



Wattle shows off spring fashions

Many of us have been enjoying the golden gift of wattle in bloom, particularly in Royal Park, but may not be familiar with the less common red wattle.

Two years ago the City of Melbourne relaunched Gardiner Reserve, planting a diverse mix of native shrubs and many trees. Among the latter were several rare red wattles (*Acacia leprosa* 'Scarlet Blaze'). Photograph: Jan Lacey



Lilly takes our streets in her stride

Zoe Sheridan

Have you seen the lamb on a leash on the Errol Street reserve? Or perhaps you've spotted her skipping along Errol Street? If so, you haven't gone bleating mad.

Lilly the lamb is staying with local family, the Burrows – Wendy, David and daughter Lani.

"We own a little farm near Macedon, and one of our sheep recently gave birth to twins," David says.

The ewe abandoned one of the newborn lambs in the paddock. A sheep will often reject a lamb, especially if one of twins or triplets.

"It seems the mother didn't want to look after both her babies," Wendy says.

"Two little girls who were holidaying on the farm with their mum brought the lamb inside and kept her in the bathtub overnight, putting milk on their fingers to encourage it to suck. They got her through the night, which was spectacular."

Unable to fend for itself, the tiny lamb was taken to the Burrows' North Melbourne home. Wendy says it was easy to come up with a name for their woolly guest. "Lilly was one of the girls who had cared for her that night, so we named the lamb after her."

After Lilly became a regular at the Errol Street park, she acquired celebrity status via the North Melbourne Good Karma Network Facebook group. "I posted some of the cute things she did at home and it created a sensation. Lilly's fame just blossomed," Wendy says.

"Children just love to pat her and feed her, and she brings them so much pleasure," Wendy says.

However, it seems not every North Melbourneite is au fait with farm animals. "Some people have stopped us in the street and asked, 'Where did you get that goat?'. I can't believe people have never seen a lamb."

For others, Lilly is a warming link with their childhood. "Some people say, 'I grew up in the country and it's



Lilly with David and Wendy Burrows and friends.



great to see a lamb in town," David says.

Lilly has become so popular that locals are queuing up to mind her in their backyards. It seems it takes a village to raise a lamb. "People take her in for a few days and she's such a hit with the kids," Wendy says.

She is reassuring about Lilly's future.

"She'll end up out in the paddock and one day she'll have her own little lambs. But now she's just acquiring a taste for grass and working out who she is. We've got two dogs and she thinks she's the third!"

Wendy plans to write a children's book for charity and to call it *Lilly Doesn't Like Grass*. "It will tell Lilly's story, about how she came to town, met all these people and slowly learnt to eat grass," she says.

The proceeds of the book will go towards supporting women and children who have to leave situations of domestic violence. A specific aim is to support the care of their displaced pets.

The inspiration came when a woman fleeing domestic violence with her two children arrived at David and Wendy's farm with seven suitcases and stacks of plastic bags.

"It was heartbreaking. She had nowhere else to go."

Zoe Sheridan is a new contributor to the News.



Toys a transition to hope

Laura Misale

Frances McMillan is co-lead of the Workout Program at the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre (JLTC, Corrections Victoria) in West Melbourne.

The centre, named after a prominent advocate of prisoner resettlement, provides a supervised pathway back into society for selected prisoners nearing the end of their sentence.

"Because we call it the Workout Program, they sometimes think they're coming in to lift weights, but really they're learning to 'work out' how to get a job," Frances says.

In the six-week program, Frances develops the men's resume-writing and social skills while Louise Cindric teaches them computer literacy. All have applied to be part of the group and use the North Melbourne Library and The Centre in Errol Street as places for meeting and learning.

Frances says the men walk into the program with a lost sense of who they are but leave saying they feel like people again. "If you've been out of the workforce and in jail for years, you're not quite up to speed."

Things changed dramatically when COVID lockdowns forced this community-minded program behind closed doors. "The men were supposed to be having family visits and suddenly they were confined to a small area with other guys they didn't know," Frances says.

Something new had to be found for the men. Frances admits she didn't know how they would deal with the resulting emotional issues and she knew that a tokenistic arts and crafts program wouldn't work.

However, a discussion with the men and a breakfast meeting with friends gave her a brainwave. "It dawned on me that I should get construction kits for kids' toys and the guys could assemble them.



A toy made for children in foster care.

Photograph: Judy Lazarus Transition Centre

Then we could pack them up and send them to children in foster care," Frances says.

When her friends, and others in the Brunswick Women's Choir, pitched in with construction kits from Lego and Meccano, she gave them to the men with some reading material noting the recent increase of children requiring foster care. The project was soon rolling.

"The guys were happily working on their models when a case manager, surprised by how busy and engaged they were, asked what they were doing. One of the fellows turned round, puffed out his chest, and said, 'We're making toys for disadvantaged kids,'" Frances says with pride.

"They wrapped them up in cellophane and put notes like 'I hope you enjoy this toy', then we presented them to family service organisation Berry Street to be given to their kids. Berry Street were thrilled because their children often arrive with just a broken piece of a toy."

While recent lockdowns affected the morale of the men in the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre, they know there are little kids doing it tougher and that they have made a difference to them.

The success of Frances' program is that the men now feel that they are part of the community.

Laura Misale writes regularly for the News.

Spring Fling flung – but there's still fun on the way

It is with a heavy heart that The Centre has cancelled Spring Fling for the second straight year.

With continuing restrictions, snap lockdowns, the Delta variant wreaking havoc and vaccinations a way off 70 per cent coverage, the sad reality is it is just not feasible to plan to gather together.

The Centre was working towards a vibrant and diverse offering on October 16. More than 60 expressions of interest were submitted to be part of the festivities. Park that enthusiasm – there will be a time!

Spring Fling Plan B was to run a series of smaller events in different parts of North and West Melbourne – a festival deconstructed – but even that has become impractical. We continue to keep a flame burning for a gathering in Errol Street towards the end of the year but, at time of publication, it would be foolhardy to confirm that now.

Not all is lost! Spring will fling itself, so let's enjoy the warmer weather and be creative within the bounds of restrictions.

Dog Show

The Dog Show has been a fan favourite in many a Spring Fling. In 2021, we will keep that tradition alive with 'Dress Up Your Dog' on Saturday and Sunday, 16 and 17 October.

Whatever the restrictions at the time, you can:

- Create a special outfit for your precious pooch (drop by The Centre at 58 Errol Street if you need some materials)
- Give your dog (and yourself) some exercise to show off your outfit
- Wink and wave at any other dressed up dogs

- Take a few photos and/or videos and upload them to Instagram [@springflingfestival](https://www.instagram.com/springflingfestival)
- Prizes of gift packs from North Melbourne pet supplies shop Paw Principality will be awarded for:
- Best dog outfit
- Best combined dog-owner dress sense
- Best trick
- Longest drool

Human Library Project

Join in this empowering project where you get to tell your story. The workshop series helps people find their voice and be confident sharing about themselves. Over eight weeks with presenters Dorcas Maphakela (Oz African TV), Guido Melo (writer/speaker), Dr Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara (psychologist) and Dr Priya Srinivasan (artist/changemaker/writer), participants will learn to break through perceptions, gain resilience, understand themselves and how to present in person and to camera.

If you are curious to hear your neighbours' extraordinary stories, there be get a chance to hear them at a Human Library event or to follow online later in 2021.

Flag Competition

Show your community pride and design a flag for the suburbs of North and West Melbourne.

What does this neighbourhood mean to you? How can you represent this visually?

The chosen flag will be flown from the flagpole in the reserve at the corner of Hawke and Victoria Streets, right on the border between North Melbourne and West Melbourne.

Leading vexillologist Ralph Bartlett will lead an informative and hands-on workshop at 2pm on Saturday 13 November to help you understand the practical elements of creating a flag. Book through The Centre.

An expert judging panel will choose the winning design, which will be printed at West Melbourne's own flag printers, Evans & Evans. The winner will also receive a \$100 voucher to spend at local shops.

Other prizes awarded for:

- People's Choice (\$50 voucher)
- Best Design by under 15 (\$25 voucher)

Entries close 21 November.

Give the Gift of Spring

Spring is about renewal. The rejuvenating nature around us helps create a sense of optimism, even if our freedoms are restricted.

Share the spirit of spring by giving gifts to people in our neighbourhood.

Whether it is a flower in bloom, something you've ordered online or something of yours you no longer use, wrap it up and leave it somewhere public for others to find.

See a gift on your exercise walks? Feel free to pick it up, or perhaps you know someone in the community who would really value it – drop it at their doorstep (contactless delivery of course!).

If there are times when people in North or West Melbourne go into isolation, get in touch with The Centre and we will organise some special gifts for those people in our community doing it tough.

These activities are supported by North & West Precinct Association, City of Melbourne and the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

Mission hands out food relief with a hand up to the needy

Joey Rebakis

Hotham Mission is a faith-based, non-profit organisation that provides food relief, education support and other programs to assist people in need in North Melbourne.

For more than 100 years, it has served the community by providing outreach and support to some of the most marginalised groups in our community.

Many residents of North Melbourne are relatively comfortable. Others, through no fault of their own, are doing it tough and are struggling to cover the bills. They might even find it hard to put food on the table.

Hotham Mission has consistently been active, throughout the pandemic and the various

lockdowns, with a core program that is providing food to many local households each week.

At the Mission, we realise that food relief is not merely about giving people sustenance to keep

body and soul together. It is also a mark of respect, and that's why we focus on providing culturally appropriate food.

Since early last month, Mission staff member Danielle Johnson has been working tirelessly, often on her own, packing the 120 food bags we provide to local people in need, including those in mandatory high-rise isolation.

"We help out many people in our community – public housing residents, the homeless, international students, asylum seekers and refugees, older people and those in isolation. It's so rewarding to know we're helping many families that are doing it tough," Danielle said.

