoms will resolve in four to seven days. The concern about Zika virus is that infection in the unborn baby may lead to serious birth defects, such as microcephaly, a condition where brain and head development is affected. While there is no definitive proof yet that the virus directly causes these defects, currently more babies with serious birth defects are born in Brazil, where the Zika outbreak is occurring. There is no treatment for Zika virus and no vaccine to prevent the infection. Adults who contract Zika are advised to rest, drink plenty of fluids and use the usual pain/fever-relief medicines for their symptoms. The best prevention is to wear long-sleeved clothes and long pants and use insect repellent and mosquito nets when travelling to affected areas. It can take from three to 12 days between being bitten by infected mosquitoes and symptom development, so a traveller to outbreak areas can develop the infection after returning to Australia. To diagnose Zika virus infection, two blood samples are taken, one within five days of developing symptoms and another two to three weeks later. The bottom line is that Zika is an infection ‘imported’ by people who have travelled to tropical regions and should not be a worry for those living in Australia. Even for travellers, it is generally not a problem if you are healthy and not pregnant.



The Zika virus can be carried by infected mosquitoes Photo: sourced from Wikimedia

However, many authorities — including Australia’s Department of Health and the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention — have advised pregnant women to reconsider travelling to affected areas. As we learn more about the virus, we will have a better understanding of whether infection during a particular stage of pregnancy is riskier than at others, but, until then, for those who must travel, avoiding mosquito bites is your best protection. For more information check out the WHO|Zika Virus Fact Sheet at www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/. For virus information for clinicians and public health practitioners, head to www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-zika-health-practitioners.htm or you can visit the US Center for Disease Prevention and Control’s website at www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html.

Dr Hong Wu is a gastroenterologist working at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. She is also a self-professed collector, user and distributor of medical facts.

Year	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	VIC	WA	Total
2012	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
2013	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
2014	0	4	0	7	0	2	0	13
2015	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	6
2016	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
Total	0	7	1	10	2	3	1	24

Table: Reported Cases of Zika in Australia Adapted from Australian Government Department of Health, www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-zika-notifications.htm, accessed 13 February 2016



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Pain is more complex than you might think

Bill Adamson

Pain is useful. Pain is necessary for life. Pain is fatiguing. Pain is annoying. Pain is in your head. Pain can be emotional. Pain can be physical. Pain is misunderstood.

Pain is fascinating.

We, the collective we of science, have learnt more about pain in the last 20 years than in all the years prior, and it's incredible.

The Ancient Greek philosophers used to discuss pain as the opposite emotion to pleasure: that enjoyable things in life were enjoyable due to the absence of pain.

They made no distinction between physical pain and emotional pain and regarded the two as opposite sides of the same coin.

Unfortunately for the people of the time the most common cure for pain in Rome and Greece was alcohol. From opium and coca leaves to cupping and meditative trance-like states, every culture has its own way of alleviating or coping with pain.

Medicine men of the Middle Ages would soak a sea sponge in a concoction of opium, hemlock, alcohol and willow bark, dry it out and sell it. The pain sufferer could then wet it and suck on it as required.

But it wasn't until René Descartes in the 1600s that serious discussion as to the origin, purpose and mechanism of pain took place.

His theory was that when you hurt a part of your body that information would be transferred via the hollow tube of a nerve through your limb to your spinal cord and then up to the brain, notifying it that you had hurt a limb.

Not a bad theory for someone who wasn't allowed to do much unsanctioned dissecting of bodies (the Church had a habit of burning the bodies of those that dabbled too much in dissection), but wrong nonetheless.

The problem with Descartes' theory is that it implies that tissue damage commensurately correlates with pain. But that doesn't explain the odd bruise that will turn up on a leg or arm that didn't hurt at the time or now unless you poke it.

It doesn't explain an incident when, as an eight-year-old, I returned to the barbecue from

rock scrambling at the Williamstown back beach, turned my hand out to get a sausage in bread and noticed copious amounts of blood running from a rather large gash.

The story goes that I screamed and then fainted, but because I can't remember the event it is still in debate.

Whatever happened, the tissue damage would have occurred at some point in the previous 30 minutes but I had not felt pain until sighting the wound.

So how does that work?

David Eagleman is an American neuroscientist who has dedicated his life to trying to understand the relationship between perception and neural signals. He has investigated a broad range of topics including perception, visual illusions, synesthesia and, of course, pain.

Using a combination of psychosocial, behavioural and computational approaches he has sought "to understand how neural signals

processed from different brain regions come together for a temporarily unified picture of the world".

The analogy Eagleman uses in reference to our

body's reactions to pain is that the brain is like the boardroom of a very large company.

Like any boardroom there are differing views and standpoints on whatever issue is being presented.

As I was rock scrambling with my mates, my brain would have been receiving a lot of information about the sharpness of the rocks I was clutching with my hands. I would have been having a great time.

At some point I must have cut myself. That information would have been transferred via some nerves to my brain and the brain would have had to assess the risk of damage.

Because that is what pain is — a projection of fear of damage by the boardroom of the brain.

My eight-year-old brain would have been receiving a lot of

information about the sharp rocks. When the message of damage came in, the boardroom would have looked at the message, thought about it (in less than a microsecond) and turfed it out.

"Nope, nothing about this is right, the nerve has just got confused, of course there are sharp

The analogy of neuroscientist David Eagleman is that the brain is like the boardroom of a very large company. Like any boardroom there are differing views and standpoints on whatever issue is being presented.

Medicine men of the Middle Ages would soak a sea sponge in a concoction of opium, hemlock, alcohol and willow bark, dry it out and sell it. The pain sufferer could then wet it and suck on it as required.



