

The Trev Project at City Gardens, North Melbourne



City Gardens, North Melbourne

Photo: Alice Coulson

Steven Weir

How an ordinary bloke's attempts to be a good neighbour snowballed into a new community development project and led him to discover the big, beating heart of North Melbourne.

"G'day, Digger," came the booming voice down the phone. "Digger, I've gotta tell you about what happened to me today." I'd grown accustomed to calls from Trev while sitting at my desk, and with each call came a new story, a new friend, an opportunity or a revelation.

"So I was sitting out the front of my place having a coffee and the woman walks past and starts to chat. Happens a lot around here. Well, we were talking about my garden and I mentioned The Project and then she said, 'Oh, you're that guy'."

Trev's local legend status was taking hold and he was astounded.

The Project could be described as a grant application compiled by Trev and his band

of local champs from City Gardens in North Melbourne. 'Project', however, suggests a beginning, middle and some sort of end — something I doubt Trev will be happy with.

The seed of my relationship with Trev could be traced back to an article in the City of Melbourne's *Melbourne* magazine, which had profiled a pilot project in a city laneway, where local businesses had worked with council officers to install a new style of worm farm to help minimise food waste.

Reading that article inflamed something in Mr Trevor Smith of City Gardens and it turned out to be an itch he had to scratch. It started with a phone call that weaved its way to me, as the local community development worker.

My colleague, Jill, and I first met Trev and a couple of his body-corporate committee members on-site one sunny afternoon in autumn. He was tall, silver-haired and twinkly-eyed, a natural charmer with a wicked sense of humour. I'm too polite to guess his age out loud; a recent tram ride he took perhaps better illuminates, where he told of the acute embarrassment of being offered a seat by a

young international student while riding the number 57 to the city.

At our meeting, Trev wore a brand-new Panama hat, which he mentioned needed to be appropriately grubbied before it was acceptable to the wider world. After Jill mistakenly called him 'Treasure', all bets were off in terms of formalities. I thought to myself how I wished we had this much fun in my own tedious body-corporate meetings.

They all talked at length about City Gardens, which is a veritable oasis, hidden away in the central-west side of the suburb, just off Abbotsford and Haines streets and a stone's throw from the North Melbourne Pool.

Trevor explained it was the size of a city block, a complex housing over 300 residents in 140 lots. Its lush green plantings, expansive central gardens and beautiful natural light felt a little otherworldly when considered alongside ye olde heritage North Melbourne.

Jill and I talked about possibilities, including worm farms, community gardens, inner-city beehives and community grants, and the City Gardens residents lit up. I suggested they think

about what was next for them and to call when they had some preliminary ideas.

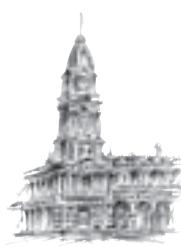
It didn't take long before Trev summoned me to his home for a cuppa and sarnies made by his wife, Glenys. Lunch was happily interrupted by two tiny and irrepressible poodles, Charlie and Pippa, bouncing around my feet, utterly adorable even in their elderly states.

Trev had worked for years in advertising, but his complete lack of cynicism did not fit the flashy, corporate 'ad man' stereotype. No, Trev oozed an old-school Aussie charisma.

He had been a North Melburnian for around 13 years. Not that you'd know it, as he spoke with a passion for the place well beyond 2002. In fact, Trev grew up in Healesville, where his father was the caretaker at the Maroondah Dam. Upon marrying the lovely Glenys, the Smiths lived the Aussie dream for 26 years on a half-acre in Mitcham in Melbourne's east, raising two children. But when their nest emptied, the inner city lured them away from the grand old east.

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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.

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North and West Melbourne News**

The *North and West Melbourne News* is looking for volunteers! If you're someone who loves your local community, then we want you. We need volunteers to help with editing, writing and distribution, so there are plenty of ways to get involved.

Do you have a keen eye for detail and enjoy making connections within your community? Then why not work with our editorial team to help source stories, generate contacts with local groups or coordinate a section?

Do you have a way with words and enjoy writing? Then you could apply as a contributor. We're always looking for well-written stories about the local area, so feel free to send us pitches or ideas or get in touch to ask for an assignment.

If you want to be involved but don't feel that the written word is your thing, why not join our distribution team or our social media network? Getting the *News* to people is just as important as writing it. There is always a need for volunteers to assist with delivering the paper, so if you're someone who likes a good walk then this might be the job for you.

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www.springflingstreetfestival.org.au
www.facebook.com/springflingstreetfest14
www.instagram.com/springfestival

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Errol's Angels rehearsing **K**

KPhoto: courtesy Errol's Angels

COMMUNITY

Art meets industry at Upper West Side on Spencer

Aaron Rowan-Bell

In amongst the light bulbs painted atop green and blue patterns spread across the walls, and the multicoloured bikes fixed high up on the brickwork, are plaques denoting the Upper West Side development's historic past. This residential and arts precinct sits square on top of what used to be the Spencer Street electrical plant.

The Spencer Street Power Station opened in 1894 with 20 dynamos and four boilers. While electricity was in general use at the time, Melbourne's street lights were still reliant on gas. On 7 March 1894 Melbourne's central city streets glowed with electricity for the first time.

In 1927 the site was once again at the core of Melbourne's development with the construction of a new hydraulic power station. Now able to power lifts, cranes and elevators, the city's construction crept closer to the sky. Some passenger lifts were still operating on this system as late as 1967.

In the 25 years since it closed its doors in 1982, the location had become better known as an eyesore and hot spot for local trespassers. In 2003 a 20-year-old male was arrested for writing the words "No jobs on a dead planet" on the plant's 105-metre chimney.

A year later the site was again in the news, this time with the accidental death of a 13-year-old girl. Shortly after being asked by security to vacate the site, the young girl fell into a seven-metre hole onto concrete, sustaining severe head injuries.

Concerns over asbestos in the building had further complicated rescue attempts, however in the following days then-opposition spokesman Kim Wells confirmed that police had been entering the site without protective equipment up until the week of the accident.

The girl, believed to be a ward of the state, had been living on the streets for several days before the accident.

Renowned youth outreach worker and community activist Les Twentyman had expressed concern over the rising number of homeless children who were resorting to dangerous sites like these for shelter.

"These derelict buildings around the city are full of asbestos, and full of young people," noted Mr Twentyman, who worked for Open Family Australia at the time. "This has been highlighted by the death of this young girl."

It wasn't until 2006 that the building was eventually designated for demolition.

Demolition of the site was finished by mid-2008. What followed has been described by Australian Property Management as the "single largest residential development Melbourne

has seen in the past 10 years", with some 2200 apartments in the heart of Melbourne's CBD.

While the Far East Consortium did a lot to modernise the site during its redevelopment, they also went a long way in preserving the site's history. Besides continuing to house a heritage-listed cast-iron water tank, built in 1889, they also agreed to preserve two of the original buildings along the Spencer Street border.

Watertank Way, the Upper West Side's arcade art district, is steeped in both Melbourne's industrial past and its cultural present. With history displayed proudly on plaques around the precinct and its funky utilities design theme, the Upper West Side is a reflection of Melbourne's character.

While the goal of the development was housing, the ground floor has been reserved for retail, including designer bags and accessories as well as a Caribbean grill and bar. The location also houses an art gallery which is simply designated by an ampersand.

The gallery is the latest to come from djproject, the arts and design company run by Julie Collins and her husband, Derek Johns.

Most recently Julie has been curating her third and final Lorne Sculpture Biennale, a biennial landscape sculpture festival held in Lorne, since she started in 2011.

While the gallery may be only six months old, art has been a big piece of the Upper West Side project from the start. In fact, Julie came to the attention of the property manager after her work was exhibited at the Upper West Side's opening.

With over 25 years as an exhibiting artist and a 15-year-long curatorial career, the gallery "was a way for Julie to bring some of her ideas back to Melbourne with her", gallery worker Ellie Collins said.

The most recent exhibition, *The Expatriates*, was Ellie's first time curating an exhibition. *The Expatriates* brought together works "by sculptors living and working abroad as well as those from other parts who now call Australia home".

"Basically it's about exploring the environment that you live in and the choices you make when you choose where you are going to live," said Ellie. "It's an important idea in a time where, with technology and flights, it's really easy to travel but it's becoming increasingly more difficult to be accepted somewhere."

The Expatriates ran until 22 May before making way for new sculptures from Jason Waterhouse. The gallery is also inviting artists to make submissions for "an exhibition which showcases contemporary Aboriginal sculpture from around Australia". Submissions end on 30 June with the exhibition planned to open on

20 August.

The Upper West Side represents a diverse and integrationist approach to development. Construction of the project has provided the city with living space while its colourful character and inviting feeling negate the looming

atmosphere apartment blocks can often produce.

Most importantly, though, this private development doesn't feel like it has stolen a piece of Melbourne's past, but rather improved it for the future.



Bicycles fixed to the walls of Upper West Side

Photo: Aaron Rowan-Bell



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The street barber who is an angel in disguise

Claudio Palmeri

When the sun goes down in Melbourne there are some who are left to sleep under the stars. Yet there is no romanticism in having only a blanket and the bitumen to call home for the night.

Homelessness is an awful reality for some. When coupled with painful internal battles, it leaves many losing faith in the kindness of humanity.

The heartless among us see the homeless as a nuisance, a menace to society, punished for poor decisions made in life. Those with more compassion see homelessness as symptomatic of a greater ill, not the fault of those on the streets but the fault of those who left them there.

Too few look beyond the sometimes bedraggled appearance of the city's homeless and see human beings with human needs. Yet one man has done just that.

Nasir Sobhani, also known as 'the street barber', is different from most people. Not only because the enigmatic hairdresser is covered in a host of tattoos, or because he chooses to

skateboard in to his regular job on six days of the week, or because his outward appearance in general is that of a man who has always identified as different.

Nasir is different because he cares, and what's more he cares enough to do something. One day a week, the one day when Nasir is not working, 'the street barber' offers his time and craftsmanship to homeless people on the streets of Melbourne.

It is a simple charity and one that might not seem significant. Yet something as simple as a haircut can rejuvenate and invigorate. Beyond this, for homeless people, who are rarely granted even life's most basic luxuries, a haircut can offer the opportunity not to be harshly judged on their outward appearance.

According to Nasir: "The way we look breaks so many social norms." People believe "a homeless person must be a junkie and a tattooed dude that looks like a criminal", he says. "Assumptions get it wrong."

Nasir, who has an outward appearance that may seem intimidating to some, is really an angel in disguise.

'The street barber' attributes his affinity with the homeless to his own harsh past life experiences. He once battled his own demons, cocaine and opiate addiction, and knows very well the downward spiral ride they can take

you on. Nasir is aware that what he does is "an external physical thing, but it has to start somewhere".

Nasir knows he can't "force someone to stay clean". But, he says, "I can help them *feel* clean."

The haircut isn't the solution but it can be the catalyst for a life-changing decision.

Throughout our interview it was apparent that Nasir was an extremely humble person. When asked who or what inspired him his response was: "I'm inspired by the people that are inspired by me." He also has a belief in a higher faith, which "emphasises serving humanity in the utmost and to the fullest

capacity, with whatever talents you have".

Nasir's experiences on the streets coupled with his passion for cutting hair gave him a calling in life, and so began his Clean Cut Clean Start program. He is in the process of trying to set up a not-for-profit organisation made up of barbers all over the world to help the homeless and less fortunate. He encourages all to check out his Instagram (@thestreetsbarber) and help make a difference.

Keeping a clear head can be a tough thing to manage, particularly on the streets, but a fresh haircut is a step in the right direction.

Nasir Sobhani knows that with a situation as complicated as homelessness it can often seem hopeless to try to help. But he believes "everyone needs love and compassion", so, rather than being daunted by the challenge, he has taken his skills to the streets and offered what little he can. With a shave, a haircut and a sympathetic ear 'the street barber' offers simple solace to the most unfortunate among us.