There is nothing glamorous about lugging boxes around on a cold

morning, especially under social distancing restrictions. However, knowing that we are helping people and providing nourishing food makes it all worthwhile.

Hotham Mission thanks our many supporters that enable us to continue this vital service. They include Foodbank Victoria, Mark the Evangelist Uniting Church and partner congregations, Feed Appeal and Scalzo Food.

Joey Rebakis is community development coordinator at Hotham Mission.

Want to know more?

Check Hotham Mission's website www.hothammission.org.au and Facebook page. You are invited to support the Mission's Give Now program.



Students find fun in classic comedy

Rose Bisignano

The Grade 6 students at North Melbourne Primary were excited when artistic director Rosa Campagnaro recently arrived at the school as our artist-in-residence.

Rosa came to us as part of an initiative by Creative Arts Victoria and Regional Arts Victoria to employ artists to work within schools.

The project's aim at North Melbourne Primary was to introduce *Commedia dell'Arte*, an Italian masked comedy, as part of our wider curriculum and our Italian, drama, art and PE classes.

Commedia was at the peak of its popularity in 16th century Italy. It is the basis of many of today's modern comedies and allows students to empathise with different cultures.

Commedia viewed social and political issues through a satirical lens. Our students took the cue and improvised characters around climate change. They planned a performance with created characters trying to save their Venetian pizzeria from rising waters.

The project began with an introduction to *Commedia* through a performance of *Venice in Love* by actors from the Make A Scene company.

Students then participated in drama workshops that incorporated Italian language and culture. They learnt about the performance's style and characters and the physicality *Commedia* comic masks create.

The children enthusiastically engaged in art classes, making *Commedia* character masks, then, under the guidance of circus-



Students practising their circus skills.

comedy performers from Dummies Corps, learned slapstick and tumbling skills.

Artistic director Rosa Campagnaro was thrilled with the project's success and pointed to many positive outcomes. "The highlight for me was the students' smiles and Italian greetings I heard in the school yard," she said.

"Their energetic involvement, from creating their own masks to independently choreographing gymnastic routines, has really inspired me."

Teachers were also delighted with the project's success. "It was wonderful. The children were hugely entertained and they had their imagination challenged," visual art teacher Melissa Drew said.

PE teacher Mark Quinn knew the project was worthwhile when he heard a student say: "I didn't think



A character mask for Commedia dell'Arte.

I'd ever see someone act a scene of driving a bus into a fly until I saw it!"

Rose Bisignano teaches Italian at North Melbourne Primary and coordinated the artist-in-residence project.

Give a gift to help others through these hard times

Once it became clear that this present lockdown was not going to be short-term, The Centre has been working with other local agencies on addressing areas of community need.

We are focusing our efforts on keeping children and young people engaged, in positive spirits and looking after their mental health.

I am sure many of us can identify with boredom, frustration, lack of social connection and a sense of uncertainty.

Some households have additional challenges that make it harder to deal with lockdown. Many families in our suburbs:

- do not have a cupboard full of toys
- do not have unlimited internet
- do not have a device for each person
- are living in close quarters.

The Centre is playing a coordinating role, reaching out to the local North and West Melbourne community to match those in need with those who can assist.

Requested include:

- musical instruments
- sports equipment
- maths games, calculators
- accessible sport/exercise info
- paints, paint brushes
- raffia and instructions to learn traditional Aboriginal weaving
- material and sewing kits
- packs of cards
- masks (animals, cartoons, heroes)

- face paints (washable)
- mini versions of books
- balloons
- halal lollies/biscuits
- colouring books with no lines
- colour pencils/textas
- educational colouring activities about COVID-19
- merch/content made by local community figures (REMi/Kaiit/Sampa)
- books in a variety of languages
- books with diverse representation of characters

These goods can be store-bought, home-made or pre-loved. If pre-loved, please ensure that they are in good condition, complete and sanitised. If home-made or pre-loved, please consider including a note to the recipient, perhaps explaining how much they were valued in your household.

Bring goods to The Centre for contactless drop-off (on your daily exercise or supermarket trip):

- Thursdays 4pm-6pm
- Sundays 2pm-4pm

Please consider donating funds so that The Centre can buy toys, stationery, internet data, Melbourne Community Toy Library memberships, and online lessons in music and other creative arts

Donate at: www.trybooking.com/au/donate/lockdown. All donations will be used to assist local families.

Community Comment

Zoe Sheridan asked four of her best friends who they would choose as their ideal dinner guest.



Marshall, wine merchant, West Melbourne

I'd choose Nelson Mandela. He'd be so good to talk with. He was a great leader and so inspirational. He overcame personal tragedies and made lasting and positive change.



Luke, small business owner, West Melbourne

I'd invite my dog, Walter, out for dinner. I've felt for a long while that he's been looking for the opportunity to talk. I'm sure he'd bring sparkling conversation to the table.



Josie, politics student, North Melbourne

I'd ask my mum and sister back in Sweden. It's so long since I've seen them. I'd tell Mum about my life and I'd talk to my sister about her cats, Abba and Ikea.



Cameron, business director, North Melbourne

I'd like to have dinner with my Uber Eats drivers. They seem to know far too much about me, and I think it's time I found out a little more about them.

Hopping into fitness

Geoff Pound

Xuan Wang is the enthusiastic coordinator of Kangatraining in West Melbourne.

When she developed back soreness from carrying her first baby on her back in a sling carrier, she shared her problem on social media. Many new mothers urged her to check out Kangatraining and the manduca baby carrier in which the baby is cradled safely in front while also providing comfort to the wearer.

Xuan acted on this advice and found it changed her life.

“My husband and I don’t have families in Melbourne so wearing the manduca has proved to be our saviour. We need all the hands we can use,” she says.

The turning point for Xuan came when she visited a pregnancy expo and saw Kangatraining instructors carrying their babies in their carriers. “They all looked so radiant and I immediately thought that I wanted to look like that, so fit and full of energy,” she says.

Kangatraining originated in Austria in 2008 after founder Nicole Pascher wondered how she could achieve a quality workout and have her new baby with her. The result was a safe and effective program for new mums and their babies. Kangatraining (the name comes from A. A. Milne’s character in *Winnie the Pooh*) has since taken off in more than 20 countries.

Xuan saw that becoming a Kangatraining instructor provided a perfect way for her to accomplish her vocational goals while also supporting other mums and their babies. She glows as she lists the benefits of Kangatraining.

“Six weeks after giving birth and the health providers give mothers the green light, Kangatraining strengthens what has been weakened during pregnancy and birth. It offers a safe and gentle way to recover. It provides a special bonding experience between the mum and the baby,” she says.

“New mums don’t have to go through the hassle of getting a



Getting in the swing at Kangatraining.

babysitter while having their gentle workout. The weekly program also gets you out of the house and you meet other mums and their bubs. Dads are also welcome to participate with their new babies.”

A typical Kanga session starts with a gentle warm up with babies held in the arms. Some floor exercises follow on a yoga mat with the babies lying nearby. They are then

popped into their carriers and music provides the vibe while the mums do some light squatting , lunging and arm exercises.

After the mothers finish up with some stretching, there’s always an informal ‘circle chat’ for participants to discuss the many topics that concern a new parent.

Kangatraining had a successful local launch at the West Melbourne

Baptist Community Centre until the recent lockdown intervened.

There’s certainly a demand for the venture. The local baby boom, which the Premier has cheekily suggested was due to last year’s long lockdown, has produced so many local joeys!

Geoff Pound is minister of the West Melbourne Baptist Church.

Lockdown runs inspire a dance full of ideas

Anna Greig

Leading Australian contemporary choreographer Lucy Guerin’s contemporary dance company is based in WXYZ Studios on Dryburgh Street, North Melbourne.

She set up Lucy Guerin Inc in 2002 to create and tour new dance works and has seen the studio evolve into a hub for the independent dance scene in Melbourne. The company taps into the many local independent dancers and holds talks, classes, residencies and workshops for dancers, choreographers and others interested in dance.

Lucy admits that lockdown restrictions meant her ideas and creativity have been influenced by daily life and our local area. On her regular runs with her partner around the huge grass circle at Royal Park, she started thinking about the coordination and cooperation involved in this simple recreational activity.

“He’s a bit fitter and faster than me, so I don’t like to hold him back. I like to let him go ahead and then I get left behind and then I catch up,” she says.



Lucy Guerin working at home.

Lucy explains how this mindset sparked a dance piece.

“I was thinking about how we need to give each other freedom, but at the same time we also need

to be considerate and sometimes wait for them to come along with us,” she says.

“How do we exist with each other and maintain our individual

identities while also allowing space for other people?”

She is currently halfway into the development of her latest dance work, *How To Be Us*, a 15-minute piece commissioned by the Australian Ballet Company as part of its Dance X Festival. She can’t reveal what the final piece will look like because, as she happily admits, she isn’t sure yet.

Lucy explains her rehearsal process usually begins with her bringing “too many” ideas into the studio to try out with the dancers. “It’s less about bringing in an idea and executing it as it is bringing in several beginning points. Then working in the studio and the physicalisation of those ideas really changes them. It generally takes things in a very different direction.”

Being based in North Melbourne has proven to be an advantage, and Lucy says the Melbourne City Council is really supportive of the arts. There is also the nearby Meat Market and the Arts House, where the company presents many of its works.

What about those among us who haven’t previously seen much, or perhaps any, contemporary

or experimental dance? What if we’re unsure if we’ll be able to understand what we’re seeing?

Lucy assures any doubters that we are all much better equipped than we imagine. She believes that a dance piece can affect us in many ways – intellectual, visual, kinaesthetic and emotional. “I think the audiences that are new to dance can really trust their responses,” she says.

“However an audience member connects with dance, I think it’s really valuable. It enters each person in a different way, depending on their own personal history.”

Anna Greig is a new contributor to the News.

Want to know more?