The face of a man expressing simple bodily pain from a 1700s engraving

Photo: sourced from Wikimedia Commons

stimuli on the hands, we're clambering all over a bunch of rocks, you dingbat."

But when I turned my hands up to receive the snag roll with tomato sauce, my eyes then transferred indisputable evidence that damage had occurred when rock scrambling.

The boardroom would then have very quickly done a backflip — "Many apologies, nerve, you are totally right, we're out" — as I fainted with shock.

The message of this tale is that pain is complex. Pain is not necessarily a pure translation of tissue damage. A great many factors influence it.

If you've had an injury before, or a friend has suffered one, the influence on that boardroom discussion will be different.


Likewise, if you're super-stressed and

anxious about other issues, the boardroom may ramp up its perception of the threat of damage.

In practice I see a wide variety of presenting pain paradigms, the longer they are around the more factors involved. One thing that is certain is that the body is pretty clever.

No matter how long or short a time the pain has been around there is always a way to alleviate it; it is just a matter of convincing the boardroom everything is okay. This can come from surgery or from hands-on care, exercises, education and understanding, the judicious use of painkillers and, of course, a little bit of laughter.

Bill Adamson is an osteopath practising at Errol St Osteo.



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THE
GREENS.

Lifesaving data is being collected by doctors

Katrina Kincade-Sharkey

Over her lifetime a woman has about a one-in-10 risk of developing breast cancer. That risk varies with age, peaking between 50 and 70 years, but diagnoses can occur in ages ranging from the early 20s to early 80s, so this threat is not age-selective.

As of last month's ABS population figures, that's 10 per cent of 11,944,250 female Australians, nearly 1.2 million Aussie women threatened throughout their lifetime.

Nor is this insidious disease socio-economically choosy. Cases are spread across the entire female spectrum, so it attacks rich and poor, energetic and sedentary, as well as our entire skin colour range. Some women, however, are at higher risk than others due to their genes and lifestyle factors.

Then there's this planet's ethnic mix. All women are at varying risk of developing breast cancer no matter their geographic origins, so Africans, Americans, Asians and Australians join Europeans in contending with the pain, the trauma and the potential 'disgrace' of losing an 'essential' part of their womanly shape, their sexual attractiveness, their femininity.

A group of Melbourne's prime medical detectives is conducting a **lifepool** of volunteers to collect data and better understand what causes this particular cancer in those particular one-in-10 women.

The majority of participants do not have a diagnosis of breast cancer at recruitment and are followed prospectively by linkage with registry data to identify incident cancers.

The **lifepool** group is led by chief investigator Professor Ian Campbell from Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (PMCC); with Professor Stephen Fox, PMCC director of molecular pathology; Professor Bruce Mann, director of the Combined Breast Service at Royal Melbourne and Royal Women's hospitals; Vicki Pridmore, CEO of BreastScreen Victoria; and Professor John Hopper, director (research), Centre for Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of Melbourne.

Lifepool is a population cohort — a group of women gathered through BreastScreen Victoria initially and now nationally — to provide health information samples of their DNA to determine genetic markers common to breast cancer risk.

Researchers have determined three fundamental risk elements for developing breast cancer. These are the density of a woman's breast, genetic factors and lifestyle practices, but evaluation of their specific causes and effects is a mammoth task.

Mammographic density is the measure of

the white (more dense) versus black (less dense) areas on a mammogram X-ray, and women vary in those densities.

Genetic faults in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes are known to put women at higher risk of breast cancer, but researchers contend many more gene faults must exist. Those other faults in the mix make the variation in risk alternate astronomically.

Launched in 2011, the **lifepool** study gathered details from more than 50,000 Victorian women. Having recently expanded nationally, that study figure is now 54,000, but more volunteers are still critically needed as the scheme currently supports seven research projects through collecting information from women and about women.

"Our aspiration is to grow to 60,000 women, or even more," explains the **lifepool** project's general manager, Lisa Devereux. The study will then follow the health of these women every year to learn who has developed breast cancer.

"**Lifepool** participants allow us to collect their mammogram data. A mammogram screen only takes about five minutes and involves no physical intrusions. We ask some participants to donate a sample of either blood or saliva so that DNA can be extracted for genetic research," Lisa explains.

The National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF) provided \$6.25 million funding over 10 years for the study. "This substantial funding has supported effective research infrastructure of people, a significant investment," she praises.

NBCF is totally philanthropic, meaning this multimillion-dollar sum is completely donated by individuals and groups with no government investment. "So it is a huge gift," Lisa smiles, gratefully.

As general manager of **lifepool**'s volunteer cohort, Lisa Devereux must:

- Prepare all necessary project documentation for HREC approval of **lifepool** protocols and operation;
- Develop and maintain key stakeholder relationships;
- Manage communication strategy and promotion of project to community and researchers;
- Develop and maintain a regular meeting schedule with investigators, advisors and collaborators;
- Oversee the operation of the cohort including participant recruitment, design and maintenance of the database, specimen collection and clinical data acquisition;
- Prepare all reporting documentation and manage project finances;
- Coordinate recruitment and management of other cohort staff;
- Manage risk and, in collaboration with



Lifepool information is stored at secure databases

Photo: Jim Weatherill

the chief investigator group, develop and implement strategies and protocols for efficient, ethical operation of the **lifepool** project; and

- Manage the \$6.25 million grant budget across both the cohort and research arms.

"We have so far made 14,000 random contacts with prospective participants and about 7000 — or half — have responded positively and donated blood or saliva samples for research, and that donation rate is fantastic.