While it's important to remember that a bad hair day isn't the end of the world, Nasir's story shows how a good haircut can be the start of something much better.



Nasir, hard at work on the city streets

Source: Facebook

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The Trev Project at City Gardens, North Melbourne



Trev and his 'Project' are transforming the City Gardens

Photo: Steven Weir



Photo: Ruth Allwood

Continued from Front page

We talked about the creep of change to the local area brought about by the curious work being done by city planners, the march of gentrification and the growing recognition that North Melbourne was — is — a bloody great place to live. I told Trev of my own love of the suburb, which began on my very first day in Melbourne as an international student and had led me to refer to it as my 'spiritual homeland'

ever since. He couldn't have agreed more.

We shared stories of the place. We talked about the nearby housing estate and the neighbouring site of the Victorian Archives Centre, home of the Public Record Office. Trev spoke of the former local councillor who lived nearby and ran a local history project, whom he'd newly anointed with 'bloody legend' status following a recent meeting.

We discussed the local residents' group who watched like hawks the progress of

the contentious Woolworths development approved nearby. Trev told me of the short walk towards the railway station for the crystal-clear view over the city, perfect for watching New Year's Eve fireworks.

Trev gently lamented that City Gardens, with its mixture of townhouses and flats, of owners and renters, often struggled to foster a sense of 'community', even in its central green space, designed to allow easy interaction and socialising.

"Digger," he said, "what I want is a movement away from selfishness. I want this to be a place that people love and want to stay for a long time." He hoped that having worm farms on-site might help bring people together working on something in their beautiful inner-city space. My advice was: "Think bigger."

Then we talked more about the community grants, and with that the still unnamed Project took on a new dimension. Trev made it his mission to build a case for funds to create a garden that not only produced local veggies and herbs for the residents of City Gardens, but would also encourage locals to stop by and visit their little slice of heaven.

Over the next few months I fielded numerous calls from Trev, following up on local discoveries all made in the pursuit of a top-class grant application. While The Project was ostensibly about the creation of a productive garden, with every call or meeting it morphed into something bigger.

The Project became a link to the local residents' association, providing its members with a grassroots project to take the edge off the often-relentless vigilance needed to monitor developer activity. It became an opportunity for educational outreach about urban horticulture for the students at The Huddle, the youth outreach facility at the North Melbourne Football Club.

It linked to the permaculture project being undertaken at The Venny in Kensington, a 'backyard adventure playground' for children based on the Kensington housing estate.

With almost every new connection he made, he called me — not for help but simply to tell me of an amazing discovery in the neighbourhood. Of dedicated people doing incredible things to help those around them to be resilient and to forge a deeper connection to North Melbourne.

On more than one occasion Trev told me of choking back tears on leaving these local places where people were working to do good things, his tears propelling him to do more. On one such occasion I was addressed as 'Knackers' instead of 'Digger', which obviously still thrills me.

I last visited Trev a few weeks ago to have a look at the committee's latest triumph, which is re-thinking City Gardens' recycling system,

which now includes a variation on the old 'charity bins', to enable residents to dispose of clothes and bric-a-brac. Worm farms were also in and proving to be a huge success.

Chatter had started about what the productive garden might look like if the grant was successful, including stories of what residents would like to grow. Trev told me of a Vietnamese lady who hoped to grow a type of garlic she struggled to buy at Queen Vic Market. A successful safety assessment meant that rooftop beehives were likely to be on their way. There was a buzz at City Gardens — pardon the all-too-corny and obvious pun.

We had a cuppa in the garden and Trev told me of the loss of his older pup, Charlie, who had made it to the ripe old age of 14. Little Pippa (12 years), resplendent in her little blue-and-white striped coat, seemed to be bouncing back.

Out of the blue, Trev pointed out an old footpath that led seemingly to nowhere under his fence-line and proceeded to explain that a large part of the whole block used to be a motel of sorts, and that his townhouse was the reception area. I'd had no idea.

He then talked about the stories he'd heard of the days before the vast reclaiming of Melbourne's container port: "Digger, you wouldn't believe it but it was possible to see the northern part of the port from just across the road there." He mentioned the more-than-100-year-old plane trees on the site that were saved years before by vigilant residents, and the story of the 'old-timer' at the pub, when he was a kid.

"This old-timer used to pocket the money given to him to visit the pool, to buy lollies. He came and swam in the babbling creek that ran right under what is now Plane Tree Way instead," Trev explained, gesturing to the private lane that cuts through the development.

Of course, what he was inadvertently telling me was that he had another project in mind: a history of City Gardens. His restless mind was already forging ahead, blissfully unaware that his time would soon be very much filled. With an about-to-be-announced successful grant, The Project — and Trev — would continue their infectious North Melbourne revolution.

In late October, City Gardens' project was awarded a community grant by the City of Melbourne. Find more information about the grants at www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/governance-transparency/Pages/grants-and-sponsorships.aspx

Steven Weir is a Scottish-Australian hybrid, working with the City of Melbourne in community development/engagement to help people in Melbourne to connect and realise ideas and projects.



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Lola Russell, the queen of King Street

Jenny Cook and Bill Hannan

Melburnians rightly picture the architecture of the 19th century as ornate Classical. Yet there are very few remaining examples of what Georgian Melbourne looked like before the gold rushes.

One standout example is on the corner of King and La Trobe streets. It is a white two-storey cottage and shop opposite the Flagstaff Gardens, somehow preserved amidst a 20th century forest.

Built in 1850 by the Heffernan family just before the gold rushes served to create North Melbourne and other inner municipalities, and in continuous use as a residence since then, it is now heritage listed and relatively safe from destruction. Furthermore, an oak tree in its backyard has 'exceptional' status, a form of heritage protection available to extraordinarily distinguished trees.

The tree grew from an acorn that George Dixon picked up and planted 40-odd years ago. George has been in the cottage since he set up with his partner, Lola Russell. Lola was born in the cottage in 1921 and still lives there today, helping to run tearooms in the small shop that has housed a range of businesses across the centuries.

Lola's grandfather, Valletto Azzopardi, bought the general store and newsagency in 1899 and subsequently bought the land and house in 1917. His daughter Beatrice Patricia married George Russell in 1919. They moved into the cottage with him in time for their daughter Lola to be born into the house she still lives in.

Lola was mad for the theatre, and a polished singer. She met her future husband, George Dixon (he of the exceptional oak tree), at a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*.

As so many people of the theatre did in those days, she took off for London at the end of the 1940s, leaving George behind to finish his degree. However, he missed her so much that he followed her to England and enrolled at Cambridge. On their return to King Street in the 1950s George moved into the cottage as a boarder. Both mixed theatre work with teaching.

Performers do not retire but as she approached 70 Lola thought back over her full life and dictated her memories to George. The work, *City Kid*, was published last year and introduced to Hotham History earlier this year by its editor, Susan Pierotti.

The book, Susan has said, is "the story of a woman and a building", of a cottage that is "the only continuously lived-in residence remaining in the CBD", and of "a smaller, more integrated, less fragmented world".

City Kid is a very enjoyable read, written



Lola Russell and George Dixon at home

Photo: Jim Weatherill

in a matter-of-fact, fairly understated way in incredible and loving detail and with fond nostalgia for a lost era. It also explores the precarious nature of theatrical employment and the need for initiative, networking and teaching jobs to survive between roles.

Lola's memories of school, as student and teacher, take us to days when schooling was highly selective and to the beginnings of its great expansion in the 1960s.

Extroverted and noisy but of noted ability, she was soon in the front row in King Street Primary. Of the 56 kids in Grade 8 only she and one boy could graduate to University High. She recalls her mother making her school uniform, sports gear and speech-night frock, and taking the tram to Hall's Book Store to buy secondhand textbooks.

Her experience teaching in various high schools and tech schools had its ups and downs because it had to compete often with her first love, the theatre.

This love began, as did her eventual marriage, in university theatre and the Union Rep and expanded into the main repertory theatres of the day, the Melbourne Theatre Company and the Little Theatre.

It was shortly after her return from London that Lola was taken on by Wal Cherry, the

new director of the Melbourne Theatre Company, to go on tour in an old converted bus. Everyone pitched in to set up and pack up equipment and props. This was Lola's "greatest theatrical experience" to date. At this point she finally considered herself to be "a fully developed actress".

She then had work at the Little Theatre, as did George. As she puts it, "life had begun to be fun" and they were saving up to get married.

1961 typifies Lola's triumphs and trials. The country was in recession and she was in her third year of teaching at Coburg Tech. She knew she had to do "something in [her] artistic life".

She decided to put on Harold Pinter's *The Room* — a double risk since it was a first performance and decidedly avant-garde. It performed at various venues to acclaim and came second in the Victorian Drama League Festival. Lola was awarded Best Actress of 1961 for her part as Rose.

She then took on the formidable job of producing a double bill in the Russell Street Theatre for November. Friends helped book out the theatre. The season "received extremely good critiques and had tremendous publicity" and as a result she established Lola Russell

Productions. The firm is still going.

Lola Russell Productions introduced much avant-garde theatre to Melbourne audiences, including Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* with the late Peter O'Shaughnessy and Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter*.

Although her schools had gone to some trouble to accommodate her two professions, the intense theatrical activity of 1961 saw her sacked from the technical division for her many absences. She was of course devastated but found work teaching history three days a week at a Catholic school in Berwick — an extremely distant workplace for King Street's longest running resident.

These days Lola prefers to stay closer to home and help George run the tearooms at her historic home, where her theatrical life still offers entertainment.

Russell's Old Corner Shop Luncheon Room at 330 King Street is open 7.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and is included in several historical tours offered around Melbourne.

City Kid by Lola Russell was published by Palmer Higgs Pty Ltd in 2015 and can be purchased online at www.citykidbook.com.au/325/buy_city_kid_book/buy-city-kid-book.html

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Welcome to Saints Peter and Paul parish, North Melbourne!

Father Alexander Kenez and Father Ivan Mysiv

Welcome to a new and interesting option to find a space to pray. The Ukrainian Catholic Church, on the corner of Canning and Dryburgh streets, is a little-known gem in Melbourne, a peaceful place to step out of this world and spend some quiet time.

When you walk into this church, it has a wow factor. You are surrounded by icons and the whole sense of this church is one of peace and almost otherworldliness. This is a place that allows you to forget time.

Saints Peter and Paul is one of the most interesting churches in and around North Melbourne. It was built by Ukrainian immigrants when they came here after the Second World War. Real Byzantine style with an Australian flavour is the best way to describe the church. Inside you will find some interesting Byzantine icons.

People often find this church unusual. It is a Catholic church which worships in the Byzantine tradition. The Ukrainians have always worshipped in the Byzantine style, but as time has gone by the style has become more Australian. This is a space where we worship, a place where sight, sound and the smell of incense overwhelm our senses and allow us to leave our daily problems behind and become closer to God.

When you visit for the first time, expect the unexpected. We have a bishop, several priests and deacons and a convent of Byzantine nuns of the order of St Basil the Great. At Easter time you might be interested in learning how to make Ukrainian Easter eggs. For others who are learning the significance of icons there is an icon painting group.

Not everyone has the chance to immerse himself or herself in the world of iconography. Here you have the opportunity to be part of a group of people who do just this. If you wish to take part, you can email ssmimel@gmail.com, where Sister Maria will answer any questions.

We follow the Julian calendar, which is why Christmas is on 7 January and Easter often falls on a different date from other Christian churches.

If you visit the church on Sunday, it may be helpful to come at 11.30am, when the English Divine Liturgy takes place. The earlier services, at 8.00am and 9.30am, are in Ukrainian. Sunday worship here is different from what you may be used to. The Mass in the Roman



Inside Saints Peter and Paul, the Ukrainian Catholic Church

Photo: Paul Danyluk and Ivan Mysiv

Catholic Church has its origins in Rome; ours has its origins in Constantinople. We are as Catholic as any other Catholic church in Australia, but we simply do things differently. If you come, feel free to receive communion. The only difference is that it is given in the form of bread and wine.