Dance piece How To Be Us will feature at the Australian Ballet’s Dance X Festival. Dates will be confirmed. For tickets, check www.australianballet.com.au/the-ballets/dancex. For information on Lucy Guerin Inc dance company, head to www.lucyguerininc.com or follow it on Instagram @lucyguerininc.

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Smoke creates spirit of land

Steven Hubbard

St Michael's Primary recently hosted a traditional Indigenous smoking ceremony. The event was the highlight of the school's celebration of NAIDOC Week.

NAIDOC Week was observed nationally to embrace the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The theme, 'Heal Country', called for all of us to continue to



A St Michael's teacher participating in the smoking ceremony.

seek greater protection for Indigenous lands, waters, sacred sites and cultural heritage from exploitation and destruction.

St Michael's welcomed Aunty Sherry Balcombe, a Western Yalangi, Djabagay/Okala elder from Far North Queensland and part of Aboriginal and Catholic Ministry. She explained that our Indigenous peoples are the oldest continuing culture in the world and have a special connection with the land.

Aunty Sherry spoke of the significance of smoke in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and led the entire school in the traditional smoking ceremony. All children and staff gathered in a circle on the basketball court and were joined by some of the children's families.

Everyone had the chance to walk up to the bowl on a stand that held the burning twigs and gum leaves. All breathed in the smoke, a sign of being cleansed and a special part of Indigenous spirituality.

Erin Jenkins, the school's student wellbeing leader, was thrilled with the success of the venture. "It was a truly special experience and the children's reflections and wonderings that they shared afterwards were wonderful," she said.

Other activities during NAIDOC Week at St Michael's included the children sharing stories and singing songs. They also created beautiful pieces of artwork and recreated stories of our country's first people.

Staff were delighted with the way the children embraced the experience. "It was



Aunty Sherry Balcombe leads students in the smoking ceremony.

so obvious they genuinely honoured the smoking ceremony in a respectful and meaningful way," Grade 3/4 teacher Angela Flint said.

"It was so exciting to see our students get involved in the week's activities and then get right into classroom work on what they had seen," Grade 1 teacher Susan Plant added.

As always, it was the children who captured the essence of the week.

"I learnt so much about Indigenous culture and the people whose land we share," Grade 6 student and school leader Mischa said.

Steven Hubbard is deputy principal of St Michael's.

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Daniele Greco and Ryoko Baba at Small Batch Roastery.

Big tastes from a Small Batch

Shannon Colee

Andrew Kelly is the man behind the Small Batch Roastery cafe in North Melbourne's Little Howard Street.

He has worked in the hospitality industry for more than two decades. He previously owned the iconic Auction Rooms in Errol Street and he knows everything there is to know about sourcing coffee beans from different spots in the globe.

If you take a gander into the cafe, nestled in the alley between Howard and Capel streets, you'll find all sorts of goodies, ranging from brewed wine from Gippsland to coffee beans from places a bit more distant, such as Guatemala and Columbia.

Andrew understands the hard work that goes into the handpicking of coffee beans and he trades directly with growers across the globe, thus allowing him to be sure of the quality of the bean and the experience of the worker. He holds that coffee must not only taste good but must have a positive social impact and support sustainable agriculture.

He brings an discerning eye when sourcing the items that are sold at Small Batch and is passionate about finding small producers that care just as much as he does about the ethics of agriculture. "Being deeply involved in sourcing has come to define what we are as a business," he says.

With coffee, this might mean making sure that the farmer isn't growing it as a monoculture crop. With wine, it might involve being concerned about the environmental impacts of the bottle as much as the quality of wine inside it.

Andrew cares deeply about broader issues of recycling and climate change. "Unfortunately a large part of the carbon footprint of wine is the glass itself and the fact that we have such a broken recycling system."

Patrons at Small Batch can be sure that the bottle of wine they buy helps contribute to a reusable wine-bottle system. The initial price covers the cost of the bottle and when you come back for a refill, you buy it at a lower price.

The team at Small Batch is committed to ensuring that curated ingredients are used to make the best possible product. Whether you are looking for some new fermented vegetables to try or some locally brewed wine, or even if you just want to pause for a coffee and a pastry, you'll find something to tempt you.

Andrew defines his philosophy simply. "We want to put together things we love that also tell the story of small agriculture and small producers. We aspire to quality, always with waste minimisation in mind."

Shannon Colee writes regularly for the News.

Neo Ceramics offers a new space to learn and create

Alexandra Kent

Neo Ceramics on Abbotsford Street opened its doors just two months ago.

The studio was founded by 25-year-old potter Jack Balfour, who has worked with clay for eight years. "As soon as I touched clay, I just knew it was something I wanted to pursue," he says.

Jack came to North Melbourne last year and, when the opportunity to open Neo came up, he jumped at the chance.

"This is something I needed to do in my life, to open a studio space like this. There's a real sense of community here and I saw it as an area I wanted to invest time into."

Neo Ceramics is not only a studio, it's also a teaching space and a store. Following Jack's dream that it offer something for everyone, it's a place to hunt down your next handmade purchase or simply stop by to view the beautiful pieces made by local artists.

It also offers a workshop where people can acquire new skills and techniques. Neo Ceramics offers two six-week classes or two-hour taster sessions. Classes are intentionally small, about six, so contact time with teachers is maximised.

Jack says this tutoring style was the informal way that he himself had learned the craft. "It wasn't through university or TAFE, but through direct contact with potters and makers. Kevin Boyd and Arnaud Barraud

inspired me with their mentoring in clay and ceramics. Without them I wouldn't be the potter I am today."

Neo Ceramics' studio space is stocked with Jack's work and that of his close friends and mentors. His background in industrial and automotive design is reflected in his focus on the finer details. "I became incredibly passionate and driven to understand how the materials work and the science behind all the metals," he says.

Jack's favourite pieces to make are lidded boxes and tall porcelain bottles, with long skinny necks. "The most satisfying object would be a lidded box, because you have to throw two lumps of clay then take the weight of each ball so they fit in proportion when you throw them," he says.

"To get a curve that rolls from lid to body is just really satisfying. There's an element of surprise when you lift the lid to reveal its internal texture. It's quite beautiful. It's one of my favourite experiences."

The process is a labour of love. It begins with Jack sitting with a lump of clay before he begins to throw and form it into the shape he wants, allowing adequate time for it to dry. Then, in the trimming process, he redefines its curves and shapes.

The clay is then fired at 1,000 degrees before being glazed by dipping or spraying. After this, the clay is fired again and removed when cool.

"That's one of my favourite parts of the process. You never know what will happen. It's quite magical," he says.

When Jack isn't in the studio with partner Lillian and brother James, he works as a teacher's aide at a secondary college. On weekends, he enjoys riding his bike exploring the local area.

Lockdowns permitting, Jack is hoping to offer more workshops soon. "We just want to give people a great experience and hopefully light the fire within some who might become potters themselves."

Alexandra Kent writes regularly for the News.



Potter Jack Balfour and some of his work at Neo Ceramics.

Want to know more?

For details of Neo Ceramics' pottery classes and workshops, check out the studio website: neoceramics.com.au

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Jack Yang (rear) with homework club at the group's break-up party.

Jack stars in homework club

Laurence Angwin

The Centre's homework club organises learning support to local primary and secondary students at four locations, including The Centre and the North Melbourne Library. The four weekly groups provide 17 tutors to help 50 students. The juniors meet at the library where Jack Yang is the senior tutor. Jack joined us in 2010 when he was a Grade 4 student at North Melbourne Primary School. Remarkably, he is still with us 11 years later and an important member of our team. When Jack finished as a club participant after completing Year 10, he decided – after

experiencing six years of the tutors' warm assistance and the group's camaraderie – to become a volunteer tutor. For the last four years, he has offered his help and guidance to the club's juniors. Over that time, students have consistently made comments such as "Jack helps us understand our schoolwork" and "Jack's a nice person who helps us learn new things". He has been a fine role model and proof that through study and application one can reach one's dreams. He creates a welcoming atmosphere, and students identify with him as he attended local schools and shares a common background with many of them.

In his spare time between tutoring at the homework club and studying second-year science at the University of Melbourne, Jack is kept busy helping his father run the family vegetable business at the market. He is a positive person, unfailingly enthusiastic about life, study, work and community outreach, and always willing to lend a hand. He now mentors the club's volunteer Year 10 tutors from University High School. With a star like Jack, the junior homework club continues to be a success through these trying times. Jack, we hope you can stay with us for another 11 years.

Laurence Angwin is coordinator of The Centre's homework club.

Mammad Aidani helps refugees tell their stories

John H. Smith

Mammad Aidani is an Iranian refugee with first-hand experience of the violence, trauma and dislocation imposed by authoritarian regimes. He is also an acclaimed poet, playwright and theatre director. Last year the Institute of Postcolonial Studies in Curzon Street sponsored him to work with fellow Iranian refugees to explore their experience in the Finding Place After Dislocation project. Mammad knows all too well the pain of lockdown that robs us of things we love to be and do. His personal understanding of lockdown's constraints has created an opportunity for him and his team of Merham, Asghar, Reza and Farhad. "We reflected on last year's lockdown. We shared our thoughts and talked about writing pieces concerning the unique situation. Each of us thought about themes and wrote our pieces independently," Mammad said. When lockdown permitted, he and his fellow refugees worked steadily on their project. "We met once a week to read, discuss, reflect, interpret and share understandings in order to prepare a performance based on our writings," he said. The team explored feelings and concepts including context, emptiness, void, fear, dejection, neglect, loneliness and belonging. Many people who have themselves lived under lockdown will find these ideas familiar.



Playwright and theatre director Mammad Aidani.

The group participated in workshops that allowed each to gain a deeper understanding of their writing and to experiment with performing some of their pieces. Mammad saw encouraging progress as the group sessions continued. "We have reached the stage where we are more confidently approaching a theatrical performance," he said. He and his team have used their own individual experiences of dislocation to confront, in a creative way, the new dislocation imposed by the COVID-19 virus.