"The current average age of **lifepool** women is 59, but we have participants in their early 20s, as well as those in their 70s and 80s.

"That was an extraordinary research response because it helps us understand about new mutations that are important in contributing to the breast cancer risk.

"Chief investigators are from PMCC, BreastScreen Victoria, the University of Melbourne and the Royal Melbourne and Women's hospitals, while PMCC's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this project's protocols and documents," Ms Devereux says, briefly hinting at her tens of thousands of hours establishing and managing **lifepool**'s campaign.

This lithe, hazel-eyed, 55-year-old Master of Applied Science majored in toxicology at RMIT, directly following her Bachelor of Applied Science in medical laboratory science. She then spent 19 years as a research scientist at PMCC, initially as part of its immunology and immunogenetics department, which classifies all new leukaemia and lymphoma patients.

Academic credits include first-class honours for her graduate certificate in clinical research management through Melbourne University, yet not one word of these achievements has been mentioned during our extensive interview.

Ms Devereux was a founding member of the Australasian Biospecimen Network (ABN) and was then elected president of the Australasian Biospecimen Network Association (ABNA). Her scientific appointments include manager of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre Tissue Bank and research manager of the centre.

She is a member of the Cancer Council Victoria Tissue Bank Network and was a council member of the International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories from 2007 to 2009, so is an internationally acknowledged expert in medical research.

This **lifepool** project is an intense part of her consciousness, so she hits her sales pitch.

"Being part of **lifepool** involves participants completing our health and lifestyle questionnaire — it takes about 30 minutes — giving permission for **lifepool** to collect your mammogram information from BreastScreen, then allowing us to link with the Cancer Registry to follow your health with respect to any diagnoses of cancer," she says, avidly encouraging any female in her vicinity to volunteer for the research collection.

Women do not have to have been diagnosed with breast cancer to donate — any adult female who has had, or intends to have, a mammogram is welcome to join.

Lisa stresses that all women's health information and questionnaire data is stored on secure databases housed at PMCC and the University of Melbourne. Any tumour samples collected by **lifepool** are converted into wax blocks (called tissue microarray blocks) and then stored at Peter Mac's tissue bank.


"In giving your consent to join this program," she explains, "you agree to allow **lifepool** to keep your information securely and provide it in a de-identifying format to researchers. Then **lifepool** will keep you updated about the kinds of research your data and sample has supported, but we won't pester you by asking your permission to use those samples or data in each separate research study.

"Researchers from right around the nation, in fact right around the world, can apply to us for data and samples for their research, so your donations are critically important," she says, proudly.

Segments of those donated blood or saliva samples might be used across dozens of individual studies both here and overseas, so contacting participant donors would add a huge cost in both researchers' time and telephonic contacts.

New volunteers to **lifepool** will join a study recently published in the respected *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

Any woman who has had or intends to have a mammogram and would like more information about joining **lifepool** can contact lifepool@petermac.org.



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Tried and true, Hot Poppy still delivers

Meegan Waugh

If there's one thing that isn't lacking in Melbourne, it's great breakfasts. With this city's brunch and coffee obsession, it seems like every week there's another hot new place to get your Sunday morning fix.

The one downside to the constant stream of shiny new venues is that it can be easy to overlook the tried and true. Remember: they've lasted this long for a reason.

Hot Poppy is a mainstay of the North Melbourne cafe scene. We ventured there on the recommendation of a local who seemed to know his stuff, and we weren't disappointed.

Family-friendly and dog-loving, Hot Poppy has built up a loyal crew of local regulars. The aim here isn't to dazzle you with wizardry and spectacle, but to serve up consistently good food and coffee with friendly service.

The lengthy menu includes classics like eggs benedict, a handful of toasties, a regularly changing jaffle special and much more.

We went for the huevos rancheros (\$18.50) and the parmesan French toast (\$17). The huevos rancheros was a generous serving of chorizo, guacamole, beans and sour cream served on corn tortillas topped with fried eggs and salsa. Hearty but not too heavy, it's the dream breakfast of slightly hungover brunch-goers everywhere.

The parmesan French toast also got the tick of approval; savoury French toast is something that should be a lot more common. Served with crispy bacon and relish, it was a welcome twist on what can be a sickly-sweet dish.

Brunch isn't complete without a cuppa, and Hot Poppy delivers whether your poison is coffee, tea or chai. Even your pup will be well looked after with a water bowl. Happy faces all round!

Hot Poppy is at 9 Errol Street, North Melbourne, and is open 7.00am to 5.00pm all week and until 6.00pm on Fridays and Sundays.



Hot Poppy offers a classic and captivating breakfast menu *Photo: Meegan Waugh*

Harar: city of culture, coffee and kyat



Harar is a dynamic and vibrant city

Photo: Bill Adamson

Bill Adamson

Harar, the ancient Muslim city, is different from anywhere else I've been in Ethiopia. I've been here for nearly a month and I'm feeling a little reflective.

It's old; you can feel its age everywhere you go. The Islamic-designed crumbling grey walls are set next to pink walls, which are next to green walls. The mishmash of colour seems surreal to my drab occidental sensibilities.

Houses may share a courtyard with other houses but there are no yards or gardens as such. Goats and sheep use the small alleyways as their pastures.

Mosques and orthodox churches are spotted throughout the old town.

This morning I was woken by the call to prayer, which the local cat decided to sing along with, miaowing loudly and enthusiastically until, as if out of some old cartoon, a thrown shoe curtailed its religious ambition.

After the call to prayer died away the Sunday orthodox singing continued in its wake. It's hard to tell the difference between the two, especially between the hours of 4.00am and 6.00am. Both are sort of an eerie, warbling throwback in time.