If ethnic Ukrainian food is what interests you, this is available after Liturgy on Sunday

and served in a friendly, hospitable atmosphere. Don't be shy, feel free to join in. The meals are served in the church hall next door. Just ask where to go.

If you wish to simply come in and look around during the week, please come to the presbytery at 35 Canning Street, North Melbourne. Someone will gladly open up for you and leave you to explore at your own pace. If

you are interested please email us at melbourneparish@catholicukes.com.au.

Australia is a country that finds unity in diversity. Our community contributes to the diversity of the ways in which people have been praying over the past 2000 years. We are a church for all people and a welcoming local church. Don't be afraid to come and discover something new.

The NAC — networking the north

Lachlan Marr

For all the digital dreams of technocrats and urban planners alike, the idea of the modern, interconnected hyper-city has far from realised its full potential.

The notion that the digital revolution would better connect communities and allow greater access to services online has had mixed results.

Certainly, the opportunity exists to exploit the ubiquitous nature of the internet to fuel growth and facilitate communication within local areas. Instead, the unfortunate reality is that people operating online tend to interact with the internet on an individual basis.

Community groups formerly reliant almost exclusively on face-to-face meetings have been able to take advantage of the increased communication made available by the internet. Yet in attempting to generate community action online many quickly find that the broad

scope of the internet lends itself less to small-scale community concerns and instead trends towards ideas with mass appeal but little substance.

How to square the circle of on-the-ground community action with the ethereal involvement allowed by the internet is a challenge confronting most community groups. While Facebook 'likes' and Twitter hashtags may generate a greater level of awareness, they don't always lead to a higher level of actual involvement.

For all the high-minded ideals that the internet would create new connections, it has in many ways instead severed traditional connections made within communities. This is increasingly the case as people become more and more reliant on the World Wide Web rather than their local neighbourhood to create a sense of interconnectedness and involvement.

A new website initiated, designed and developed by North Melbourne Language and Learning and the City of Melbourne aims to

address some of these issues for community groups in North Melbourne.

The North Melbourne Community Connector at northmelbourne.net was specially designed for North Melbourne's local community and the many agencies and organisations that support it.

The site is intended to act as a service directory and a source of information for the communities of North Melbourne and surrounding suburbs. The way the site has been designed allows for member agencies of the North Melbourne Agency Collective (the NAC) to manage their own details, share stories and experiences and connect with each other to collaborate and coordinate.

For local residents keen to contribute to their community, connecting online is easier than ever before. This site provides a hub for local services, programs and agencies as well as information about local events, news and grants.

The highly functional and easily navigable

site was designed specifically so that North Melbourne's diverse communities would readily understand and utilise it. Using the site is fairly simple with options for more visual or text-based layouts available.

The site was funded by a grant from the City of Melbourne, and staff members from their offices who spoke with the *North and West Melbourne News* are extremely enthusiastic about the project. Joanne Goodman, who is leaving North Melbourne Language and Learning after over 20 years of service, was intimately involved in the development and launch of this effective community tool.

We're still a long way from the far-flung future some constantly seem to envision as just around the corner. Yet the North Melbourne Community Connector is a great step towards coordinating the efforts of community groups and residents online and on the ground.

Check it out for yourself at northmelbourne.net and get connected.



North and West Melbourne Association

NWMA annual general meeting

The Association held its annual general meeting for the 2015 calendar year at the Bastow Institute on 19 April this year with more than 30 people in attendance. There were some changes to the committee but all were elected unopposed, as follows:

Chair: Kevin Chamberlin

Deputy chair: (position unfilled)

Secretary: Jane Poynter

Treasurer: Michael Horscroft

Assistant secretary: Janet Graham

Ordinary members: Bill Cook, Cecilia Gason, Sue Scarfe and Geraldine Suter

The vacant positions of deputy chair and one ordinary committee member may be filled at any ordinary general meeting — if you would like to take a role on the committee, or you know someone who might, please get in touch.

The chairperson, Kevin Chamberlin, gave an overview of the Association's busy year, with other members adding reports on their specific roles in the organisation. Kevin said there was a focus on urban planning and the NWMA's representation on other groups, notably the Coalition of Resident and Business Associations (CoRBA), the Homelessness Action Group and Police Community Consultation committees.

The Association also supported subgroups such as the opponents of the Baptist Church development (North and West Melbourne Voice) and worked closely with RAID (Residents About Integrated Development) and the Kensington Association and was a founding member of IMPA (Inner Melbourne Planning Alliance), whose main aim is to get a better-planned city.

In 2015 we had had a win at VCAT on 89–95 Lothian Street regarding heritage issues and only partial success on 9 Dryburgh Street, where VCAT had reduced the proposed 14 storeys to 10.

The Errol Street Precinct Improvement Survey run at the NWMA stall at the Spring Fling had elicited a huge response from festival-goers to diverse topics including tram superstops, a new public toilet and especially the greening of Errol Street, to the extent that Melbourne City Council had shown interest.

More detailed analysis this year of the survey revealed that 77 per cent of respondents thought we needed a new unisex toilet, and

256 of the 443 responses on the straw poll were for "trees and landscaping". The council has since had a meeting with the North and West Melbourne Precinct Association (traders' group), which also wanted more greening in Errol Street.

Kevin concluded that the Association was not an organisation where one or two people did everything; it relied on contributions from many members, not only those on the committee, and he warmly thanked all those who had donated their time and expertise.

Collapse of Royal Park Hotel

Work to demolish the condemned Royal Park Hotel on the corner of Queensberry and Howard streets began on Monday 18 April. The following Wednesday part of the hotel's brick wall suddenly crashed, knocking over the protective hoarding and narrowly missing a passer-by pushing a pram.

The site was eventually secured and Queensberry Street blocked off to traffic for the rest of the day. The westbound lane remained closed for some time.

The Association is appalled by the scant attention paid to occupational health and safety and the danger posed to pedestrians. Has nothing been learnt from the collapse of the wall in Swanston Street in March 2013 that killed three people and traumatised many others?

The excavator owned by demolition contractor Sustainable Demolition was removed after this photo was taken.

West Melbourne Heritage Review — Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C272

The Heritage Review has now been completed and the City of Melbourne (CoM) proposes to implement the recommendations into planning scheme heritage controls through Planning Scheme Amendment C272. The CoM says the review will form a key input into the West Melbourne Structure Plan because heritage emerged as a matter of great importance at community meetings held in 2015 to discuss the new structure plan.

Several items of topical interest appear in this impressive 700-page review, with the following structures having their classifications provisionally upgraded.

West Melbourne Baptist Church manse (pages 124–5)

The classification has been upgraded from D to C. The 1917 building is described as "significant":

- Historically, as the only physical link with the long and rich history of the Baptist congregation in West Melbourne on this reserve and, itself, the place for near to 100 years of occupation by the church; and
- Aesthetically, a well-preserved and early example of an Arts and Crafts Bungalow style manse, distinctive among the pervading Victorian-era character of West Melbourne.

The elm tree in the Hawke and Curzon Street Reserve next to the manse has also been given a C grading "for its rarity in West Melbourne" (page 126).

Underground public toilets, Hawke Street and King Street Reserve (pages 195–6)

This structure has been graded A in a Level 2 streetscape and is described as "of historical and architectural significance". The Statement of Significance begins: "The underground men's public toilet in West Melbourne, built in 1938, is one of eleven built in Melbourne in the early twentieth century in response to public demand for public toilet facilities in Melbourne that were both sanitary and discreet."

It is a pity that the (male) public can no longer admire the rare "Moderne style polychrome brick ventilation shaft with decorative wrought iron panels" as they avail themselves of the facilities, since the entrances have long been concreted over, thereby rendering the toilets more disabled than the "disabled toilets" at the town hall to which notices direct people needing to relieve themselves.

It is also ironic that "Street-level toilets were regarded as indecently open to public view" at the time of construction, when the Association and others have been lobbying for years to get a highly-visible heritage-style unisex toilet installed next to the urinal in Queensberry Street. We wait with bated breath to see if the council includes this in its final budget.

Access the entire West Melbourne Heritage Review with its hundreds of contemporary photographs at www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/may16_fmc2_melbourne-planning-scheme-amendments-c272-c273-att3-full-amendment.pdf

CityLink Tulla Widening project and the lemon-scented gums

Led by Protectors of Public Lands Victoria, residents have twice gathered to protest about the Tulla Widening plan to axe five mature lemon-scented gums in the Flemington Road median strip opposite Church Street, Parkville. One of the trees is about 95 years old and survived a similar attack when the Tullamarine Freeway was built in 1969–70.

Project planners initially said the removal of the trees was necessary to make room for a relocated bike path. This path, however, which takes cyclists from Mount Alexander Road to an on-road cycle lane in Flemington Road via the median strip, is already hazardous and should probably be located elsewhere for safety reasons alone.

At a meeting called by the Flemington Association on 10 May to discuss the Flemington section, presenters from the project team, having changed their stance in the face of community pressure, stated: "CTW Project understands the value of the five lemon-scented gums on Flemington Road to the local community. Ongoing discussions [are taking place] with Melbourne City Council about [the] final design of [the] Flemington Road interchange."

Councillor Rohan Leppert, who joined the first protest, is adamant that the famous trees should be saved, and we understand that the council is right behind him.

Western Distributor

A number of NWMA members attended the community consultation on 27 April and noted new roads, beyond the project's original scope, drawn on the maps, one connecting Wurundjeri Way with Dynon Road and running through the E-Gate site next to the railway network.

We believe the Western Distributor will create more traffic in North and West Melbourne as vehicles access Carlton's education and medical precinct via Dryburgh, Abbotsford, Curzon and Victoria streets, and Ascot Vale via Dynon and Kensington roads.

One staff member at the consultation admitted that Dudley Street might experience a 5 per cent increase in traffic.

Upcoming meetings and speakers

Meetings: third Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm, Dewey Common, Bastow Institute, 601 Queensberry Street (enter from Union Street) — everyone welcome!

Date	Guest speaker/topic
21 June	Western Distributor
19 July	John Blewonski, CEO, VincentCare Victoria
16 August	Forum on homelessness in North and West Melbourne
20 September	Forum on community and street gardens
Information:	info@nwma.org.au
Website:	www.nwma.org.au
Facebook:	www.facebook.com/NorthAndWestMelbourneAssociation/

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BULK-BILLING FOR PENSIONERS



The partially demolished Royal Park Hotel collapsed on 20 April

Photo: Janet Graham

Resident input can achieve integrated development

Marg Leser

RAID advocates for planning and development that is matched by linked social infrastructure that addresses the needs of current and future local residents of all ages.

RAID is committed to open debate and to the development of transparent, independent planning and appeal processes, while learning from innovative international and national residential planning experience.

Resident input into policy

RAID's experience over several years has reinforced our belief in the importance of resident input into policy development and implementation affecting 3051.

Last year RAID contributed to the Minister for Planning's *Apartment Standards Discussion Paper*. RAID put in a submission and representatives attended two consultation workshops. Our submission sought minimum design standards and minimum room sizes and challenged density when it does not add to amenity.

RAID also submitted to the C190 Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan, emphasising the importance of community infrastructure. Holistic planning is essential to ensure provision of adequate schools, childcare facilities and health, recreation and transport services to support the new communities that will move into the area.

Planning review panels and other similar forums have given RAID the opportunity to point out that the community can play a role in planning.

However, planning matters have become increasingly complex and frequently require expertise beyond that of individual residents. It is therefore important that neighbours share their knowledge through conversations and email messages (see RAID contact details at end of article). Residents know what is needed to ensure that North Melbourne continues to evolve as a well-integrated, well-planned, safe community.

Resident input needs to be proactive and at the initial policy development level rather than by protesting at VCAT after decisions have been made.

There are a number of reasons why this is the case. Primarily, the language of planning is difficult for people from outside the profession to understand or use. References to various bodies by the use of acronyms make much of the written material that surrounds decisions hard to follow. The policy documents often appear to be written in jargon for an 'in' group that we are not in.