John H. Smith writes regularly for the News.

Want to know more?
Mammad Aidani's play In the Mirror was staged at La Mama in July this year. Read a review at: www.stagewhispers.com.au/reviews/mirror-0

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I'm amazed. Have just seen a fox run across Queensberry Street. They're pretty things, but they most certainly don't belong here. I've heard stories of them in the outer suburbs, but daylight in North Melbourne is something else. Speaking of invasive species, wouldn't it be great if our suburb was one of those that offers a bounty on Indian mynas, evil birds they are. If a group of crows is a Murder, a group of mynas should be an Idiot.

★ ★ ★

I watched lots of that 2021 Olympics stuff. I can understand including skateboarding and BMX biking, but golf as an Olympic sport? Nope! I enjoyed the men's water polo. Wet fit men in budgie smugglers, what could be better? Do they have velcro on their fingers? They Never Miss A Catch. I could make at least five women's beach volleyball bikinis out of one men's singlet. And then there's the men's stupid down-to-knee shorts. Not only sexist, also extremely pervy.

★ ★ ★

VERY IMPRESSIVE

A message I recently sent my mum. Thinking of you. You were in my dream last night. Somehow Nunga, The Magnificent Wonder Dog, and I were living in the Renwick house. You, Dad and Julie were coming for dinner. I'd been living there for a while because I'd almost finished a stone wall with fabulous wrought iron Victorian gates across both driveways. Weird and fabulous dream it was. Never ever have I had you visit any of my homes for dinner.

★ ★ ★

My guitar asks: "Does anyone else want to play me because Very clearly can't." I bought it for \$4.59 at Brunswick Savers, so cheap I just couldn't help it. I now have a saxophone, trombone, trumpet, ukulele and guitar. In an op-shop window, I just saw a flute that I must have. Want to be in my band? Years ago



in Christchurch I was lead singer of Sex Trash Automobile. I'd love to be trying it again here in Marvellous Melbourne.

★ ★ ★

Pain is such a wondrous thing. I woke up on Sunday morning with huge huge pain in my groin. Took Wonder Dog Nunga and

myself to the Royal Melbourne emergency. The diagnosis was diverticulitis, inflammation of the lower intestine. No wonder it was so painful. Apparently diverticulitis is something that happens to those of us in Middle Age. Yay!!! I'm properly old now that I have old people problems. Got sent home with drugs to clear up the infection.

★ ★ ★

Finally, here's a movie recommendation for you – *My Name is Gulpilil*. It's on the life of David Gulpilil. He's dying of lung cancer and is on dialysis. The film advertising industry is racist; he's done a number of films in his career that I've not seen, never seen a poster of, never read a review of, never seen even the slightest hint of his existence. He deserves better. I have loved him in all the films I've seen him in.

Very Impressive shares his views on life in each issue of the News.

Hollywood came to town and the stars went to the dogs

Back in 1959, Melbourne was agog with excitement. Hollywood royalty had come to town to make *On The Beach*, a movie about the end of the world following a nuclear war.

The staid old town was buzzing as Oscar-winning director Stanley Kramer and stars like Gregory Peck, Fred Astaire and Tony Perkins walked among us. But it was the sultry and mysterious Ava Gardner, who seemed to hold everyone in disdain, who captured most attention.

Like most young boys – and many older males, who should have known better – I was madly in love with her and used to dream about meeting this gorgeous goddess. In fact, at 37, she was old enough to be my mother.

Melbourne must have seemed quaint and boring to these international stars. Pubs closed at six o'clock, cafes served cups of tea,

TOBIN'S TALES Gavan Tobin

and, except for footy, church and the local pool, there was virtually nowhere to go or anything much to do.

It is widely believed that it was Gardner who voiced the scathing put-down, "This film is about the end of the world, and Melbourne sure is the right place to film it." In fact, it was young journalist Neil Jillett who fabricated the quote.

However, in the late '50s, at least one local activity was wildly popular. North Melbourne boasted weeknight greyhound racing at the Kangaroos' home ground in Arden Street.

My father, Phonse, was on the committee

that brought the dishlickers, as they were called, to North Melbourne. Patrons could punt on a 10-race card and, if in the know, could drink to all hours in the committee room in the old stand.

During filming of *On The Beach*, Peck and Astaire – both famously keen on a bet and a beer – were invited to the dogs as guests of the greyhound club. Dad met them, they got on famously, and they promised him they'd return next week with Ava.

I was so excited. I begged Dad to take me to the dogs that night so I could meet this star of the screen. Mum put her foot down and said

next day's school was more important. Next day, when I asked Dad what she was like, he said: "No appearance, your honour".

Filming of *On The Beach*, snippets of which can be viewed on You Tube, finished soon after, and Ava and her co-stars left the country. While the movie has naturally dated, cameos of citizens silently lining up at the State Library to receive their suicide pills to avoid a horrifying death by radiation are still shocking.

Greyhound racing at Arden Street ended in 1962. The football club had initially hoped that rent from the dogs would fund ground improvements, but steep council rent increases were a problem. The dogs left North Melbourne and went to race at a new Olympic Park track.

Gavan Tobin writes regularly about his memories of North Melbourne long ago.

Latrobe Street's long tale of burials, boomtime and art

Latrobe Street begins in the east at Victoria Street at Carlton Gardens, cuts through Melbourne like a knife, and ends in the west at Harbour Esplanade in Docklands.

The street is named after Charles Joseph La Trobe, who was appointed lieutenant-governor of the brand-new colony of Victoria in 1851.

Three of the eight blocks on greater Latrobe Street are within West Melbourne. These three start at the northern corner of Flagstaff Gardens at William Street and end at Adderley Street beside the Melbourne Assessment Prison.

Flagstaff Gardens, named in 1840, was once known as Burial Hill because Melbourne's earliest pioneers were buried there. It perches on a hill from which a flag would be flown to signal the arrival and departure of ships.

In 1850, when separation from NSW was announced, a salute of cannon was heard from the hilltop and a tall beacon was fired up.

Seven portions of Crown land were surveyed by Robert Hoddle and 1850 saw an early public auction. Among the 22 land

RIGHT UP OUR STREET Stephen Hatcher

buyers were John Pascoe Fawkner and Sir John O'Shannassy, both elected members of Victoria's first parliament.

As a 10-year-old, Fawkner arrived in 1803 on the convict ship that transported his

convicted father. He is remembered for his pioneering connection to Melbourne's first European settlement in 1835, and for his roles as newspaper editor, publican, prisoner, bookseller, builder and farmer.



Photograph: Stephen Hatcher

In 1895 the northern side of Latrobe Street, between William and Adderley streets, contained 45 dwellings, two hotels, a candleworks, a brass foundry, a fruiterer, a tank merchant, a hide and skin merchant and one artist.

A notable early resident of Latrobe Street was Eleanor 'Nellie' McGlinn. She was the fourth of five children of dairyman and later publican Francis and wife Alicia, who had arrived from Ireland in the early 1840s.

Nellie completed arts studies at The National Gallery of Victoria Art School, in Latrobe Street just behind the State Library. It was the most prestigious centre for academic art training in Australia and counted McCubbin, Roberts and Streeton among its graduates.

Nellie never married. She lived at Number 480 then 446 Latrobe Street until her death in 1937 aged 75.

She left us all a wonderful legacy in her painting, *Melbourne from the south bank of the Yarra, 1840*.

Stephen Hatcher writes regularly about local street names for the News.

A new home for North Melbourne toy library

A new toy library is opening at Hotham Hub in Melrose St, North Melbourne.

It will be part of the Melbourne Community Toy Library, an organisation run by the community to support families with young children in the City of Melbourne.

The space will be open by mid-October, including click and collect during lockdown.

It will feature a wide range of toys for imaginative play, construction, water play and

more. An extended board game and puzzle section will provide entertainment for older children as well as young.

Anyone interested in being involved is encouraged to join online for 30 per cent discount until the end of October via www.melbournecommunitytoylibrary.org.au/how-to-join.html.

If you are interested in helping out, email mctl.volunteer@gmail.com.

Artists create a magic space in restored pavilion

Ellen O'Brien

Six local artists met while working at West Melbourne's River Studios, a refurbished warehouse of 60 art studios on the Maribyrnong in West Melbourne.

Pauline Delaney, Vincenza Fazzalori, Roze Elizabeth, Nancy Lane, Laurie Franklin and Dan Elborne with newcomer Elsa Thorp not only share an enthusiasm for art but also a determination to encourage community members to be creative and to stay connected.

Tagging themselves as CoLab artists (short for CoLab Arts in the Park), they believe in the need to stay connected despite lockdown restrictions.

"We came together as a group of artists with the aim of providing positive experiences that will help sustain the community through difficult times," Nancy said.

The CoLab group is part of a City of Melbourne-funded arts program called Creative Spaces, which aims to activate and invigorate spaces for the community's benefit. The most recent program focused on the pavilion in Fitzroy Gardens that had previously been a restaurant but had fallen into neglect.

The pavilion was restored and refurbished and, under Creative Spaces management, is offered for three months to artists on a rotating basis to host exhibitions and events. The CoLab artists seized the opportunity to create and share their art in a location that would otherwise be deserted.

The project has transformed the neglected pavilion with a dash of creative magic. Over recent months, the unused building has been rejuvenated into a vibrant centre for artists, and the CoLab exhibition has been dazzling visitors.

Each of the seven artists has their own unique style and works with a different medium. The result is a cornucopia of artistic delights for visitors to enjoy. "We all do something different.

You can never predict what different people will like to look at," Nancy said.

Visitors can walk past the open plan pavilion, glance through the expansive windows and feast on the floral flourishes of Elsa's botanical art, Laurie's ethereal paintings, Dan's beautifully macabre ceramic creations and Vincenza's elegantly crafted earrings.

When restrictions allow, visitors can walk through the gallery and talk to a designated 'artist on demand' about the group and their workshops and artworks. Fruitful exchanges, both for artists and visitors, have followed. Nancy happily shared a charming story.