It's market day. I wandered through town. Tiny walkways curve to and fro like a colourful maze. Main thoroughfares were packed. Hawkers screeched as hawks watched, bobbed and swooped like oversized seagulls.

It's funny, I came away looking for an adventure. I've seen lava lakes, ancient churches and incredible landscapes, heard wonderful music and met great people but the best adventure was the one I stumbled into on my very first day.

After a lengthy flight of trying to fit my oversized limbs into undersized aeroplane chairs I arrived in Addis Ababa a little bedraggled.

But it was only 11.00am so I thought I should try to push through until dark before sleeping.

I should probably have just had a kip as my green gills were a little too obvious to a local scammer.

Pickpockets are everywhere in Addis, especially in the cheap backpacker Piazza district. Despite being forewarned, I was still shocked that within 20 metres of my hostel I was hit up by one such young entrepreneur.

Fortunately I was saved by a passing student.

After a wander and a chat I offered to buy him lunch at a local place of his choosing.

Several laneways later we were chewing coffee leaves and drinking coffee. "Coffee leaves?" I asked, slightly wary but noticeably naive.

"Yes, good sir, coffee leaves, due to special once-a-year holiday today," he answered, a little too reassuringly.

"Of course, of course," I muttered, still chewing on the bitter-tasting leaves.

He regaled me with stories of Ethiopia, its music and history.

After half an hour my heart rate was through the roof, jetlag a distant memory and coherent thoughts difficult to pace out.

"Are you sure these are coffee leaves?" I asked, my eyes twitching. "They're not kyat, are they?" My suddenly hyper-alert mind was finally putting the pieces together.

Yet still my 'student' friend reassured me: "No, no, no, special holiday, coffee holiday."

In hindsight it was obviously kyat, the speed-like narcotic of choice for the region, and I had just eaten a smuggler's boatload of it.

The bill came and it was close to \$150. My newfound charming and chatty friend was suddenly a lot less pleasant.

The other eight or so other patrons suddenly loomed a lot larger and the space seemed a hell of a lot less spacious. My protests at what I perceived as ridiculousness were not being received so well.

As it happened I was only carrying \$70 in local currency (and a money belt stuffed in my pants with US\$500 which I was frantically hoping they hadn't noticed).

After some heated discussions that I was decidedly not part of they said they would accept my \$70 but that I should remember how hospitable they were.

I swallowed my pride and thanked them profusely, through gritted teeth, and scarpered, smashing the five-kilometre walk at a 15-degree incline like a Smith Street fiend.

Some poor Irish bloke was sat at the hostel bar and I spent the next hour earbashing him and drinking copious amounts of beer.

"You haven't been chewing kyat, have you, mate?" he asked with a knowing grin.



Harar in Ethiopia

Photo: Bill Adamson

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

An urban cathedral to art and nature

Charlotte Aldenhoven

In this globally networked world of urban growth and decay we have been granted access to all types of information and imagery. We have come to realise that we are more or less at an environmental and psychological tipping point.

The way we imagine the landscape around us is an important factor in how we come to terms with our hopes, fears and the role that we play in society.

Using nature as a mirror to our own experience, Kirstin Berg aims to expand the dimensions of our inner landscape in her new installation show, *Tragedy's Cathedral*, at Gallerysmith.

Kirstin's work seeks to depict a subterranean or unconscious reflection of the world that we find ourselves in, and our compulsion to relentlessly create and destroy monuments that mark our most profound experiences.

She starts by sourcing the limitless power of nature, sacred architecture and human drama. In doing so, her work seeks to overhaul the typical gallery experience and convert the space into an augmented cathedral of Mother Earth and human nature.

Kirstin has been working as an artist since 2000. She lived in Europe from 2003 to 2009 and now lives between Berlin and Melbourne.

She signed on to the stable of Gallerysmith's artists in 2009 and since then has gone from strength to strength.

It was while travelling through Italy and France last year that Kirstin first had the idea of transforming a gallery space into a cathedral.

"In all the spaces I visited, there was a fascinating tension between ideas of oblivion and commemoration. These cathedrals are simultaneously places of mourning and celebration, tragic and ecstatic, full of beauty and horror,"

Kirstin recalls.

"I am interested in these contradictions and the redemption that can be found through the paradoxical processes of life and art."

Kirstin combines those concepts of human spirituality and has incorporated elements of Mother Nature and the dynamism of the Australian bush. One of her works, *Urban Cathedral: Bush Voodoo*, refers to both the seen and unseen influences of the primal and elemental forces that occur in nature.

Urban Cathedral: Bush Voodoo presents an amalgamation of multiple elemental forces at play, a deliberately jarring blend of manmade and naturally occurring environmental power.

"I am interested in these contradictions and the redemption that can be found through the paradoxical processes of life and art."

It is highly evocative of the bushfires that plague the Australian countryside and Kirstin's work reminds us that the energy within nature has always been a source of wonder for mankind.

"Its forms and processes are a huge power source and I try to tap into this energy," Kirstin says.

There are millions of unknowable forces at work in nature and in the making of art, and through Kirstin's careful placement and use of materials we can feel this energy brimming through her work.

The installation will build on large-scale works on paper, made from fire ash, pigment, India ink and watercolour. The show will also comprise sculptural works made from painted bush debris, reclaimed timber, plaster, rock and glass. These materials she mostly found in the bush or extracted from demolition sites, which contributes to the idea of destruction and renewal.