RAID's experience of a string of

unsuccessful appearances at VCAT hearings tells us that we often enter the scene far too late to have any effect. It is clear that it is almost impossible for individual residents to influence planning and development at the appeal stage. If residents are to have an effective say in planning, we suggest it has to be at the policy-making level. Otherwise, sensible ideas do not get a hearing because policy decisions have already dictated what can or cannot be done.

Of course we will keep trying but we need to move the goal posts.

RAID input at Managing Residential Development Advisory Committee hearing

RAID was represented at the Minister for Planning's *Managing Residential Development Advisory Committee* public hearing on 27 April. Our presentation addressed the terms of reference regarding a review of process, including community consultation.

We placed particular emphasis on: the importance of community groups in informing planning policy and planning decisions; an exploration as to why community groups form in response to planning matters; the need to consult using effective strategies so the community voice is heard; and the need for plain-English explanations to unpack the complex planning language and processes when the majority of community group members are not planning experts.

Our presentation also noted examples of what RAID considers to be the City of Melbourne's (CoM) inconsistent application of the Residential Zone criteria in North Melbourne and compared this to other inner-city municipalities' allocations. Many councils had designated significantly higher percentages as Neighbourhood Residential Zones, which provide the greatest protection. In closing, a series of review requests were posed for consideration by the panel members.

Update on Woolworths demolition

RAID was launched in 2011 in response to a proposal by Woolworths to build two residential towers, 300 apartments, a bottle shop and a large supermarket on a triangular site bordered by Canning Street, Macaulay Road and Vaughan Terrace in North Melbourne. RAID opposed the initial proposal at VCAT on the grounds of site overdevelopment and impact on traffic, parking, open space, community amenity and infrastructure.

Demolition of the factory buildings on the Woolworths site commenced on 4 January this year and continued six days a week aside from a week in late February when the site was closed down and a 'stop work' order posted. RAID remains unclear as to why the order was required despite seeking advice from the CoM.

Demolition work resumed and continued until early May, when a perimeter fence was constructed after all the factory buildings had been razed.

RAID members are keeping a watching brief over the site and raising issues with CoM officers and councillors as they arise or, in the case of traffic management around the site, pre-emptively before they arise.

We are aware that a development site of this size requires approval of a construction management plan (CMP) which includes, among other matters, a detailed plan for traffic management at all stages of the demolition and construction phases.

With the 402 bus travelling west down Canning Street and a bus stop next to the demolition site near the corner of Shiel and Canning streets, safety is paramount for pedestrians and passengers boarding or alighting from the bus.

Note that permitted hours of work within the CoM are Monday to Friday 7.00am to 7.00pm and Saturday 8.00am to 3.00pm. Any work outside these hours requires an out-of-hours permit. Workers are allowed onto the site before this time but must not undertake any building work. Any breaches can be reported to the CoM on 9658 9658.

Finally, RAID continues to seek advice on the status of any new plans submitted for this site, and on VCAT's prescribed conditions to the permit. The lack of community consultation remains a major issue.

Overshadowing of Gardiner Reserve playground

Over 400 apartments are to be constructed over multiple sites in the area surrounding Gardiner Reserve. Many of these developments will be high multistorey buildings (up to 13 storeys) that will overshadow and detrimentally impact on Gardiner Reserve, which is the only public playground in the area.

RAID continues to lobby for an expansion of this playground to cater for the growing number of children residing in 3051. Traffic management and pedestrian safety are already a concern.

Traffic management

RAID is working with the CoM to develop proposals to address the problems of both increased traffic and increased pressure on open space which the new developments will bring. We are looking at a number of measures, such as traffic diversion, traffic calming, traffic islands and median strips, road narrowing, pocket parks and enlarged safety zones.

RAID annual general meeting (AGM)

On 9 March 2016, RAID held its fourth AGM. Committee members elected were: Peter Hogg (chair), Marg Leser (deputy chair), Tess

Demediuk (secretary/treasurer), Lorna Hannan and Megan Cusack. Additional members can be co-opted as required. Annual membership remains \$1 (and the initial joining fee is also \$1).

Councillors Ken Ong and Rohan Leppert attended. The guest speaker was Dr Darragh O'Brien, who is the chair of the Inner Melbourne Planning Alliance (IMPA), of which RAID was a founding member. Dr O'Brien is an architect with extensive research and design experience who has worked with communities in Europe, the US and Australia.

Darragh spoke on the importance of evidence-based design of architectural and urban environments and particularly on how communities can become the primary source of input into the development of people-friendly, well-planned neighbourhoods where buildings have active frontages that interact with the street. He illustrated from overseas experience the importance of using new technologies to gather data to inform the design of socially, environmentally and commercially sustainable cities.

He concluded by suggesting that the planning process would be improved by the creation of a Melbourne urban design hub — a physical space for council, community groups, academics and others to be part of the planning process.

RAID updates

We send members regular email updates. RAID will continue to address its five focus areas:

- Monitor the Woolworths and Haines/Shiel Street developments
- Monitor how the CoM is dealing with other large-scale developments
- Assess the implications of future developments by the CoM with respect to a new Municipal Plan and the Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan
- Liaise with other community action groups
- Continue to work constructively with the CoM on planning and development matters.

WANT TO HELP?

RAID's resources are stretched and we really need support from the community and more residents sharing their skills with us. Please contact us if you are able to assist.

Connect to RAID @ 3051

For further information about RAID, or to become a member and receive our e-newsletter:

Email: raid3051@gmail.com

Access the RAID website: www.3051-integrated.com

Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/3051-RAID

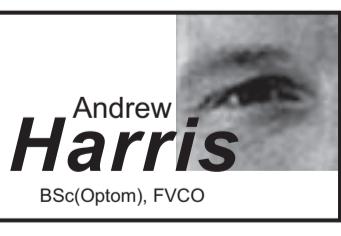
Marg Leser is deputy chair of RAID.



Passengers wait at the bus stop next to the demolition site

Photo: Megan Cusack

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Latin beats and treats at Spanish Language Fiesta

Tatiana Echeverri

Melbourne experienced a bit of Latin America and Spain at the Spanish Language Fiesta on Saturday 23 April.

At 7.00am the first volunteers arrived at The Centre to set up George Johnson Lane for North Melbourne's first-ever Spanish Language Fiesta. The weather, initially chilly with a few showers, improved to ensure that all attendees had an unforgettable day.

People started to walk into the fiesta and visit the different stalls. They found a photo booth, Spanish language book-swap,

maracas-making, arts and crafts, tourist information and book-selling. The children enjoyed storytelling in the library, while adults participated in salsa lessons and guacamole workshops in the quaint laneway just off Errol Street.

Michael Halls, The Centre's director, and Juan Carlos Gafo Acevedo, Spain's consul general in Melbourne, gave the opening speeches, officially launching the event and welcoming the community. They encouraged attendees to try the taste of Colombian *arepas*, Cuban sandwiches, traditional paella, sangria and churros from Spain.

The beats of Latin America and the traditional dances of various Spanish-speaking

regions delighted all the curious locals and visitors who came to the Spanish Language Fiesta.

As well as enjoying the great food and entertainment, walking around the fiesta was about making links, meeting people and hearing amazing stories.

Two little girls joined the storytelling, not only to listen to one of the traditional fairytales, but also to read it by themselves while practising their Spanish. Two children from Hong Kong joined in the guacamole-making workshop, while many other local children joined in the learning and the fun.

Thanks go to The Centre, event coordinators Emma McCashney and Tatiana Echeverri, and

the group of volunteers who made possible this celebration of the richness of the Spanish language in Melbourne.

If you are interested in participating in future activities related to the annual Spanish Language Fiesta or would like general information about Spanish language programs in North Melbourne, please visit www.facebook.com/thecentrenorthwestmelbourne and don't hesitate to contact us by telephoning 9328 1126 or emailing admin@centre.org.au

We look forward to seeing you all again next year for the second Spanish Language Fiesta. Don't forget to bring your friends!



Photos: Jim Weatherill

Wheelie Good Day on Melrose Street

Lachlan Marr

The Wheelie Good Day returned to North Melbourne on Sunday 1 May this year. The event took place on Melrose Street where the local community gathered to learn more about travelling on two wheels.

The Wheelie Good Day is intended to encourage people to ride bikes more regularly, offering training and encouragement for current and potential bike enthusiasts.

This year saw many members of the local community travelling down to Melrose Street to join in the workshops and activities. Bike skills courses, such as fixing a flat, bike tune-ups and bike decorating workshops were just a few of the activities available.

Knitting, knotting and weaving workshops for creating pompoms were popular. Other attractions were pedal-powered smoothies, a handball competition and face-painting.

The Wheelie Good Day was all about showcasing the fun that can be had on two wheels and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all.



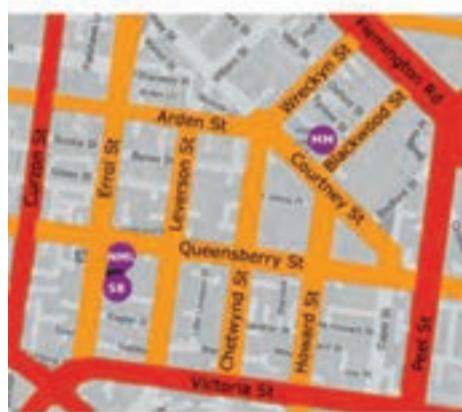
Photos: Jim Weatherill

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 Classes follow school term dates
 unless otherwise stated



The Centre
 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne VIC 3051
 Tel: (03) 9328 1126

North Melbourne Library
 66 Errol Street, North Melbourne VIC 3051
 Tel: (03) 9658 9700

The Meat Market
 5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne VIC 3051
 Tel: (03) 9329 9966
Kensington Town Hall
 30-34 Bellair Street, Kensington VIC 3031



Docklands Hub
 80 Harbour Esplanade, Docklands VIC 3008
 (near the corner of Bourke Street — look for the giant rabbit)



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

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

Centre Adventures (Day Field Trips)
 Time: Fourth Tuesday monthly
 9am – 5pm
 Cost: \$35 / \$25 concession* #
 Meet at: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

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: \$165 / \$103 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
 Time: Monday 10am – 12 noon
 Cost: \$90 / \$55 concession*
 Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Home Away from Homework Club 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
 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
 Time: Monday 1pm – 3pm
 Cost: \$90 / \$55 concession*
 Meet at: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
Self-development Short Courses: Travel Trip Tips
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: Monday 4 July, 19 September
 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
 Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Venue and Facilities Management NEW
 Time: On-the-job training
 Cost: \$65 / \$55 concession* or free internship
 Venue: INC @ Kensington Town Hall

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 quarterly
 Dates: 6 July, 2 November
 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 \$93 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 at Any Age
 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
 Cost: \$185 / \$135 concession*
Exercise for Older People
 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: Tuesday 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: Tuesday 10am – 12 noon or 1pm – 3pm
 Cost: \$133 / \$90 concession*
 Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

* subject to conditions
 # subject to staff-student ratios

Volunteer and Internship Program
 We have a wide range of opportunities for everyone, for example:

- Spring Fling, third Sunday in October annually
- Writing and editing *NWM News*
- News distribution
- Tutoring or teacher's aide
- Office and business administration
- Venue and facilities management

 Time: Must enter into a regular commitment
 Venue: 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

COMMUNITY

Meeting some members of the NWMPA

Emma McCashney

For this edition we conducted interviews with some members of the North and West Melbourne Precinct Association. We spoke with Mark Salvadori of Melbourne North Service Centre, Sue Gertzel of City North Physiotherapy and Jason Pope of the Courthouse Hotel.

Mark Salvadori

Melbourne North Service Centre
175 Arden Street, North Melbourne



When did you first move to the area?

Our family have been in business in North Melbourne for 52 years and I'm the third generation in the industry. The business originally started in Errol Street as North Melbourne Tyre Service and it was started by my grandfather. We've now been at this location for 22 years.

Can you highlight three things that you think make this precinct special?