"A three-year-old came in with her family. I showed her my designs and told her that I used things I'd picked up off the ground to create them. She soon returned with a metal nut that she found, saying 'This is for you'. She wanted me to use it in my art."

During the exhibition, the artists have hosted workshops and encouraged visitors to get involved and share their experiences. Visitors have learnt the art of screen-printing with Roze and seen demonstrations from Pauline, who specialises in creating glass lampwork beads. Children have had the chance to create their own 'crazy critters' from clay.

Roze explained that sharing art brings its own benefits. "We are able to work together, always a strong point. People working together may achieve much."

Ellen O'Brien is a new contributor to the News.

Want to know more?

Find out more about the CoLab artists on Instagram: www.instagram.com/colabartsinthepark and Facebook: www.facebook.com/CoLab-Arts-in-the-Park-110386867962900. For workshop bookings, go to www.trybooking.com/eventlist/colabartsintheparkfitzroygardens. The exhibition in Fitzroy Gardens continues to 27 September.



Artist Roze Elizabeth and workshop participants show their screenprinted items.



Dr. Priya Srinivasan
artist/choreographer/writer



Summayyah Sadiq-Ojibara
Psychotherapist, Counsellor,
Storyteller, Writer and Poet



Guido Melo | Writer, Poet



Dorcas Maphakela | Speaker,
Filmmaker, Producer, Artist, Writer



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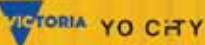
The Centre is seeking a diverse range of people who live, work and/or play in North & West Melbourne. Are you interested to explore your story?

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If you are curious to know about the ordinary people in your neighbourhood, you will get a chance to hear their extraordinary stories at a Human Library event later in the year.

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Lizzy Footner

New neighbours will be Friends

The Quakers will be bringing their distinctive beliefs to West Melbourne early next month when they officially open the doors of their new home at 484 William Street.

Also known as the Society of Friends, the Quakers began in England after the mid 16th century Civil War. Believers seek religious truth in inner experience and focus on the primacy of conscience. They emphasise direct experience of God without the need for clergy and rituals.

Some years ago, the Quakers planned a move from their Toorak base to somewhere more central, preferably one serviced by trams.

After years of searching and delays due to renovations and lockdowns, they are keen to welcome the local community.

After the opening of the new centre in West Melbourne in the first week of October, locals are invited to drop in, share a coffee or a kebab, explore the new space and learn about what Quakers do. This will, of course, be dependent on any COVID-19 restrictions at the time.

The Quaker Centre is on the lands of the Wurundjeri people, who offered to welcome believers with a smoking ceremony. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has put a stop to this, and

the open weekend planned will not be held until autumn next year. However, the building will be open to visitors by appointment.

COVID-19 restrictions permitting, a weekly Sunday morning meeting for worship will be held. Without priests or sermons, Quakers simply sit together in silent contemplation, with each responsible for their own thoughts and actions.

“We find it a calm refuge of stillness and community. If you visit, there will be Quakers available to answer your questions, or even question your answers,” Quaker representative David Parris says.

Quakers set great store in putting beliefs into actions such as Earthcare, alternatives to violence, support for refugees and respect for our First Nations people.

Believers have a strong tradition of personal responsibility, equality and community.

“Women have been active leaders and participants since the very beginning,” David says.

Quakers have shaped historical events of major social progress. “Believers started the first railway in the world and, much more significantly, they fought for the end of slavery and started humane

mental hospitals,” David says.

He adds that commendable initiatives by adherents brought at least some light and relief to one of the darkest periods of human history. “Quakers organised the Kindertransport that ferried children out of Nazi Germany.”

Lizzy Footner writes regularly for the News.

Want to know more?

If you are interested in Quaker spirituality, attend one of the Sunday services (restrictions permitting). If you would like to see the space or talk to a Quaker, come during the week. To arrange a visit or a chat, call David Parris on 0400 009 377 or Jill on 0417 798 396.

Lisa-Marie lights up kids’ minds via arts program

Katianna Grosser

Singing teacher Lisa-Marie Parker is in her element at her Vocal Studio at 1/175 Arden Street, North Melbourne.

Last year’s lockdowns brought home to her what she has gained through the creative arts and music ensembles that have been part of her journey.

She has performed professionally in many musical productions, including *Les Miserables* and *Cats*, and is committed to the crucial importance of teaching.

“I’ve always enjoyed teaching alongside my performing, because they’ve helped each other,” she says.

While Lisa-Marie has been engaged in some teaching for 20 years, it is only in the last seven that it has become all consuming for her. Over her time in the industry she has leased various spaces but she is now right at home in her Arden Street studio.

She previously lived in West Melbourne for 10 years and knows the local community well. “I’ve had this sort of affinity with this area for a



Lisa-Marie Parker at home.

really long time and I love North Melbourne,” she says.

Lisa-Marie’s current focus is on her Kids Division program, catering for children

between five and 12. Her enthusiasm for the venture grew as she watched her own children struggle during last year’s long lockdown.

“I saw them become really anxious and I realised I have this space, I have incredible singing teachers, and I felt a need to create something for kids.”

The Kids Division is a radical change from Lisa-Marie’s previous teaching of adults in a very industry-focused and career-driven model. She now emphasises fun, confidence building and a growth mindset with her young students.

“The core of my program is process over outcome,” she says.

Kids Division offers classes including singing, acting, drama, and yoga and mindfulness. All cater for beginners and Lisa-Marie is determined to offer all participants the opportunity to learn.

She highlights the importance of diversity within the broader performing arts. “There’s a big push for diversity in the music theatre industry. We’re still not where we need to be,

seeing all ethnicities on the stage, but there is a massive push to achieve that,” she says.

Lisa-Marie’s drive to include children of all backgrounds and abilities has led her to offer a diversity inclusion scholarship to youngsters who may lack access to the arts due to cultural and linguistic difference, disability or economic hardship.

Applicants can go to the Kids Division website and click on the Diversion Inclusion Scholarship link where they will find a form asking them to submit some basic details.

“They just need to tell us a little bit about themselves. Simply, we’re offering a free spot in our classes each term,” she says.

“When you have a space like we have, you’ve got a place for people to come to. Kids Division is something that is going to grow. I’m really, really passionate about it.”

Katianna Grosser is a new contributor to the News.

Want to know more?

Check out Lisa-Marie’s Kids Division at www.lisamariemarkervocalstudio.com.au/kidsdivision

Honour a Woman aims for gender equality in Australian awards

John H. Smith

North Melbourne resident Elizabeth Hartnell-Young is a life-long educator and activist.

In 2017, appalled by the continuing low proportion of women receiving Australian Honours, she, Carol Kiernan and Ruth McGowan OAM co-founded the Honour a Woman movement, which aims to achieve gender equality in the awards.

At the time of the announcement of the 2017 Honours, a scathing assessment from the Governor-General’s office that “not enough women are getting these awards” acted as a call to arms for Elizabeth.

“In 2017, there were only six women among the 26 nominations overall, and only one woman, Cate Blanchett, amongst the 15 recipients for the highest honour,

the Companion of the Order of Australia,” she says.

Elizabeth stresses that the Honour a Woman movement was not formed as an organisation. “It is a non-partisan social movement to foster gender equality in Australian Honours,” she explains.

The first goal, to increase the number of nominations to 50/50 by 2020, has been achieved in some states but not all.

Elizabeth’s advocacy for gender equality was nurtured early by her family, which gave her a strong sense of self-belief and fair play for all. “I always wanted to be a teacher. I am not a frustrated artist who took up teaching,” she says.

“Studying at Monash was fabulous, it was an eye opener. I also realised not everyone had as great a life as I had. I had contact with feminist ideas, and realised you



Elizabeth Hartnell-Young.

can’t help others if you aren’t strong yourself.”

Education has been a powerful theme in Elizabeth’s life.

“Teaching is not about delivering

material – standing up and telling you how to do things. It is about bringing people out and bringing them on. As an educator I have always worked really hard to support women,” she says.

“I set up a subject for secondary school girls called Women in Society. Later, the Education Department invited me to run courses for professional development for women.”

Elizabeth started Women at the Cutting Edge, a series of workshops focusing on mentoring, coaching, developing writing skills and working in a team.

“It enabled women to recognise their strengths and to learn how to articulate them in a professional portfolio,” she says.

“All this relates to Honour a Woman. Changing gender inequality is not as simple as

merely nominating more women. There has to be effective structural change with support from government and the community.”

The skills Elizabeth has developed to support women are still much needed.

“A lot of women are not confident in putting themselves forward; they don’t believe they are good enough,” she says.

“Honour a Woman has shown that if women get organised and are nominated, they are just as successful as men.”

John H. Smith writes regularly for the News.

Want to know more?

Read more about the Honour a Woman movement at honourawoman.com

Authorised by D. Lawson, Australian Greens, GF1 296 Brunswick St, Fitzroy VIC 3065.

Silent screen star’s humble start

Rashi Jain

Passers-by will know the tiny house in Courtney Street with a brass plaque on the front. It registers the 1889 birth in the house of Harold Hopetown Fraser who, under the name of Snub Pollard, was to have a distinguished career in the cinema.

Three young friends now renting the quirky little house have become intrigued with researching Snub Pollard’s history. “It is very cool to live in a historical house, especially this one because of its back story and unique layout,” a tenant who preferred to stay anonymous said.

Pollard’s story belongs, literally, to another age. He became an international success when he worked in Hollywood early last century alongside Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd and other legends of the silent screen.

He began his showbiz career as a choirboy in a juvenile performance troupe, Pollard’s Lilliputian Opera Company. Like many of the group’s young actors, he adopted the family name of the organiser to become Harry, later ‘Snub’, Pollard.

At 19, he travelled to North America with the troupe. After being spotted in early stage performances in Los Angeles, he began playing supporting roles in the silent film classics of that era, usually sporting his trademark moustache.