Having been assembled through an arduous process of hunting, gathering and gleaning, the materials exhibit a fundamental spirituality and connection with nature. The evident battle involved in transforming the materials into something else contributes to the meaning and

potency of the artworks.

The overall planned exhibition takes these concepts to new heights with the entire gallery space converted into one of Kirstin's burnt-out urban cathedrals.

The Gallerysmith art gallery has been designed intentionally as a large open space to allow artists like Kirstin to be ambitious with their art.

Not only that, but the upper floor of the Gallerysmith building has been expanded within the last 18 months to include studio spaces for artists such as Kirstin and also the more experimental 'Gallerysmith project space'. The project space was opened up for young unrepresented artists as an opportunity to broaden their range and offer some exposure.

For Kirstin's installation the gallery will be transformed into 'Tragedy's Cathedral', a vast shrine to the paradoxical processes of art and nature.

Tragedy's Cathedral: New Landscapes by Kirstin Berg

From 21 April to 21 May 2016

Opening Function Saturday 30 April 4.00pm to 6.00pm. All welcome!

Gallerysmith

170-174 Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne
www.gallerysmith.com.au



The Returning by Kirstin Berg

Photo: Kirstin Berg



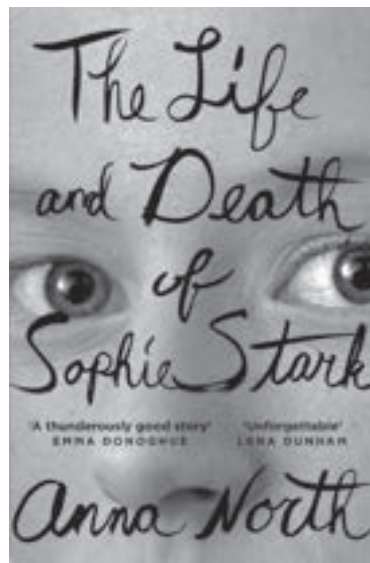
Urban Cathedral by Kirstin Berg

Photo: Kirstin Berg

Between the Covers

Chris Saliba

The Life and Death of Sophie Stark
Anna North
(W & N Fiction. RRP: \$29.99)



Anna North's second novel, *The Life and Death of Sophie Stark*, examines the artistic temperament and how it can drive some over the edge.

Sophie Stark is a young filmmaker with a natural talent. While her early films may be a bit rough around the edges, she's certainly got a vision and can capture an unerring quality in her human subjects.

Sophie goes from artistic strength to strength. Her films attract critical attention. She screens her films at important festivals. At the same time, her personal life is a slow motion train wreck. Manipulative, cold, self-centred, yet also strangely vulnerable and capable of empathy, Sophie divides those around her.

Anna North's novel is narrated in the first person through the separate voices of Sophie's family, friends, lovers and professional colleagues.

Sophie never speaks directly in the novel herself. All of these different perspectives build up a striking portrait of a brilliant, complex, difficult and ultimately doomed artist.

Written like a thriller, mixing shrewdly observed character study with heart-stopping mystery, *The Life and Death of Sophie Stark* will keep you enthralled until the very last page.

Battleground: Why the Liberal Party Shirtfronted Tony Abbott

Wayne Errington and Peter Van Onselen
(MUP. RRP: \$29.99)



Academics Wayne Errington and Peter Van Onselen are best known for their seminal biography, *John Winston Howard*. In *Battleground: Why the Liberal Party Shirtfronted Tony Abbott*, the two authors come together again to look at what went wrong with the Abbott prime ministership.

Tony Abbott won the 2013 election promising government by grown-ups. Barely two years later his own party had removed him, repeating Labor's cardinal sin of removing a sitting prime minister.

What makes *Battleground* a standout is the extensive interviews that have been conducted with Liberal Party MPs and their staffers, offering many fascinating insights. Much that was rumoured to be happening behind the scenes, particularly chief of staff Peta Credlin's iron grip, is corroborated.

The book is also a cut above for its intelligent analysis and knowledge of government.

Why did Abbott fail so devastatingly? Primarily it was an inability to listen, to be flexible, and to accept responsibility for mistakes. His denial of reality made him almost a magic thinker.

When Abbott stretched the truth he was dishonest not only with the public, but also with himself. A stubborn inability to listen, learn and change ensured his downfall.

First Bite: How We Learn to Eat
Bee Wilson
(Fourth Estate. RRP: \$24.99)



In the past, British food writer Bee Wilson has tackled such diverse subjects as the honeybee and the history of food frauds.

In her new book, *First Bite: How We Learn to Eat*, she examines the psychology of eating: how our tastes are formed, how habits are reinforced and how we might change them for the better.

Using the latest scientific research, along with psychological insights from a raft of experts in the field, Wilson provides often surprising, sometimes intriguing, explanations for why we eat the way we do.

For example, not only does our childhood influence what we like to eat, but our siblings can have an effect. Gender plays a part too, as culturally boys are encouraged to eat meat while sweets and cakes are thought proper for girls.

Lively and engaging, *First Bite* does an excellent job of describing how psychology and environment affect what we eat.

Bee Wilson's keen interest in food history also provides much fascinating material, highlighting how cultural attitudes to food change over time. Amazingly, it was once thought that fruit was poisonous if fed to children!

First Bite is sure to have wide appeal. Entertaining and instructive, it offers a genuine path to better eating.

Chris Saliba is co-owner of North Melbourne Books, 546 Queensberry Street, and a regular contributor to the North and West Melbourne News.

Music Reviews

Paul & Maria from Heartland Records



Anthologia

John Cooper Clarke
DELUXE 3CD/DVD set

At last, a release that captures the essence of the unique British punk and poet, John Cooper Clarke, in all his glory.