Definitely the people in the community would be the first thing. Also the history of North Melbourne is something that is really an interesting thing — the transformation of North Melbourne if you compare it over the last five to 10 years and then you date right back. We were looking at photos of our old shop in Errol Street recently, and the transformation of North Melbourne from a more industrial, working-class area to how it is now is something we've seen first-hand.

What direction would you like to see North and West Melbourne take in the future?

I like the way that the area is transforming and what it's growing into. I'd like to see more

parks and open spaces. I'm a fan of the Metro Rail project that's going to be put into North Melbourne. For our part of North Melbourne, down around Arden Street, hopefully there will be some more open spaces put in along with that development to open the area up. Living around North Melbourne is fantastic but the one downfall is that there's not much parkland.

What do you most enjoy doing in North/West Melbourne?

The cafes are something that I still absolutely love. I often frequent restaurants and cafes up on Errol Street, Queensberry Street and that pocket. They're popping up all over the place, which is great.

What do you see as some of the benefits of being involved in the North and West Melbourne Precinct Association?

You get to network with fellow business owners and meet new people. Also going to sample the local businesses who host the networking events as you get to try places you may not have been yet. At these events you get to hear about other people's history in the area.

What is your favourite season in North/West Melbourne?

Spring definitely. That ties back into being able to walk up to the cafes and wandering around the area.

on the corner of Flemington Road and Melrose Street. That was how I came into the area. I then went to work at another practice in Villiers Street but always wanted my own practice. We looked around for a building and Errol Street was the place to be. That was in 2000.

It was luck of the draw that I started here but I like the area and think it's like a country town, but still in the centre of the city. It has a lovely community feel and you get to know many of the residents and businesses. Another reason I like being here is to be part of the community through The Centre.

What is your favourite season in North/West Melbourne?

If I had to pick one I suppose I would say spring, as I like to see the cherry-blossom trees outside the church in Curzon Street. It's also when it's just starting to warm up after the cool of winter.

What direction would you like to see North and West Melbourne take in the future?

As far as businesses go, I would like to see a bit more retail. We attract people to this area who don't live here and they go and have coffee and a wander around, but it would be good to have something to keep them here. So they could come here to see me and then they might come back to North Melbourne because there's clothing shops or specialty shops.

What do you see as some of the benefits of being involved in the North and West Melbourne Precinct Association?

Getting to know other people with businesses in the area. Discussing how they're getting on and how they promote their business.

Can you highlight three things that you think make this precinct special?

The people in the area, proximity to the city without being in the city, and the community feel.

What do you most enjoy doing in North/West Melbourne?

Drinking coffee at Errol's Cafe!

Jason Pope The Courthouse Hotel 86-90 Errol Street, North Melbourne

What made you choose to set up your business in North/West Melbourne?

It's a fantastic central location and a great meeting spot for people from all suburbs.



There also seemed to be great growth opportunity for the area.

Can you highlight three things that you think make this precinct special?

The community feel — it's a place where you know your neighbours, which is unlike some other precincts of Melbourne. A second is that people invest pride into the area. Also its ability to be geographically central to the CBD while still preserving a great sense of lifestyle.

What is your favourite season in North/West Melbourne?

I would have to say spring because it's festive and there's lots happening in the area at this time of year. The Fringe Festival starts in September, then there's the Spring Fling Street Festival in October. These events showcase the best things about the precinct.

What direction would you like to see North and West Melbourne take in the future?

I would like to see it further evolve as an entertainment precinct with culture and performing arts as this is complementary to the area. A lot of these things are already here so we should work towards enhancing them.

What do you see as some of the benefits of being involved in the North and West Melbourne Precinct Association?

It's a huge networking opportunity where you meet like-minded people from the area. It also provides important access to marketing, intellectual property and business development resources that we wouldn't have otherwise.

What other part of the world do you think North/West Melbourne most resembles?

New Jersey. Despite North Melbourne's obvious European influence, there are some small towns in New Jersey that it reminds me of.

What made you choose to set up your business in North/West Melbourne?

I was asked to be part of an oral medicine practice that started up in 1997 in a building

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ILLUMINATI

EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Home Away from Homework Club

Frances McMillan

Education empowers young people to realise their full potential. We all recognise the value of education to the student, their family and the community now more than ever, with engaged and interested youths being an asset to the community.

The Home Away from Homework Club (formerly the Global Homework Program) is a unique and successful program which aims to provide a holistic approach to the provision of education support to students in years 4 to 12 so they can reach their full potential. It is run through The Centre: Connecting Community in North and West Melbourne Inc in partnership with the North Melbourne Library. With your support we can work to ensure that the club continues and expands into the future.

The Home Away from Homework Club now has a new identity and logo; it has, however, retained all the quality support services it has been providing to students through its unique model for the past 12 years. Since its inception more than 900 students and volunteer tutors from around 10 different language and cultural groups have benefitted from learning support and social interaction.

The club is well recognised as a world-class, best-practice, benchmark program and currently has around 60 students and 30 volunteer tutors enrolled from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

It supports families who may not be able to help their children with homework as they may be immigrants in non-English-speaking households. The parents may not have had an extensive education themselves, and may not be able to afford private tuition. Other family pressures sometimes cause difficulties in help-

ing children with complex homework.

The Home Away from Homework Club's model in practice provides learning support and tutoring to young people, helping them both socially and academically to participate in school in a more meaningful way. It supports students in finishing their homework, developing their skills, confidence and personal resilience. It provides access to community-based resources, such as computers, books and databases, which may not be available at home.

Studies show that several factors, including the onset of puberty and difficulty in transitioning to secondary school, may contribute to a drop in students' engagement with schooling. This disengagement may begin in a student's early years. Providing a positive approach to discipline and an emphasis on personal responsibility for learning and social behaviour, the Home Away from Homework Club assists the students to develop important life skills like teamwork, leadership, self-discipline and resilience.

The club's model also includes specific activities for students transitioning from primary to secondary school, career guidance sessions for secondary students, and visits from pastoral teachers or coordinators. Parents and carers are included in information-sharing sessions about the school system, current curriculum and options for securing and funding tertiary education.

Health and wellbeing components and community involvement are an integral part of the club through the healthy snack program, regular written contributions to the *North and West Melbourne News* and participation in local events.

One of the main strengths of the Home Away from Homework Club is the involvement of volunteer tutors who provide students



Students enjoying the support offered by the Home Away from Homework Club

Photo: Frances McMillan

with quality support. Many have achieved tertiary qualifications themselves, including Masters and PhDs, and they benefit equally from the community engagement, training and opportunities to support others that the club gives them.

The Home Away from Homework Club (with its new name and logo) will be launching a fundraising program to ensure that it continues to contribute to the successful future of the students who rely on its assistance.

In the coming months you may be asked to support the Homework Club through a direct donation, hosting a small event on our behalf or by providing goods and services for our fundraising purposes. We hope you will give your support and enlist the help of your family, friends and organisations you are involved with, to help us reach our target and continue to strengthen an already world-class program.

If you would like to help the Home Away

from Homework Club, please contact The Centre on (03) 9328 1126 or visit www.centre.org.au/homeworkclub

Home Away from Homework Club is run through The Centre in partnership with the North Melbourne Library. The Centre: Connecting Community in North and West Melbourne is a not-for-profit neighbourhood house and community centre whose mission is to creatively strengthen and support community life for individuals, groups and organisations in order to achieve a stronger, safer and more inclusive community.

Studies providing information:

'Making the most of the Middle Years' and 'Addressing disengagement from schooling through community action networks', by Tom Stehlik, *Journal of Educational Enquiry*, University of South Australia

New energy options in Australia

Kane Webb

Australia, with Germany and South Africa, is a key market for American automotive and energy storage company Tesla, which made its Powerwall battery pack available to us at the beginning of the year.

The Tesla Powerwall is an unobtrusive 7-kilowatt-hour wall-mounted lithium ion battery pack that connects to a solar panel grid to store electricity during the day so it can be used at peak-usage times in the evening, or as an uninterrupted power supply in the case of a blackout. Excess power generated can be 'resold' to energy companies that provide a credit on the bill.

The company quickly received orders to a total value of US\$800 million when it originally unveiled its home and industrial battery packs for America in April 2015. Australians seem equally excited about the technology, with the first Powerwall kits being installed in NSW as soon as they became available in January.

Sydney-based solar installer Natural Solar was the first company listed as a Tesla partner when the Powerwall became available to the Australian market in December last year, and electricity retailers Origin Energy and Simply Energy joined Natural Solar to become the first three official authorised resellers of the 7kWh Powerwall.

Packages are being sold for between \$13,990 and \$16,500 (GST inclusive and with small-scale technology certificate rebates taken into account) and include installation of solar panels and inverter along with the Powerwall.

The Powerwall can connect to existing solar set-ups but there are only two compatible inverters currently on the market, so most existing solar-panel owners will still need to upgrade their inverter. The solar array also needs to be big enough to charge the Powerwall and power your home — 4kWh for most households. The Powerwall and inverter without the solar array will cost between \$12,000 and \$12,500 depending on the inverter.

Whether your Powerwall and solar installation will pay for itself before the warranty ex-

pires will depend on your usage and could also depend on the per-kilowatt rates in your area, but, with potential energy cost savings of over \$1000 a year for particularly efficient households, it might be possible. It would be worth crunching the numbers to see if the Powerwall is economically feasible in your workplace or household.

Tesla plan to establish a purpose-built 'giga-factory' battery manufacturing plant in Nevada by 2017 that they say would reduce their battery costs by 30 per cent. Until then, Panasonic

will be manufacturing the battery cells.

Since releasing its first product, the Roadster, in 2008, Tesla has been moving more and more into larger, more competitive markets at lower price points, so for most of us — especially those without existing solar array installations — it might just be worth sitting back and waiting for the technology to become more affordable and efficient.

For more information about the Tesla Powerwall, check out the company's website at www.teslamotors.com/en_AU/powerwall



Australia has been identified as a key market for energy storage company Tesla

Source: Facebook

A better way for people seeking asylum

Adam Bandt MP

So much of what I love about Melbourne comes from our diversity of culture, language and experience.

Never have I felt more welcome than attending an Iftar dinner in North Melbourne at the end of Ramadan. And when I'm in Richmond I feel proud that we once welcomed 'boat people' from places like Vietnam.

Melbourne would not be the vibrant city we are today and Australia would not be the cosmopolitan country we are today if it weren't for the people who have come from across the seas who now call Australia home. People seeking asylum have been an asset to Australia for generations and will continue to help make our country better and stronger than it has ever been.

We have a proud history of welcoming people to our country and helping those who are in need. At our heart, we are a generous and caring nation. We can welcome people seeking asylum who will help build our communities and contribute to our economy.

Yet, as I write this, we're in the middle of a federal election campaign that has seen our national conversation on refugees and people seeking asylum go from hideously bad to much, much worse.

I did not believe that our current Immigration Minister could sink to further depths in his discussion of some of our world's most vulnerable people, yet now, when Peter Dutton opens his mouth, we're hearing the same vitriol that we associate with the likes of Pauline Hanson.

For a government minister to be making these hateful, offensive, divisive and plainly untrue statements is unthinkable.

The current language in our national conversation is insidious but, what's worse, our government's policies and treatment of people seeking asylum are reprehensible. However, it is not just the Liberals. Labor, the supposed opposition, is in lockstep with the government in its policies of brutal cruelty towards refugees and people seeking asylum.

Together, Labor and the Liberals have locked up people seeking our help in island prisons for years, including children. The government has refused them the health care they've required. They have forced people through so much suffering that they have broken.

It is both heartbreaking and blood-boiling and the worst part is it is unnecessary. I refuse to believe that our decision is between people drowning at sea and people burning.

There is a better way.

We can and must create a safe way for people to seek asylum in Australia, giving them a better option than a boat journey. Families do not want to have to use a people smuggler and, if there is a safer alternative, they will take it. Children don't belong in detention.