His early career hits included the *Keystone Kops* series and the *Lonesome Luke* series by Hal Manoch, one of Hollywood’s most renowned silent-era producers. He also had success in one- and two-reelers, then later in full-length movies.

It’s a Gift (1923), one of his most notable works, saw him star as



Snub Pollard’s birthplace in Courtney Street.

‘Inventor Pollard’, devising useless and reckless gadgets. His cinema career flowered briefly until the Great Depression at the end of the 1920s smashed the industry.

Pollard was later to claim he couldn’t “adjust to the talkies”, but in fact he found some acting work in talking comedies, B-grade Westerns and slapstick revivals.

In an interview late in life, he compared the eras of slapstick and modern films.

“Comedy hasn’t changed much in the last 39 years. When sound arrived in pictures, a new type of comedian was born, but, basically, comedy today is very similar to comedy four decades ago,” he said.

“I go back to 1915. Things we did then to make people laugh are still being done today. Of course, the gags are up to date. But timing and facial expressions are as important now as they were then.”



Snub Pollard in the silent film era. His star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.



Some of Pollard’s last works, in which he played only minor and walk-on roles, included classics like *Miracle on 34th Street*, *Singin’ in the Rain* and *Pocketful of Miracles*.

In his 50 years in the industry, he worked in more than 200 films and 500 roles. He died, aged 72, in California and was posthumously awarded a star on the iconic Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Rashi Jain is distribution coordinator for the News.

Healthy home for an artist’s work

Joe Misuraca

Premier Health Partners, with its range of family medical, osteopathy and related health services, has been a feature of our community for many years.

Premier’s director, osteopath Paul O’Keefe, is happy to talk about the clinic’s relocation last month. ‘Yes, we’ve moved – all the way from West Melbourne to West Melbourne. Our new digs are in a new development at 8 Wominjeka Walk – that’s the Woi-Wurrung word for welcome,’ he says.

Paul explains that West Melbourne is a unique area. “North Melbourne’s heart and soul is Errol Street, but West Melbourne doesn’t have a real main street. People often don’t know it. In the past, when I’ve said we were in West Melbourne, I was often asked which suburb in the west of Melbourne.”

His aim is to create a new local hub and to connect with the growing West Melbourne community. “The suburb has always suffered from a sort of poor cousin syndrome. The nearby

population has doubled in the last six years, and I hope we can lift West Melbourne’s profile, as opposed to everything being about North Melbourne,”

A highlight of the new premises is that it is disability friendly, unlike the previous premises in King Street. “When patients arrived in wheelchairs or with prams, we had to put a portable ramp on the steps. Here, we’ve also got free car parking underneath, which is serviced by a lift,” Paul says.

The new clinic has an extra attraction. One of Paul’s patients had mentioned she had some artwork to display. “I said we were moving to a new clinic and had lots of white walls that we needed to fill,” he says.

Twenty paintings now adorn those barren walls, and Paul is delighted with the many positive comments. “It’s nice to display them. I love telling people about the artist’s unique style – how she uses a literal hands-on application then gets a hairdryer to dry the wet paint.”

Paul’s plan is to rotate the paintings through the clinic. “We could reflect the season and respond to patients’ preferences. Perhaps we could also exhibit photographers’ work.”

Joe Misuraca writes regularly for the News.

Want to know more?

Premier Health Partners is now at 8 Wominjeka Walk, near Rosslyn Street, in West Melbourne. Drop in and check the paintings.



Paintings at Premier Health Partners’ new West Melbourne clinic.

With some help from the vet you can bet Money is set to recover

Kate Hartwell

Money, a five-year-old French bulldog, was surrendered to Lort Smith Animal Hospital a year ago when his previous carers moved overseas. Our shelter vets knew that Money, with itchy skin, inflamed ears and some spinal issues, had a long course of treatment ahead of him.

One of Lort Smith’s leading vets, Dr Anthony, diagnosed Money with generalised atopic skin disease, a skin condition caused by allergies that in turn led to an infection, otitis externa, in both ears. This caused so much swelling and discomfort for Money that he needed two weeks of anti-inflammatory and antibiotic medication before Dr Anthony could even see into his ears.



Money, the French bulldog.

“Money wasn’t in great shape when I first saw him. He must have been hurting. His ears were so sore

and inflamed, and he wasn’t happy when I tried to examine him,” Dr Anthony recalls.

Money was prescribed steroids and, as they worked their magic, he was bathed with a medicated shampoo to help his skin. He also started a special diet, Hill’s Prescription Diet z/d for Skin/Food Sensitivities, which is specially formulated to support dogs with problems like Money’s.

When Money came back a few weeks later, Dr Anthony found that his skin was slightly better. However, the dog’s ear canals were still swollen and sore. Suspecting damage from chronic infections, Dr Anthony decided that Money needed his ears examined under general anaesthetic, and also a CT scan of his head.

These procedures found extensive ear damage and Money needed immediate treatment. Our vet trialled Money on an antibiotic and steroid solution, made in-house at Lort Smith.

Dr Anthony wasn’t sure if it would be enough to avoid a complex surgery. Fortunately, within a few weeks, Money’s ears were looking much healthier and the infection was clearing.

Money was lucky to have an amazing foster carer, Emily, support him through all of his surgeries and recovery. The bond Emily formed with Money was so special that she couldn’t bear the thought of letting him go. When he was ready for adoption, Emily was the obvious choice.

“Money’s condition is ongoing, and he will need special care for his ears and skin, but Emily is great, and she can do it all from home. He’s in great hands,” Dr Anthony says.

Lucky Money is now feeling a million bucks thanks to the combined efforts of Lort Smith staff, volunteers and donors.

To make a donation and help us help more animals like Money, please visit: lortsmith.com/donate

Kate Hartwell is program support officer at Lort Smith.

Want to know more?

Lort Smith stocks @Hill’s Pet Nutrition, including Prescription Diet z/d Skin/Food Sensitivities. The dispensary staff can help advise about the best diet for your furry friend.

Arts House plans its 2022 program

Michelle Cheung

Arts House, based in the North Melbourne Town Hall, is Melbourne's home of contemporary art. It is proud to announce a brand-new Disability-led program as part of its 2022 offerings. The Warehouse Residency has been co-devised by six D/deaf, Disabled and neurodiverse artists – Luke King, Hannah Morphy-Walsh, Kath Duncan, Pauline Vetuna, Jonathan Craig and Eva Sifis. The project, working alongside Arts Access Victoria, will focus on experimental projects presented at the Town Hall. The Warehouse Residency celebrates D/deaf, Disabled, neurodiverse and chronically ill artists, curators, collectives and their collaborating allies. Two opportunities are available each year for the next five years, giving

creatives the opportunity to grow their practices in self-determined and sustainable ways. Artistic director Emily Sexton is enthusiastic about the venture. "Some of the most exciting work being made now is led by artists who bring fresh perspectives to the world in which we live, whose ability to find solutions and new creative methodologies is grounded in their lived experiences," she says. Successful participants will have three months access to a dedicated studio space in the Arts House and \$25,000 cash for creative fees and materials. They will also receive production expertise, guidance and consultation and mentor support. The result will be a presentation as part of next year's Arts House program. In line with Arts House's Disability and Inclusion action plan, the

program aims to champion the diversity of lived experiences in the Disability community and particularly encourage multiple-marginalised disabled people. Arts House strongly encourages all who self-identify with Disability, D/deafness, neurodiversity or are chronically ill to apply. Projects that are interdisciplinary, show artistic experimentation and will strengthen the future of applicants' practice will be considered. Michelle Cheung is audience engagement coordinator at Arts House.

Want to know more?
More information on this 2022 program and how to apply (closing date Thursday 14 October) can be found at: artshouse.com.au. You can also check Arts House's other development and residency opportunities for next year.



Imagined Touch by Jodee Mundy Collaborations performed by deafblind artists Heather Lawson and Michelle Stevens presented by Arts House. Photograph: Bryony Jackson

Sing NoW choristers find their voices in online sessions

Kate Ritchie

The hearty choristers of community choir Sing NoW have proved very adaptable. Despite the many lockdowns, we came to enjoy singing our lungs out with no-one listening. Our choir leader, Jane York, ensured we were able to practise effectively on Zoom. It sure beat solo renditions in the shower while also helping build our confidence as we practised on mute. Jane's patient and cheerful leadership helped many of us escape from lockdown and isolation. She is just the choir's fourth leader in our 20-year history (including the time when we were Errol's Angels). Our musical maestros have certainly been long lasting. It must be our enthusiasm! Jane joined us with a great musical pedigree at a time when lockdowns prevented us being



Jane York leads the Sing NoW choir in a Zoom session to share the music.

able to get together in the flesh. Coronavirus has been tough for community choirs, and even harder for their leaders. However, we soon realised that Jane is a great Zoom manipulator. We could tune in to our weekly practice sessions and not only

enjoy them but also be exposed to a variety of music. Singing is good for our health. While our lungs get a workout, there's also the joy of singing together. The connectivity, the sense of belonging and the harmonising release good chemicals in our brains. Singing also relieves stress and helps us to sleep. Speaking personally, I always leave our sessions uplifted and humming a new tune. Jane has spelt out some pointers on how to make Zoom singing work. 'Zinging' should be a separate activity, removed from the day's work, and it should be in a quiet space. It's OK to hear your own voice, as no one else will be listening. Jane's mantra is "Community first, choir second". She creates a relaxed, safe and fun atmosphere that is very different to many singers' past experiences in choirs. This pleasant

ambience is also a great way to meet new people and make new friends. Here's your personal Sing NoW invitation. Come and have a Zoom try-out with the choir – it's free and there are no auditions. We'll send you a Zoom link and Jane will do the rest. We currently get together Thursday evenings during school terms from 7.00 to 8.30 pm. Whenever COVID-19 permits, we'll be regrouping in the large, safe space at Sokol Melbourne, 497 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne. Until then, we'll keep on 'Zinging' along. **Want to know more?** Contact The Centre on 9328 1126. Choir leader Jane York also runs a 'Lunchtime Live' livestream on Thursdays at 1 pm. You can like or follow 'Just Holler' on Facebook.