Spread across a DVD, three compact discs, plenty of rare photographs and all encased in a deluxe Pop Art book cover, this set sums up his 40-year career perfectly.

The first CD is a 'best of' and contains 19 tracks from his four studio albums: *Où est la maison de fromage?*, *Disguise In Love*, *Zip Style Method* and *Snap, Crackle & Bop*. All were released in his early career years of 1978 to 1982.

Quintessential tracks include 'Beasley Street', 'Night People' and 'The Day My Pad Went Mad', which contains the classic lines: "The kitchen has been ransacked ... the chicken has been dhansaked."

Discs 2 and 2 feature live tracks from 1978 right up to 2014 and represent Johnny Clarke, as he likes to refer to himself, at his best in the live arena.

But it is the DVD that captures the true essence of Johnny Clarke: stick thin, dressed in black and donning sunglasses — a permanent fixture just below his iconic 'birds nest' haircut.

He appears to be disorganised and making it up as he goes along with a cigarette in hand, whilst using handwritten notes. The live footage is taken from various sources including *The Old Grey Whistle Test* TV show from 1978 right up to his appearance at the Palace Theatre in Manchester in 2014.

Born 1949 in the Salford area of Manchester, England, his nasal accent really adds to the droll delivery of his work. His first release, *The Innocents* EP, in 1977 led to him appearing as a support act for bands from the area including The Fall, The Buzzcocks and Joy Division.

He then went on to support London bands the Sex Pistols and Siouxsie and the Banshees, which propelled him to achieving almost immediate cult status.

His brand of observational poetry, comedy and songs was unique at the time and is still relevant today. As well as being admired by his contemporaries, Johnny Clarke's brand of off-beat punk poetry inspired and influenced many artists active today.

The Arctic Monkeys are big fans and printed the lyrics to his poem 'Out of Control Fairground' on the inside of their *Fluorescent Adolescent* single release as well as adapting his

poem 'I Wanna Be Yours' for their *AM* album.

Apart from his music releases, Johnny Clarke has led an interesting and varied life including starring in his own narrative documentary movie *Ten Years in an Open Necked Shirt*, released in 1982. He also appeared in Sugar Puffs breakfast cereal adverts on British television in the 1980s and has made various appearances on contemporary shows like *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* and *Would I Lie to You?* He even has a track featured on season 5 of *The Sopranos*.

His struggle with drugs in the 1980s along with his then partner Nico (of The Velvet Underground fame) is well

documented but he managed to survive that period and in 2013 received an honorary degree from the University of Salford in recognition of his contributions to poetry.

Placebo – MTV Unplugged

Placebo
2LP set

If you're in your late twenties or thirties, the band Placebo might mean something to you. It might remind you of your troubled teenage years and the sound of Brian Molko's nasal cries over edgy, sharp, angsty guitar riffs. The raw experimental lyrics, dealing with topics outside of mainstream rock music, such as drug addiction, LGBT themes, abuse and mental illness.

Let's not forget Molko's androgynous look characterised by the goth glam outsider aesthetic of the mid-1990s. I remember repeatedly blasting Placebo's debut self-titled album, with the track 'Nancy Boy' bouncing off the band poster-plastered walls of my bedroom as I sat relishing the fact that I was a misunderstood teenage outsider.

2016 marks the 20th anniversary of Placebo's debut release. As part of the 20th anniversary celebrations, Placebo re-released their first five albums on vinyl, and on 19 August last year they recorded an *MTV Unplugged* concert performed in front of a live audience at 'The London Studios'.

The performance included songs spanning across their whole career, even those seldom heard live. *MTV Unplugged* is Placebo's latest offering, and has been released on CD, DVD, Blu-ray and vinyl.

For Placebo, which is now a band of forty-somethings, it's strange that they can still often easily be characterised by the teenage outsider appeal they had at the time of their early beginnings. During their early career



Music Reviews

Paul & Maria from Heartland Records

they played alongside famous names, opening several concerts for David Bowie, as well as recording with him the song 'Without You I'm Nothing'.

Bowie even invited them to play at his 50th birthday celebrations at New York's Madison Square Garden with other notable artists such as Billy Corgan of The Smashing Pumpkins, Robert Smith of The Cure and Lou Reed.

Placebo have continued to tour over the last couple of decades and to date have released seven studio albums. They also consistently rank high in charts and album sales. Although their audiences seem to have grown up, their music continues to be popular among newer younger followers too.

It's difficult at first to imagine how a band like Placebo could re-create their particular music style 'unplugged', and still be able to pull off the same raw emotion which comes with their punchier gripping songs.

However, after the opening track, their well-known cover of Sinead O'Connor's 'Jackie', it's good to see that the stripped-back versions of their songs are not them simply performing acoustic cover versions.

Rather, each song is painstakingly re-arranged into beautifully layered renditions. It's clear that each song has been carefully re-crafted and great care has been taken to ensure each track boasts the sound of every new instrument used.

The help of guest vocalists Broken Twin on 'Every You Every Me' and Joan As Police Woman on 'Protect Me From What I Want' also provides a touch of difference to well recognised songs, adding a layer of maturity and depth to the meaning of the original lyrics. Even Molko's distinctive vocal style, the nasal anguished cry, is pared back to release a more pensive, soulful vocal approach.

Molko casually jokes and chats with the audience between songs, offering small backstories to a few of the songs such as '36 Degrees', which, he tells us, was written when he was 21 and Stefan Olsdal was only 19 and hadn't been played live for over a decade.