Greens representatives march at the Walk Together rally

Photo: courtesy Australian Greens

The Greens have a plan. The other parties' policies have failed and it's up to us to build a better way.

Firstly, we must remove all children and their families from detention immediately, including those in offshore detention and on Nauru. We must shut down the detention camps on Manus Island and Nauru and abolish the inhumane practice of offshore detention.

We can provide safety for 50,000 people. The Greens would increase the number of people Australia helps from 13,750 to 50,000 per year and ensure the fair and efficient assessment of people's refugee claims.

To speed up the process of assessing refugee claims we would give \$500 million to assessment and support organisations in our region.

We will give people access to education and work rights while they wait so their lives aren't put on hold, and we will abolish temporary protection visas and provide permanent protection to people seeking safety.

Every person should be treated with dignity and respect. The Greens want to introduce a 30-day time limit for people held in onshore immigration detention. This is ample time to conduct the necessary checks and to assess their claims for asylum.

To harness the skills and expertise of people seeking asylum the Greens will establish a skilled refugee visa program, creating opportunities for 10,000 people. We would also make it easier for families who are separated across the globe to reunite here in Australia.

Australia has, in the past, led an ambitious and bold regional solution such as the one the Greens are proposing. After the Vietnam War, and under the leadership of former Liberal prime minister Malcolm Fraser, we resettled tens of thousands of Vietnamese people who went on to strengthen the Australian community and economy. We can do it again.

We can treat people the way we would want to be treated while saving lives in our region and enriching our nation. Together we can lead the country towards a better way right here from Melbourne.

Adam Bandt is the Greens Federal Member for Melbourne.

If you care about politics, myVote might help

Michael Hockstein

Over the past couple of months I've been meeting with a few small-business owners and entrepreneurs in Melbourne and the surrounding suburbs. One person in particular is doing something very different and highly relevant to right now.

I met Lisa through a friend who found her online looking for someone to help her complete the final bits of her project — a new political app called myVote.

The idea is a completely impartial political app that will tell you straight-up facts about political parties, representatives and candidates during an election, like the one going on right now. It won't warp words and provide opinions but will very plainly and clearly state the objective facts. In this way you can happily feel informed without worrying about being manipulated.

Lisa had this idea in 2014. She mulled it over for a few weeks, discussing the idea with friends and family, and then just took the plunge. She found an app development compa-

ny that will take you from zero to app store.

This company helped flesh out her idea into user stories, features, look, feel, style and colour scheme. She went forward collecting information for the database, creating surveys for users, designing a logo, figuring out marketing and even filming a brief commercial for myVote.

I asked Lisa what got her over the hump. It's a big commitment to start an app like myVote. She's moved from a full-time position to part-time, only working weekends at her old job, which allows her to work full-time Monday

to Friday on her project. Secondly, she's borrowed and spent a fair bit of money to make this dream a reality.

It has also been a strain on Lisa's personal life. Working seven days a week doesn't leave a lot of time for friends or her partner. She explained why she was so committed:

"There isn't anything else like this out there right now. If I don't do it, someone else will. I care about politics. You can't get involved this deep if you don't love it. I didn't want to see someone else take my idea and create it poorly. I want it done right."

Fatism and the Biggest Loser bias

Bill Adamson

I have to admit to once having been a fatist. That is someone who judges others depending on their size.

My perception was that they were lazy. That they obviously over-indulged in too many party pies and sausage rolls.

At the time I was a beer-guzzling, burger-eating university student who did no exercise beyond running for the occasional train.

The thought process was easy. I was not obese, therefore I was healthy. They were obese, therefore I was healthier than them.

Now, this is a terribly short-sighted and uneducated way of thinking for anyone, let alone a healthcare professional, and it should have been picked up and stamped on by my university.

Unfortunately, healthcare practitioners are just as susceptible to trends in culture as everyone else. A recent study showed that implicit/subconscious bias against obese and overweight people is just as strong in medicos as it is in the general public.

I was fortunate enough to treat an obese woman in the first few weeks after I was released from university. She exercised four to five times a week. She ate stringently. Her blood pressure was normal. Heart was fine. She didn't have diabetes.

This made me rethink a few of my preconceptions and begin to research more deeply about diet, weight and the way our society treats both issues.

Unfortunately, with diets, we simply do not



A sculpture called 'The women of bronze' displaying an emaciated woman and an obese woman as a reaction to body fixation

Photo: sourced from Wikipedia

know enough to give good recommendations. For each article spruiking a vegan/whole-food diet you can find another that spruiks a paleo diet and another two that spruik the Mediterranean diet.

What we do know is that rapid weight loss is bad — really bad.

A follow-on study of the USA's 2009 *Biggest Loser* contestants produced some startling results. Contestants lost between one-third and half of their body weight over around six months during the program. They exercised

four to eight hours a day and severely restricted their caloric intake.

But six years on six of the 14 now weigh more than their starting weight. Seven have put a lot of weight back on and only one is still close to their finishing weight.

However, and this is the important bit, all the contestants have a much slower metabolic rate now than when they began the show.

Danny Cahill, the competition winner, began at 195 kilograms and got down to 86 kilos but now weighs 133 kilos. He has to eat 800

calories less than other 133-kilo men to maintain that weight.

The authors of the study suggest that the body really doesn't like rapid change and will do everything it can to get back to whatever its starting point was.

My other preconception was that if you were fit and healthy you would not be overweight.

Then I found a lengthy article in the *Journal of Internal Medicine* from 2008 that looked at the incidence of raised blood sugars, raised cholesterol or raised blood pressure in obese, overweight and 'healthy' BMI ranges.

Just over half of overweight people and almost a third of obese people are metabolically healthy. That is, they don't have raised cholesterol, blood pressure or blood sugars. However, nearly a quarter of all 'healthy' BMI-ranged people do have raised health indicators.

So what does all this mean?

Weight is complex. Stress, diet, exercise, family history, light levels, sleep levels and exposure to certain chemicals and medications have all been proven to influence weight.

Weight doesn't correlate necessarily with health. But medicos from all fields can fall victim to their own subconscious biases.

Exercise is all-important. If you want to lose weight, great! Do it slowly and incrementally. Exercise makes you healthy.

If you are a skinny, beer-guzzling uni student who doesn't exercise, you should check your genetic luck before you judge outwardly overweight people. They may very well be a lot healthier on real health markers than you are.

The real biggest loser when it comes to societal bias is the truth.

Pharmaceutical drug use in Victoria is rising

Stephanie Filaktatis

Pharmaceutical drugs are on the rise in Victoria, where more people are overdosing on prescription drugs than recreational drugs.

On average, individuals aged 60 and over take five or more drugs, almost four times as many as those aged between 20 and 59.

Despite theorists arguing that recreational drug use differs, such as that heroin is unreasonably framed as a drug that leads to legal problems while cocaine is more likely to exacerbate health and social problems, drugs do not in fact discriminate.

Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) executive officer Sam Biondo said the different portrayals of drugs in some cases present explicit evaluations that are entirely fabricated.

"Drugs do not discriminate and it is merely a conceptualisation," he said. "Claims that there is a rise in recreational drug use are manifested through propaganda. It is completely wrong."

Currently, pharmaceutical drugs are the number one cause of toxicity, and more Australians are dying from drug overdoses than are dying on the roads each year, with an approximately 27 per cent increase.

According to Drug Info Victoria, non-opioid

analgesics such as paracetamol are the third most common drug involved in ambulance attendances, after alcohol and benzodiazepines (minor tranquillisers), in that order.

Over the past year, there have been 358 ambulance attendances in the City of Hume and 261 in the City of Melton, with numbers almost equal for females and males.

Mr Biondo said there were multiple challenges for health professionals in relation to drugs.

"Health professionals are ignorant of one's health lifestyle where they are now over-prescribing drugs; however, health professionals should turn to real solutions," he said.

Limited time dealing with patients and being

bombarded with advertisements from pharmaceutical companies that exaggerate the benefits of their drugs are two major causes of over-prescription. However, Mr Biondo believes there are multiple ways that drugs can be combated.

"A law-and-order approach and decriminalisation are two methods that can be used to combat drugs.

"Look at Norway, for example, and their decriminalisation on drugs. Instead of sending addicts to prison, they are sentencing them to treatment, which will allow them to clear their drug dependency, which, in turn, will decrease their chances of returning to crime. Perhaps this is something Australia should look at," Mr Biondo suggested.

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On the mountain path to Iran's highest peak

Chris Nichols

I had been travelling around Iran solo for three weeks and had a week-and-a-half left on my visa. During those weeks I had heard much praise about the mountains and lush forests of the north, so I decided to spend my remaining time exploring the northern provinces.

A man named Vahid was helping me map out the rest of my Iranian travels. My itinerary had been so impromptu that my plans would change at the drop of a hat. That's how I like to travel. Some think I'm disorganised; I like to think I'm just open to going with the flow.

Vahid said I was all over the place and he wanted to make sure I saw the best sights of his country. The next destination would be Mount Damavand and then I would work my way across the Caspian Sea towards Tabriz and back to Tehran in time for my flight out.

Like most Iranians I had met during my journey, Vahid always kept in contact. He wanted to make sure I was having a good time and keeping safe in his country.

Vahid was supremely confident when he

suggested that I climb Mount Damavand, saying it was a relatively easy climb. I didn't know that Mount Damavand is the highest peak in the Middle East. A week earlier I had been in the country's south, melting in the desert's 40-degree heat, with no plans to be walking in the mountains near a blizzard a week later.

All I had packed in my bag were a few T-shirts and some worn-out sneakers. After lunch, Vahid helped me catch a ride in a share taxi to Polour, a mountain village in the Mazandaran province, and within an hour I was hurtling along the winding, degraded roads weaving through the Alborz Mountains in an old car pumping Persian folk music. As we ascended the air changed, becoming much cooler and purer as the pollution of Tehran was left behind.

On arriving in Polour I searched for somewhere to stay and was directed to an old climbers' federation hostel outside the village. From the hostel you could see the sheer scale of Mount Damavand. Looking up, I laughed to myself in disbelief at Vahid's misplaced confidence in my ability to climb the peak.

A handful of climbers visiting from Poland and Germany were confused as to why I had made the effort to travel there but wasn't

climbing the mountain. They saw me as some unprepared Australian city boy with no experience in mountain climbing.

One way or another I was determined to enjoy the scenery. With a bag packed full of fresh barbari bread, fruit and labneh cheese I set off on my own adventure, following a very basic map sketched out on a scrap of paper. A blue lake was my goal.

The dry, vast landscape transformed as I ascended a deserted road into the mountain. It was late summer and most of the vegetation had dried up, the air was crisp and the light and shadows cast from the passing clouds constantly changed the appearance of the landscape.

At one point a majestic-looking dog came out of nowhere and started to accompany me, its fur weathered by the elements blending with the colours of the mountain. At that time of year the mountains were greyish-brown and bare of vegetation.

I wasn't sure whether the dog had an owner, but it wanted to keep me company. This dog knew all the different paths on the mountain. Sometimes it would run further up the mountain or disappear down a ravine. If I ever decided to veer away from the path, the dog would always lead me back in the right direction.

At this moment I felt as if the mountain had provided me with a guardian. I had recently lost my dog of 17 years and felt comfort in my new companion.

I didn't imagine that the dog would end up following me for several hours on my hike into the mountain, but eventually we reached the blue lake together after hours of walking and entered strange territory. The moment we arrived, the weather began to turn, the clouds grew dark, Mount Damavand was covered in thick cloud and the wind picked up.

The rain started to pour and it was time to turn back. After an hour retracing our steps, a car drove past and two older men offered me a ride to the village. I was hesitant to accept as this would mean leaving my companion behind, but the intensity of the storm was growing so I decided to hop in.

As we started to descend the mountain I could see through the rear window that my canine companion was desperately racing after the car. The two men laughed when they looked behind. The storm grew and our speed increased. It was pretty heart-wrenching to see my new friend chase after us but before long the dog was lost in the distance.