ELLEN SANDELL

STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE

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Politician with an iron will left a huge legacy

Felicity Jack

John Buncle was of five town councillors who served as mayor of Hotham in the second half of the 19th century.

Two North Melbourne streets are named after him – Buncle Street and Buncle Place. The latter, a narrow laneway accessed from Vale Street, is on the site of Buncle’s huge iron works that ran along Flemington Road and covered 1½ acres.

John Buncle was born in Edinburgh in 1822 and served apprenticeships in engineering and piano making. By 1852 he was chief draftsman and designer at the London and Northwestern Railway workshops at Crewe, Cheshire. Then, aged 38, he left for Melbourne with wife Mary Ann and their three daughters.

Buncle arrived soon after the peak of the gold rush when thousands of men were heading to the gold fields.

Tools and machinery were in high demand and he was employed briefly at Langlands Foundry, where one of his jobs was to hang a peal of bells in St James Old Cathedral. Soon after, he launched his own highly successful iron foundry



John Buncle.

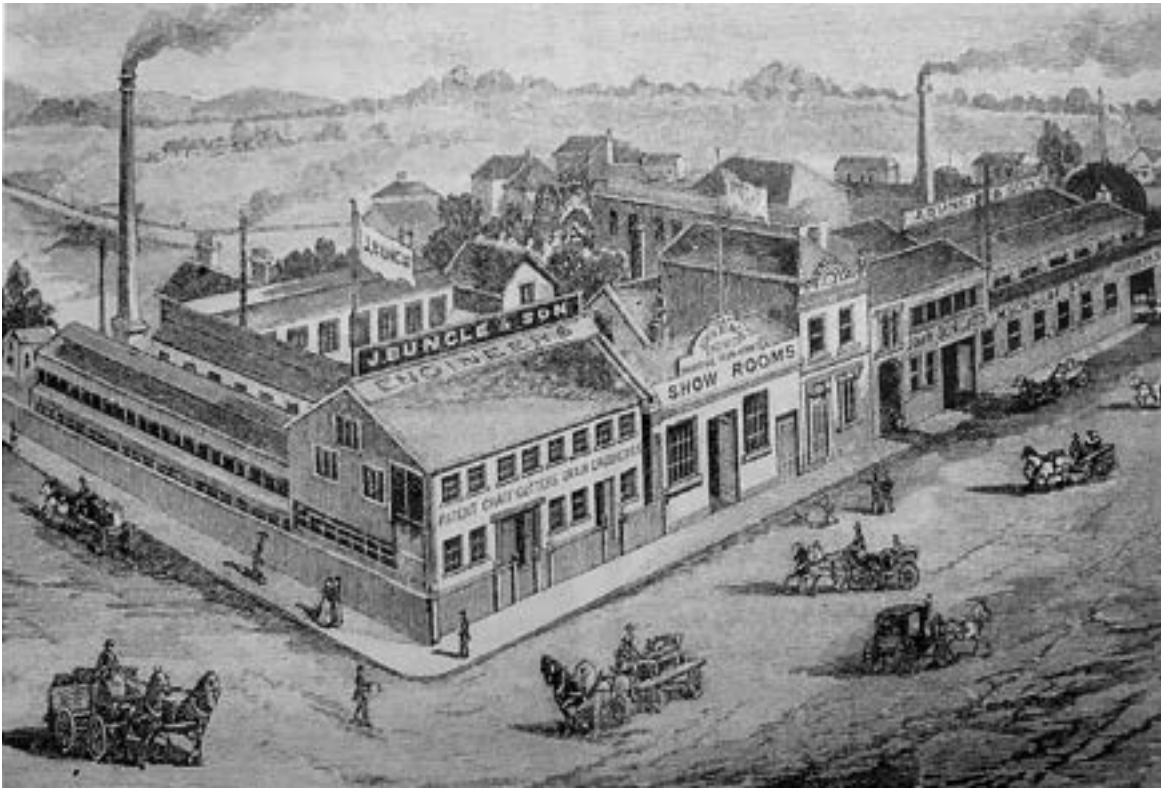
business, John Buncle and Sons.

Then living in a small cottage, he turned one room into a workshop and worked long hours to meet a demand that grew rapidly after his first customer requested various sized patterns of American stoves.

Buncle made and painted a 24-foot-long sign to ensure that his clients could find him.

The area where he lived was sparsely populated but, as more people arrived, he made extra money by drawing up plans for homes. He also charged by the hour for turning wood such as newel posts for the new constructions.

Buncle was highly regarded by his



John Buncle’s iron foundry.

peers and active in public life. He was a member of the Chamber of Manufacturers, and a commissioner of both the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition and the 1888 Centennial Exhibition. He also served on several committees of inquiry for the Victorian Government.

He was active in local politics, and twice served as mayor of Hotham. He was involved in the Hotham

School of Design and in its early years taught mechanical drawing. He was also a strong supporter of intercolonial free trade and of Federation.

In 1888, the year before he died, he wrote his *Experiences of a Victorian Manufacturer*, with amusing anecdotes of conditions in early Melbourne.

Felicity Jack is a member of the Hotham History Project.

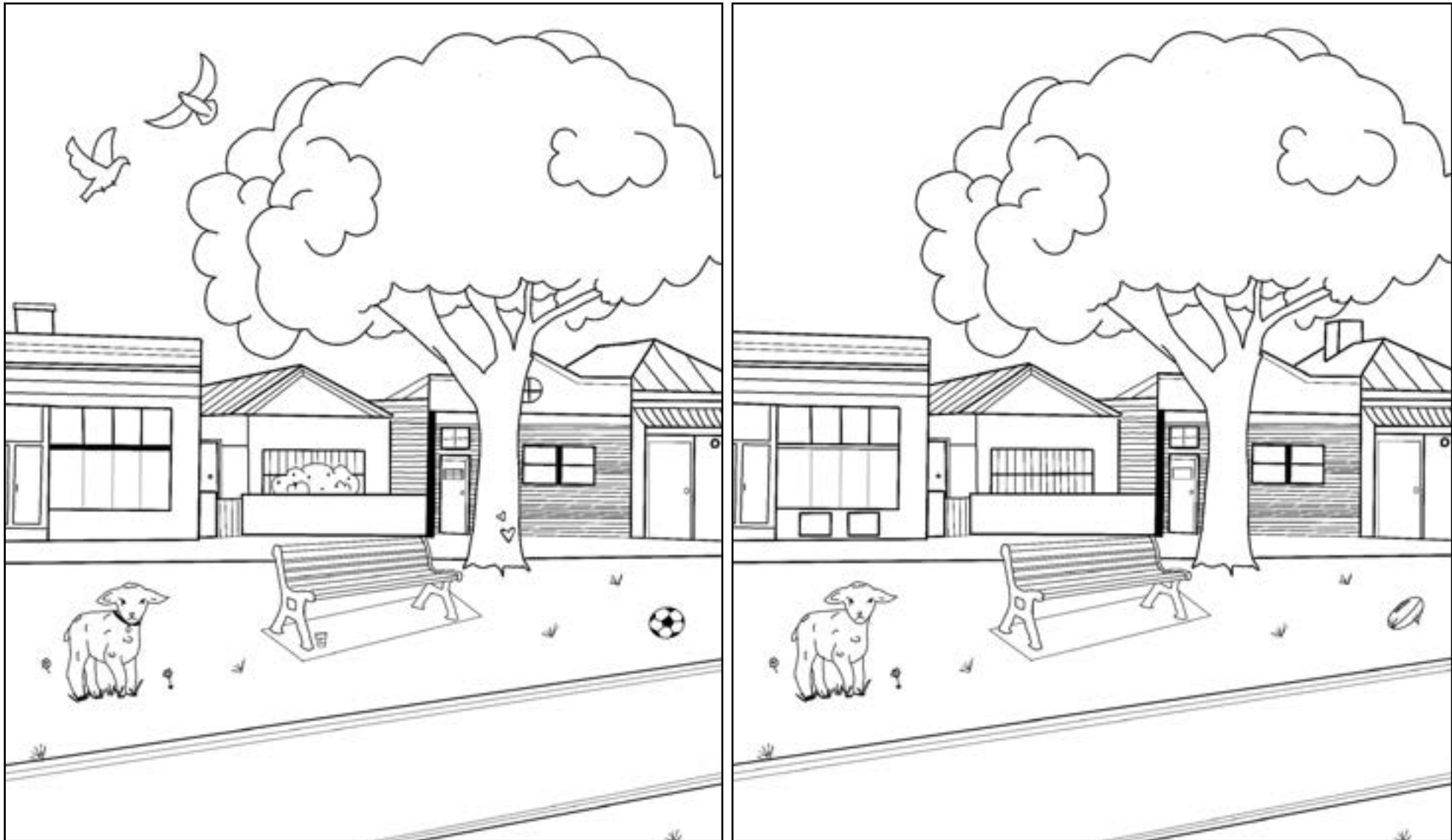
Want to know more?

More information about John Buncle and others involved in the local government of North Melbourne can be found in *Men of Hotham* by Heather McKay. Published by the Hotham History Project, it is available through www.hothamhistory.org.au.



Spot the Difference

Lilly the lamb (page 1) inspired Elizabeth Anguiano to set readers a challenge. These illustrations may look the same, but there are 12 differences. Can you track them down? Colour in the drawing and leave it in your front window to brighten the day of people walking about in your neighbourhood. (Answers are on page 27)



The North Melbourne Advertiser was distributed in the North Melbourne area from 1873 to 1894. Some of the most intriguing articles involved criminal cases heard in the North Melbourne Court. Here are some that ran more than 130 years ago, around this time of year.