Olsdal, a founding member of the band and an exceptionally talented musician, adds the icing to the cake by performing on exotic instruments such as the qanun in 'Post Blue' and the shruti drone box in 'Slave to the Wage', resulting in mysterious and hauntingly beautiful versions of the songs.

Other instruments used throughout the performance include harmonica, piano, bass guitar, drums, violin, whirly tube, glockenspiel, accordina, cello, flute, clarinet and double bass.

Even the track 'Bosco', which is off their most recent studio album 'Loud Like Love' takes on a new life, with added depth and emotion created by the masterful sweeping string arrangements and magnificent woodwind performances throughout.

The recording of this performance has been carefully mastered and ranks high in sound quality especially on the vinyl format of this release. The level of style and quality is not dropped on the packaging either.

The vinyl record is presented in two formats, a double picture disc with a geometric design and standard double gatefold vinyl housed in full colour inner sleeves which feature photo stills of the performance.

Placebo MTV – Unplugged is a fitting anniversary celebration and reflection of a band that clearly are good at what they do and can hold their own. It is an example of how Placebo, along with their audience, may have grown up but not grown out of the music.

Twenty years on, the same songs are able to take on a new life and still touch their once-tormented teenage audience, now mostly adults, in new and different ways. It's clear to see their music stands the test of time and will probably continue to do so until the bitter end.

Comedy is a funny business, no joke

Victoria Healy

A few weeks ago I was about to fall asleep and all of a sudden I jolted up, struck by a thought: "There is something funny about this."

I remembered something that had been nagging at me. It was a memory of when I was young and full of confidence and had decided to defiantly make a statement about animal welfare at the Royal Melbourne Show. I was holding a sign in protest and wearing a T-shirt with the letter G on it.

As a stand-up comedian for the last six years, ideas for comedy routines pop into my brain pretty regularly.

I've spent many nights wondering, "Do I disrupt my perfect cocooned sleeping position to write down an idea, or do I go back to sleep", convincing myself I'll remember it?

In this instance I wrote in my notepad "Protest at Royal Melbourne Show". Then I drifted off to sleep.

I got a draft of the story ready to perform for an audience. I went to the Bazaar Tales Storytelling night at Horse Bazaar on Little Lonsdale Street. It's one of my favourite venues to perform at in Melbourne, at least partially due to their generous pours of gin.

At Bazaar Tales Storytelling the storytellers get up one by one and tell a story based around a theme. It's not always funny storytelling but, with the overwhelming supply of comedians in Melbourne, they dominate the line-up and there are plenty of laughs.

I performed my story and it was loose but I had intended it to be that way. I find if your work sounds too scripted the audience feel like they are being lectured by a dejected professor of sociology whose passion dried up after their second divorce. By performing it unrehearsed I get to discover more humour through my delivery.

It took me a long time to be confident in my humour. I knew I was funny but I never knew why. So on my journey to find out I started where a lot of Melbourne-based comedians

but every scene was picked apart; teachers and peers would second-guess my choices.

The confidence that I'd once had, the confidence to stand in front of an angry goldfish retailer, evaporated.

Two institutions that couldn't get more different in their approach did not help me find my funny. There was only one other way. And that was to go out there on my own. Thanks to Melbourne's exploding open-mic scene in the last five years, it was much easier than I thought.

It was and still is a lone-wolf game of writing jokes, crafting stories, booking spots and performing, all of your own accord.

I knew this Royal Melbourne Show protest story was good but to be included in my 2016 MICF show it needed some more jokes. I listened back to the recording of the storytellers' gig and developed my ideas, trying to remember more details.

I booked another spot to test the story out some more — this time at a stand-up comedy night at Club Voltaire. Coincidentally, it is just around the corner from the place where I got my start, The Comic's Lounge.

On Sunday night, The Comic's Lounge would be expecting over 200 patrons to listen to some slick stand-up from Australia's finest. A little bit down the laneway off Errol Street, Club Voltaire Comedy puts on a line-up of some of Melbourne's best unknown comics in a slightly more intimate setting.

Melbourne's underground comedy scene is full of great acts. Yet for the casual comedy viewer who tunes into the MICF Gala once a year many of these great acts remain unknown.

They wouldn't know that in 2014 Laura Davis created one of the most heart-wrenching, gut-

Photo: Liam Amor

busting, funny postmodern shows ever. They wouldn't know that Dave Quirk onstage is more bulletproof than any armoured vehicle. He destroys every audience he faces and if they don't like it Dave doesn't care one bit.

They wouldn't know that Alasdair Tremblay-Birchall produces more original ideas than Elon Musk and does it with pure joy. That Nick Capper is an oddball. That Kate Dehnert is a goofball. That Nellie White defines dry humour. That Matt Stewart is an all-time great.

These amazing acts remain unknown to casual comedy fans. So I count myself lucky to see this amazing work by Melbourne's hardworking and too often unknown comedians.

Every night I'm lucky enough to perform alongside these geniuses and they continually remind me that I have the greatest job in the world — making people laugh.

My goldfish story went well at Club Voltaire but it can be further improved. I'll work on it right up until opening night because I am pushed every day by Melbourne's unparalleled comedic arena to write and perform the funniest stand-up comedy possible.

Victoria Healy is performing at Melbourne International Comedy Festival 2016 in The Vick Van Dyke Show, 23 March to 3 April, at the Imperial Hotel. Book tickets at www.trybooking.com/JVHR



Comedian Victoria Healy as Bert the chimneysweep for *The Vick Van Dyke Show*

The following morning, I looked at the note and had no idea what it was about.

"How is this funny?" I asked myself.

The best way to see if you've got a good funny story is to perform it. So I messaged the promoter of a storytelling night in the city and booked a spot for the next week.