A canine companion joined in on the journey

Photo: Chris Nichols

Designer 3051 burgers at Wonky Trolley

Aaron Rowan-Bell

The Wonky Trolley is hard to miss, sitting bright and cosy on Errol Street. Looking through its open glass storefront you are greeted with flamboyant cartoons of pickles, beef patties and tomatoes. Behind the counter you catch glimpses of the chefs, toiling over hotplates.

It might just be the colour scheme but something about the Wonky Trolley seems oddly reminiscent of Fox Network's *Bob's Burgers*.

On a busy Friday night the space is unavoidably small but, other than being a little over-ambitious with their seating arrangement,

the managers have used it incredibly well.

The whole shop is one room, with the kitchen and register tucked neatly behind a brick divider. The sound of searing meat is the ambience of every conversation. You can almost smell your burger being cut and constructed.

Whatever else the store has in the way of trim is of a minimalist wooden design, refreshing against the boisterous colour scheme.

An especially nice touch is the visual menu, photos attached to spartan wooden slabs showing the restaurant's beef, chicken and vegetarian options.

I ordered the '3051 burger', named for the North Melbourne postcode — double beef, double cheese, free-range bacon, lettuce and

'Wonky sauce' on a brioche bun.

By the time my meal arrived the thick fragrant atmosphere of the Wonky Trolley had driven me into a severe hunger. Needless to say the first bite was extremely satisfying.

The meat was juicy and firm, falling away easily into my mouth. The bacon wasn't too chewy. The lettuce was fresh. The cheese washed in the background and the sauce added sweetness to the burger. However, the most defining taste of the '3051 burger', I realised, was its healthy serving of 'Wonky sauce'.

The patty was cooked medium-rare, as is the new style, something I am learning to live with. The real issue was that the burger meat seemed more or less unseasoned. The brioche was like-

wise bland. More and more I began to focus on that almost singular taste of 'Wonky sauce' — not unsatisfying but disconcerting on its own.

The Wonky Trolley does do a superb chip: crispy on the outside without compromising the fluffy potato inside. Alongside their aioli dip it made a welcome addition.

All in all the Wonky Trolley makes a good simple burger with a gourmet sauce. Personally it's not my style of burger, but that didn't seem to stop any of the many other patrons enjoying their own.

The Wonky Trolley is definitely worth a look. With its funky colour scheme, charming decor and solid burger it might just have you coming back for more.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Opportunities for artists at Langford120

Wilma Tabacco

Since its launch in mid-2011, Langford120 has become an active hub of visual engagement in what is often described as a 'New York-style' gallery warehouse space in the heart of North Melbourne's iconic former industrial zone.

A short walk from Macaulay Station, with splendid vistas of the railway line and CityLink overpass, the gallery on busy Langford Street provides an oasis of light, space and up-to-the minute contemporary artwork for enjoyment and contemplation.

The gallery exhibits and promotes a variety of work by local, interstate and international artists including those from the Middle East, England, the USA and Hong Kong. Langford120 hosts month-long exhibitions of paintings, drawings, installations, photography, digital images, ceramics and sculptural works, attracting visitors and collectors from far afield.

Irene Barberis and I are the gallery directors. We are both committed artists with an extensive and diverse exhibiting history both in Australia and internationally.

We have established and continue to maintain successful independent artistic practices. We have also contributed significantly to arts education through academic work in various Australian and international universities, most recently at RMIT University, working in research, painting and drawing and with national and overseas postgraduate supervisions at PhD level. Both Irene and I have participated in RMIT's offshore program in Hong Kong since 1999.

We have known each other since 1986, have



The gallery space at Langford120

Photo: courtesy Langford120

been lecturing colleagues since 1992 and have collaborated on several exhibitions including a major travelling exhibition, *Saying it with Flowers*, shown at the Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia; Geelong Art Gallery; Ballarat Fine Art Gallery; University Gallery, Tasmania; Albury Regional Art Gallery; and RMIT Gallery (1998–99).

Our most recent adventure, to establish and operate Langford120, resulted from many discussions about what we perceived to be limited opportunities for established artists

like ourselves to exhibit in professionally run galleries. We wanted to exhibit a variety of experimental works by both established and 'emerging' artists.

Langford120 is also 'home base' for artistic endeavours organised through the auspices of MetaSenta and the Global Centre for Drawing. Dr Barberis, the creator and director of both, has mounted many exhibitions of drawings by Australian artists in New York, Florence, London and Dubai as well as various venues in Australia.

Ongoing cultural exchanges via exhibitions, seminars, international conferences and publications, which have been the focal activities of the Global Centre for Drawing, will continue into the future.

MetaSenta is a vital, compact arts research hub, which functions internationally between universities and the wider arts and business communities. It does this by linking, networking and initiating high-quality and influential international art research projects, which have high-impact outcomes, in an interdisciplinary context.

MetaSenta also publishes a variety of artists' books available for purchase through Langford120. Its most recent publication, *Contemporary Australian Drawing*, a survey of artworks by 78 Australian artists, published by Palgrave Macmillan and authored by Dr Janet McKenzie, was launched at Langford120 in 2012.

In August the gallery directors are delighted to feature the work of West Melbourne artist Magda Cebokli in her exhibition *An Analysis of Variance*.

Magda's works are finely-tuned, intellectual configurations of subtly-coloured abstract forms that play with one's visual sensibilities. Beautifully rendered surfaces combine with crisp geometries to seduce the viewer into seeing what is not actually depicted. These works need to be viewed to be fully appreciated. Magda is a renowned, experienced artist whose works are included in significant collections of contemporary art.

Showing at the same time will be works by P.J. Hickman and Sophia Errey.

Exhibition Calendar May–August

28 May – 26 June, opening 28 May

Wendy Kelly, Geometric Progressions

Max White, As It Appears

Carole Wilson, Field Notes Penang

2 July – 31 July, opening 2 July

Wendy Stavrianos, Silent Rooms and Portals to Uncertain Shores

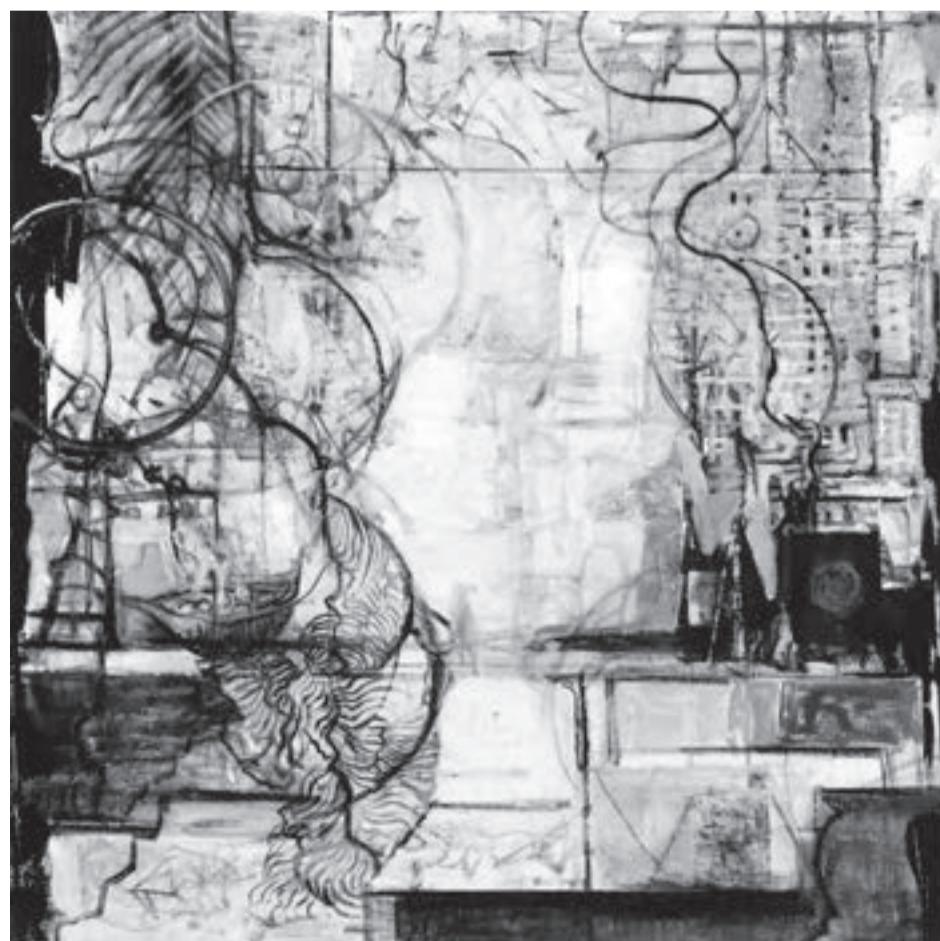
Tom McMahon, A New World

6 August – 4 September, opening 6 August

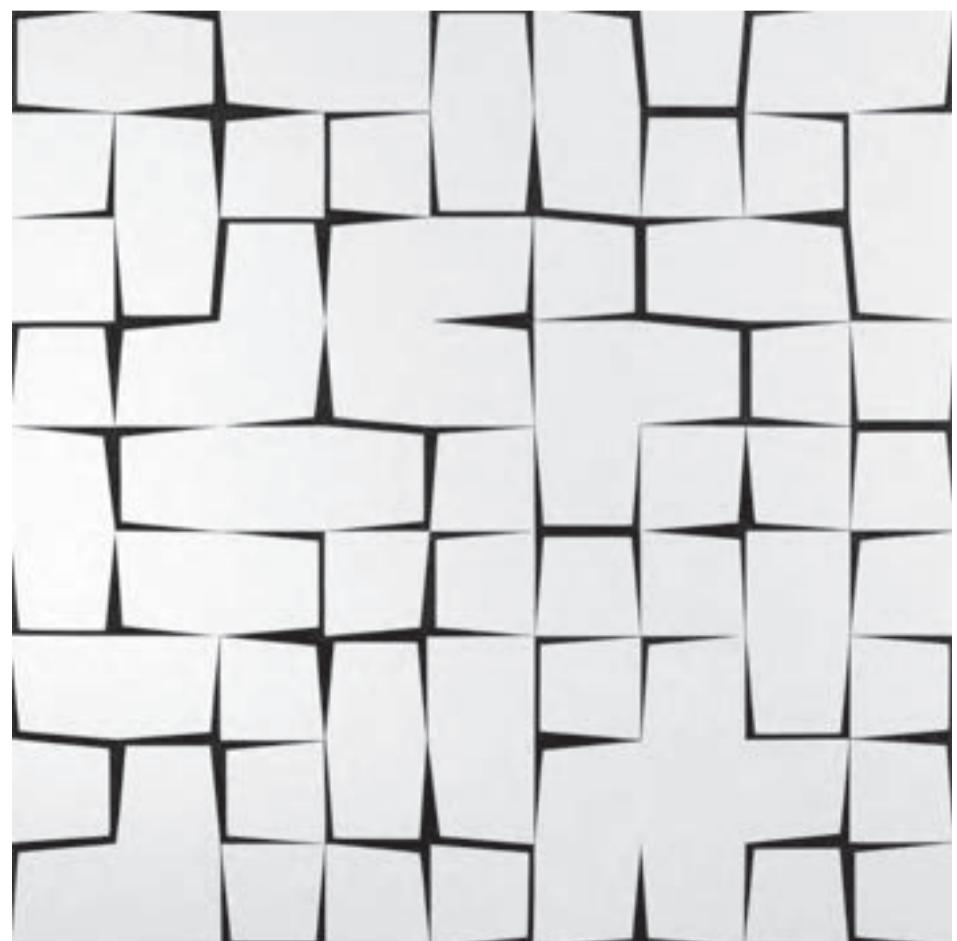
Magda Cebokli, An Analysis of Variance

P.J. Hickman, Less than minimum

Sophia Errey, THROUGH (Vocatus atque non vocatus)



Transformed by Time by Wendy Stavrianos



Fractured by Magda Cebokli

Between the Covers

Chris Saliba

Comfort Zone

Lindsay Tanner
(Scribe. RRP: \$29.99)



Former Labor member for Melbourne and finance minister Lindsay Tanner makes his fiction debut with *Comfort Zone*, a gritty inner-city crime novel with heart.

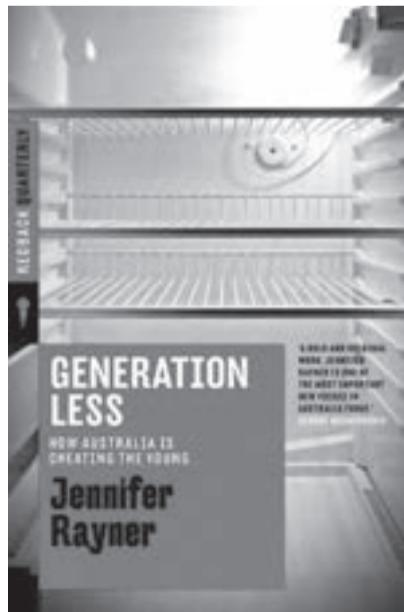
Jack van Duyn is a middle-aged cab driver. Single and childless, with few if any real friends, he lives alone in his crusty flat and tries to blame his misery on others: refugees and the unmerited rich. Life has left Jack behind and he considers himself a loser. However, things are about to change.

One day he picks up a young hotshot banker named Matthew Richards. The pair witness two Somali kids getting attacked. Jack and Matt intervene to help. The mother, Farhia, is close by and Jack finds himself mesmerised by her beauty. As Jack tries to help Farhia out, he gets drawn into the complicated world of Somali politics. Meanwhile, he faces trouble on another front. Matt, the young banker, drags him into the gritty underworld of drug dealers.

Lindsay Tanner's debut is an entertaining crime novel set in Carlton, full of local colour. While it's essentially a crime yarn, *Comfort Zone* is also a sympathetic portrait of a middle-aged man that society has left behind, but who manages to find his better self through acts of kindness.

Generation Less: How Australia is Cheating the Young

Jennifer Rayner
(Black Inc. RRP: \$19.99)



Jennifer Rayner is a Labor Party staffer and writer. *Generation Less* examines

the entrenched economic disadvantage experienced by Australia's young. The age group that the book concentrates on is the 18–30-year-old bracket: those in tertiary education through to graduates armed with degrees working in precarious jobs and trying to get a foothold in the property market.

The statistics say it all in this very accessible work. On all economic indicators young people trying to get ahead are far worse off than previous generations. They're going backwards in terms of earnings, they carry huge amounts of debt (including HECS), and out-of-control property prices make home ownership more and more unlikely.

With such grim prospects, it's little wonder that 'generation less' also experience many mental-health problems. The future is uncertain and full of anxiety.

The only way to even up this intergenerational inequality, according to Rayner, is through government policy. She urges young people to be politically engaged and demand intervention. She even makes a strong point for joining a union — employees protected by unions get better pay and conditions.

Generation Less makes for urgent reading. The social consequences of such inequality are unsustainable in a healthy democracy.

Wolfie the Bunny

Ame Dyckman
Illustrated by Zachariah OHora
(Anderson Press. RRP: \$19.99)



When the Bunny family arrive home one day they find an interesting bundle sitting on their front steps: a baby wolf, resting in a little basket with a rug over him. The parents, Mama and Papa, are enchanted and keep the baby, whom they call Wolfie. However, one member of the Bunny family has reservations. Young Dot is sure Wolfie can't be trusted and will eat them all up.

Mama and Papa continue to be enchanted with Wolfie. He can't put a foot wrong. He also loves his diet of carrots. In fact, he's eaten so many of them he's become quite big. This only makes Dot increasingly anxious. She thinks Wolfie will soon move from carrots to bunnies.

When the family runs out of carrots, Wolfie and Dot take a shopping trip to the Carrot Patch Co-Op for more supplies. There they bump into a huge bear. All is set for a terrifying confrontation, until an unsuspected hero saves the day.

Ame Dyckman's text makes for a hilarious story, with the tension building as poor Dot can't trust the cute yet disturbingly toothy Wolfie. Zachariah OHora's illustrations are wonderfully humorous, bringing many a chuckle with his depictions of Wolfie.

0–3 years

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

Music Reviews

Paul & Maria from Heartland Records

RSD 2016 RELEASES

Rather than the usual couple of reviews, we thought this time round we would do an overview of some of the exclusive releases for Record Store Day 2016, or RSD as it's commonly known as. This is an annual event that takes place on the third Saturday of April and is designed to bring attention to small independent record stores around the world by having exclusive releases made available just for that day.

What started out in 2007 as an idea based on Free Comic Book Day has grown to become the biggest day of the year for participating stores. Each year there are exclusive records available for the day, some cool and collectable, some strange and some that aren't even records. Below is a small selection of some of the 600 releases for this year.



On the pop/rock front this year's most desired releases included three by David Bowie, the top pick being *The Man Who Sold the World* picture disc LP, which replicated the original unique German artwork.

Creedence Clearwater Revival also impressed with their 1969 archive deluxe box set containing their first three albums housed in unique covers. The set contains 3 x 7-inch EPs, 3 x CDs, a poster book and bumper sticker. Probably the most impressive release this year and a great instant collection if you don't already have any CCR in your life.

Historically speaking The Doors' *Live at the Aquarius Theatre – the First Performance* was probably this year's most important release. On vinyl for the first time, this 3LP set includes the show plus a rare sound check and comes in a numbered gatefold cover, pressed on high-quality audiophile vinyl, and the sound is amazing.

Yet our personal pick from this year's Record Store Day has to be Patti Smith's *Horses: Live at Electric Lady Studios*. Patti and band returned to the Electric Lady Studios 40 years to the day after the original *Horses* album was recorded and played the album from start to finish in front of a select audience. The songs still sound as fresh and relevant today as they did in 1975. Her performance is spot-on and enhanced with some poetry and a namecheck to friends of hers no longer with us.



Meanwhile, heading up the top heavy-rock/metal releases for Record Store Day has to be the first vinyl release of *The Elephant Riders* by Clutch. Pressed on red 180g vinyl and spread over two discs that play at 45 rpm for better quality, it sounds far superior to the CD version.

Scumdogs of the Universe by American metal act Gwar received a long-overdue re-pressing and just for the occasion it came in a limited edition pop-up gatefold cover so you get something to play with whilst listening to the album.

Iron Maiden made their RSD debut this year with a 12-inch picture disc of 'Empire of the Clouds' taken from their latest album, *The Book of Souls*. Never a band to do things by half measures it comes in a numbered gatefold cover and looks extremely impressive and very cool.

This year's RSD ambassadors were Metallica, who chose to release a live CD recorded at Le Bataclan, Paris, in 2011 with all proceeds being donated to the Give for France benefit. Nice gesture but why a CD? Why not release it on vinyl?

Soundtracks are always well represented and this year was no exception. Clint Mansell & The Kronos Quartet's haunting score to the Darren Aronofsky cult movie *Requiem for a Dream* is essential and includes extended versions of some of the pieces. Tyler Bates's score for *John Wick* gets its first vinyl release on gunmetal-coloured vinyl (what else?) and also includes a previously unreleased Marilyn Manson track.

Yet the top-seller on the day was, perhaps not surprisingly, the *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* Millennium Falcon 10-inch picture disc single. These flew out the door, almost literally.



Another notable Record Store Day release in this genre is electronic artist Xiu Xiu reinterpreting the music of *Twin Peaks*. This sold out worldwide almost immediately but, fear not, it is getting a standard release in June.

Other soundtracks released for Record Store Day included *Across The Universe*, The Beatles related 2LP set on coloured vinyl, and an accompanying album for the film *How to Train Your Dragon*, if that's your thing.

The prize for quirky release this year has to go to New York rappers Run the Jewels. If Metallica appeared to take their eye off the ball by releasing a CD, then Run the Jewels weren't even looking in the first place. Their release was essentially a cardboard virtual-reality viewfinder with an attached download card to obtain music to go with the images. Strange, but even stranger still they sold out straightaway.

This is just a small selection of the titles available. As usual there were plenty of 7-inch and 10-inch releases, many of which we still have in store if you care to drop by for a look. For more information on RSD check out the website www.recordstoreday.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

www.northandwestmelbournenews.com

Comedy

Tommy Little & 5 Other Comedians | The Comics Lounge, 26 Errol Street, North Melbourne | 15 June | 8:00pm

Dave Hughes & 5 Other Comedians | The Comics Lounge | 24 June | 8:00pm

Gab Rossi & 5 Other Comedians | The Comics Lounge | 29 June – 2 July | 8:00pm – 10:30pm

Dave Thornton & 5 Other Comedians | The Comics Lounge | 6 July | 8:00pm

Jimeoin & 5 Other Comedians | The Comics Lounge | 1 & 2 August | 8:00pm

Jeff Green & 5 Other Comedians | The Comics Lounge | 3 August | 8:00pm

Adam Richard & 5 Other Comedians | The Comics Lounge | 10 August | 8:00pm

Dennis Carnahan's Rugby League – The Musical | The Comics Lounge | 19 August | 8:00pm

Exhibitions

Andrew Seward – The Studio | Gallerysmith, 170 – 174 Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne | 26 May – 9 July

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

Wendy Kelly – Geometric Progressions, Max Lawrence White – As It Appears, Carole Wilson – Field Notes Penang | Langford 120, 120 Langford Street, North Melbourne | 28 May – 26 June

Richard Knauf | Gallerysmith Project Space, First Floor, 170 – 174 Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne | 18 June | 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Wendy Stavrianos & Tom McMahon | Langford 120 | 2 – 31 July | Opening function 2 July | 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Festivals

Taste of Portugal – Cultural Festival | Queen Victoria Market, Cnr Queen & Therry streets | 12 June | 9:00am – 4:00pm

Winterfest – Theatre & Entertainment Festival | The Courthouse Hotel, 86 – 90 Errol Street, North Melbourne | 2, 3 & 4 July | 6:00pm – 11:00pm | Keep an eye out for Winterfest activities hosted by local traders

New Beginnings Fair: Workshop and Speakers | Laurens Hall, 183 Laurens Street, North Melbourne | 19 August | 10:00am – 8:00pm

Theatre

Australian Burlesque Festival | Wonderland Spiegeltent, Harbour Town, 101 Waterfront Way, Docklands

Funfair Circus	9 June	8:00pm – 11:00pm
Empress Royale	10 June	8:00pm – 11:00pm
The Big Tease	11 June	8:00pm – 11:00pm
Baby Bombshells	12 June	8:00pm – 11:00pm

Echoes of the Mind by Indefinite Dance Company | Meat Market, 3 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne | 11 June | 7:00pm – 9:00pm | 12 June | 4:00pm – 6:00pm & 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Music

Northlane & In Hearts Wake – The Equinox Tour | Festival Hall | 12 June | 6:45pm

Steel Panther | Festival Hall | 18 June | 8:00pm

Kyary Pamyu Pamyu – Five Years Monster World Tour | Festival Hall | 25 June | 8:00pm

Kearnage | Festival Hall | 16 July | 6:00pm

Asterix | Meat Market | 24 July | 3:00pm

RuPaul's Drag Race – Battle of the Seasons 2016 Extravaganza Tour | Festival Hall | 1 July | 8:00pm

MaRLo – Altitude | Festival Hall | 6 August | 7:00pm

Community Events

Game of Rhones | Meat Market | 18 June | 1:00pm – 6:00pm

Inside the Brick – Lego Expo | Meat Market | 25 & 26 June | 9:00am – 5:00pm

Biggest Morning Tea | North Melbourne Library, 66 Errol Street, North Melbourne | 5 July | 10:00am – 12:00pm

Indian Vegetarian Cooking Workshop | North Melbourne Language & Learning, Ground Floor, 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne | 21 July | 6:00pm – 8:30pm

To have your event listed here please email: nwmnews@centre.org.au