Nothing is a better motivator than a deadline. Just ask this publication's editor. I found the motivation I needed to remember the story in more detail and wrote it all down.

A high-school friend of mine had joined an animal welfare group and convinced me to join a protest that she had signed up to. We would be protesting against the sale of goldfish in clear plastic bags at the Royal Melbourne Show.

The argument was that fish need to be in filtered water, not tap-water, and they should be taken home immediately, not carried around the show being harassed by big crowds.

For a young woman who'd recently purchased Geri Halliwell's breakaway solo single 'Look At Me', goldfish seemed like the most important cause going round. Forget the Sudanese civil war — I had bigger fish to fry.

Looking back now, all I can see is the absurdity of the protest. We had to buy a ticket each to get into the show so we could even picket the tiny goldfish stall. We were next door to the main arena where farmers were being awarded for breeding cows for slaughter. In the end we were escorted out by police before I could buy a showbag.

start out — The Comic's Lounge in North Melbourne.

Every Tuesday evening The Comic's Lounge hosts a beginners' workshop at 6.00pm, then a Young Guns comedy show at 8.30pm. It's where everyone goes, but it's not for everyone.

To say The Comic's Lounge is intimidating is like saying the Melbourne Star Observation Wheel is a waste of money. It's undeniably true but it is still there and serves a purpose. The difference is The Comic's Lounge actually provides entertainment.

Everything at The Comic's Lounge is daunting for a new comedian: the stairwell that is covered in sketches of Australia's greatest comedians past and present; the giant dark room; the bouncers; the wide stage; and the sign out the back that simply states the venue's only rule, "Just Be Funny".

I attended many of the workshops and even had my first gig on that stage but it's easy to be discouraged among the crowd of young men jostling for a spot. To develop my comedy, I changed my approach. I enrolled in an improv course. While it was much more inviting, it stripped me of my performer confidence.

In my first-ever improv class, I was told to rethink my choices in the scene. This began the slow destruction of my confidence in my comedy.

I wasn't aware how damaging it was because I was moving up in the company quickly. I tried to please them and be like them

UPCOMING EVENTS

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Comedy

Lugares (Places) | Club Voltaire | 28 February – 20 March

Cackling for a Cause | The Comic's Lounge | 17 March | 7.30pm – late

Melbourne International Comedy Festival | The Comic's Lounge | 23 March – 17 April

Three For One Live | The Comic's Lounge | 23 March – 16 April

Chris Wainhouse | The Comic's Lounge | 28 March – 11 April

Frank Hampster | Club Voltaire | 23 March – 16 April

Exhibitions

Susie Leahy Raleigh – Outflow & Dale Withers – Recent Works | Langford 120 Gallery | Current until 12 March

Catherine Nelson – Submerged | Gallerysmith | Current until 16 April

Arbiter of Style: The talented Mr Johnson | Meat Market | 16 March – 16 May

Annette Iggulden – Home: a geometry of echoes, Irene Barberis – Re Forming the line: blow, cut, melt, Robin Kingston – It's a Matter of Time | Langford 120 Gallery | 19 March – 16 April

Kirstin Berg – Tragedy's Cathedral | Gallerysmith | 21 April – 21 May | Opening function Saturday 30 April | 4.00pm – 6.00pm

Eric Bridgeman – The Trade | Gallerysmith | 21 April – 21 May

Micky Allan – Inland: more than meets the eye, Ollie Lucas – The Alternative Space, Louise Blyton – Bride of Quietness | Langford 120 Gallery | 23 April – 21 May

Andrew Seward – The Studio | Gallerysmith | 26 May – 9 July

Ian Friend – City Ghosts | Gallerysmith | 26 May – 9 July

Theatre

Festival of Live Art | Arts House | 1 March – 13 March | All day

Give Me a Reason to Live | Arts House | 9 March – 11 March | 5.00pm – late

Complete Smut! Art Auction | Arts House | 12 March | 7.00pm – late

Festivals

Urban Winery Experience | The Stables | 9 & 10 March | 6.00pm – late

Turkish Pazar Festival | Queen Victoria Market | 13 March | 10.00am – 4.00pm

Wine and Cheese Festival | Meat Market | 10 April | 1.00am – 7.00pm

Kaleidoscope Virtual Reality Tour | Meat Market | 12 April | 7.00pm – 11.00pm

Music

Godwin Concert – Korede Bello | Meat Market | 13 March | 7.00pm – 11.00pm

Masketta Falls – Love Me Like That tour | Meat Market | 2 April | 4.00pm – 9.00pm

Tyga – Rawwest Alive tour | Festival Hall | 8 April | 7.00pm

Rick Dangerous & the Silkie Bantams with Tigers, Crowbait and The Patient | The Last Chance Rock & Roll Bar (Public Bar) | 15 April

Five Finger Death Punch – Headline Show | Festival Hall | 20 April | 8.00pm

Wagner's Die Walkure for Peter MacCallum Cancer Foundation | Meat Market | 22 & 23 April | 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Community Events

Australian International Coffee Awards | Meat Market | 16 March | 7.00pm – 10.00pm

Twilight Fete | North Melbourne Primary School | 18 March | 4.00pm – 8.00pm

Victorian AIDS Council (VAC) Trivia Night | Meat Market | 19 March | 7.00pm – 10.00pm

Anzac Day Community Celebration | North Melbourne Cenotaph | 24 April | 2.00pm

National Trust Heritage Festival Walk: 'Raze or Recycle: Repurposing Heritage Buildings' | North Melbourne Library | 7 May | 2.00pm