Neighbours toss insults over the back fence (1884)

Neighbours Mary Morgan and Isabella Marsh faced court for abusive language. Morgan claimed that Marsh had shouted over the fence that she was a “dirty old beer barrel”. Marsh said Morgan was a foul-mouthed liar. The bench concluded bad language had been used and fined Marsh 10 shillings with the option of a week in prison.

Evans dunks Bunce in Meat Market trough (1884)

Local butchers Mark Evans and Edward Bunce faced court for fighting when drinking at the Metropolitan Meat Market Hotel. A dispute broke out and Evans grabbed Bunce and threw him into the water trough. A witness testified that Bunce had taunted Evans so the bench found both equally guilty and imposed 20-shilling fines.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
Michelle Brett

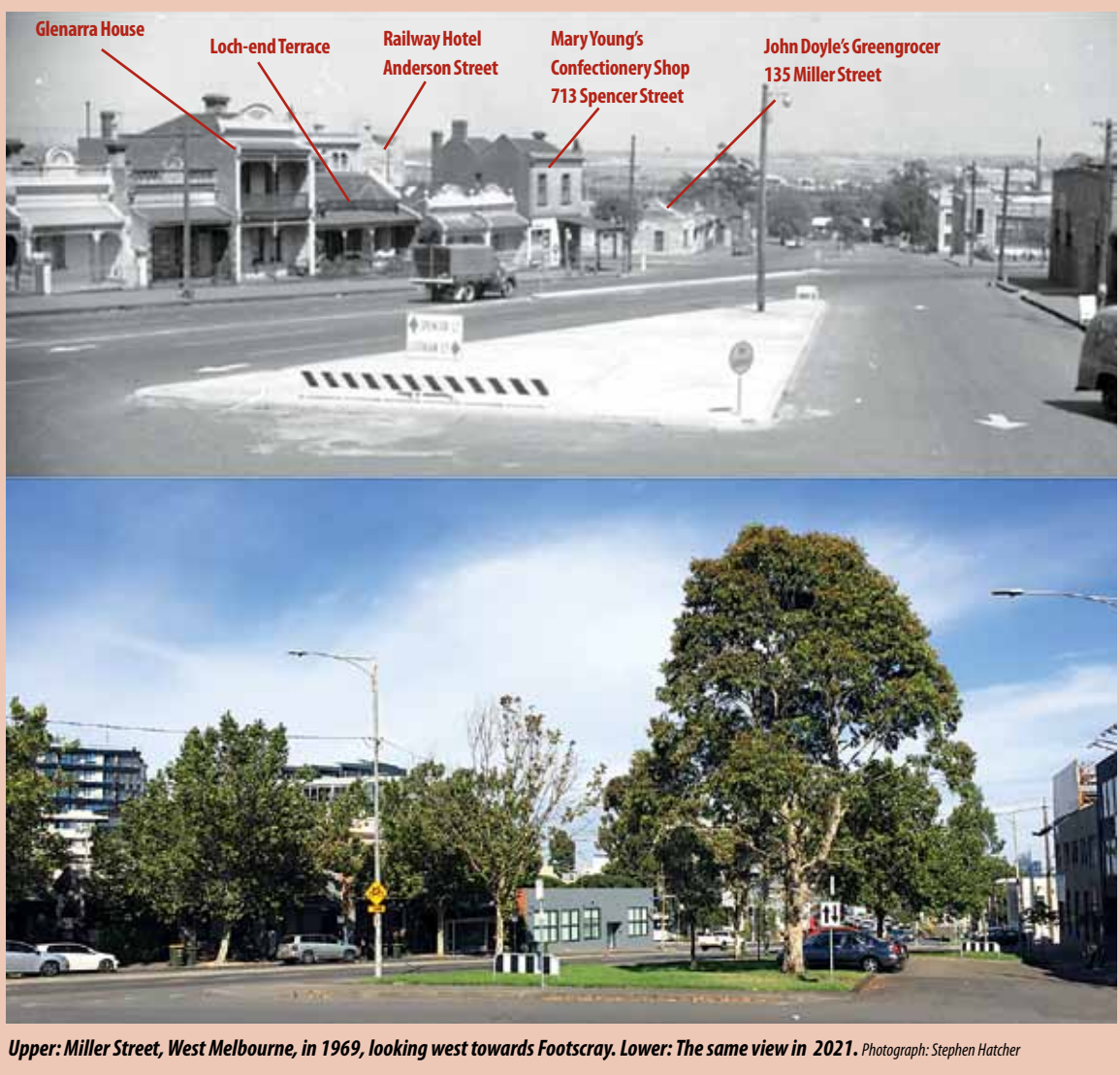
Kerby unwilling to curb her love of marriage (1886)

Seven JPs heard that Harriet Scott, alias Kerby, was on remand on the serious charge of bigamy. The accused was legally the wife of Richard Scott but had then married Thomas Kerby at the registrar’s office. She and Kerby then lived together for some months in Lothian Street. The bench committed her for trial.

Young Blew’s blue was using blue language (1888)

A youth named Robert Blew was charged with insulting behaviour. Constable Fitzpatrick said he had heard a commotion in Capel Street then found the defendant with some younger lads. They were shouting disgusting language, assailing a respectable woman with filthy epithets as they kicked at her door. Blew was fined 20 shillings.

Michelle Brett writes regularly for the News



Park yourself in the Le Bajo garage for a taste of Japan

Nigel Pereira

Le Bajo Milkbar is one of the trendiest cafés in North Melbourne. You’ll find it in Howard Street, in an open garage refurbished with vintage furniture, with an authentic Japanese menu on offer.

Co-owner Kantaro Okada – he prefers Ken – has always loved coffee. His passion was lit when he helped out at his parents’ Japanese restaurant in Auckland. “I started washing dishes and then did the cooking before running the front of house,” he says.

Ken then moved to Japan, working as a consultant for many Japanese kissatens (cafés) before launching his own shop. In 2017, he came to Melbourne and opened 279, an onigiri (Japanese rice ball) shop in Victoria Street.

It was there that he met regular customer Jason Gunawan who had previously planned his own café venture on Indonesian island



Ken Okada at Le Bajo Milkbar.

Labuan Bajo until COVID-19 cruelled the plan. However, he owned a garage in North Melbourne and soon he and Ken teamed up and Le Bajo Milkbar was born.

The open kitchen and vintage wooden furniture creates a warm ambience that welcomes everyone – casual cyclists, uni students, families and even petrol heads who

enjoy the vintage cars they see as they enter.

“We like the milk bar vibe and the community-friendly space,” Ken says.

“We are in a great location surrounded by wonderful neighbours. We’ve tried to create an ideal kissaten that’s friendly to everyone, from kids to the elderly, with a welcoming vibe and a timeless aesthetic.”

However, it’s Le Bajo’s sublime food that’s the real attraction.

The speciality is shokupan, the soft, fluffy milk bread that can be eaten in so many taste-tingling ways, either sliced thin for sandos (sandwiches) or thick for toasting. “The shokupan is authentic, but made with Australian-sourced ingredients,” Ken says.

He is also rightfully proud of his shortcakes. “A classic Japanese cake, they’re popular for celebrations, birthdays and Christmas. You won’t find the same quality anywhere else in Melbourne. Not too sweet.”

Much of Le Bajo’s menu reflects the café

culture of the city of Nagoya. “That part of Japan is famous for its dining. Many of our staff come from there so it’s no surprise that our menu reflects the area’s culinary history,” Ken says.

In fact, a Nagoya morning set menu is on offer. This tasty treat includes a slice of Japanese toast with cinnamon sugar, ogura-red bean, mentai-spicy cod roe, homemade jams or corn toast, an egg and side dishes and coffee.

Park yourself in the garage at Le Bajo and Ken will serve up a genuine taste of Japan.

Nigel Pereira writes regularly for the News.

Want to know more?

Drop in to Le Bajo Milkbar at 8-14 Howard Street, North Melbourne. Ask Ken what he recommends from the menu.

Get involved through The Centre

Looking for a volunteer opportunity? The Centre has lots of them, from office administration to event management. Or we can point you towards other organisations that also rely on volunteers.

Take a walk with a purpose

If you enjoy walking around North and West Melbourne, a great way to explore areas you may not usually visit is to help with delivery of the North & West Melbourne News to homes and businesses.

If you are interested, please phone (03) 9328 1126 or email admin@centre.org.au



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AGM reflects on year's highlights

The North and West Melbourne Association (NWMA) held its annual general meeting for the calendar year 2020 during August. The re-elected chair, Kevin Chamberlin, said holding meetings via Zoom provided a safe forum for members to catch up and share news about local projects. It also offered opportunities for the NWMA to have informal meetings with guest speakers presenting. The Association was in a very sound financial position. Following the treasurer's report, a resolution was passed to waive membership fees for 2021, as in 2020. Kevin thanked the committee for its hard work and commended the NWMA representatives in important local groups. These members then brought attendees up-to-date on current activities, with comments and questions resulting in lively debate. Some highlights follow. The **Metro Tunnel** is proceeding well, with construction of the new Arden station on schedule. Following well-received input by the Association and the Hotham History Project (HHP) to the design of a permanent façade on the station's entrance, this year we received an unexpected invitation to provide ideas for the design of 10



two-metre panels to be displayed as hoardings along Laurens Street in 2022 and 2023. These will depict the area's evolution from pre-colonial times of the Blue Lake, through the building of the Melbourne-Geelong railway line and up to the present day. Again, NWMA and HHP have collaborated on this. Dust and noise from the stream of heavy vehicles from the Arden site are an unresolved annoyance to people living in the industrial area, but there was praise for the project's efforts to engage with residents whose properties sit over the Metro rail tunnels between Arden and Parkville. Noise from the **West Gate Tunnel Project** works near North Melbourne Station is also a concern. More particularly, the authorities have still made no concession

that a sound barrier is needed to mitigate likely excessive traffic noise from the Wurundjeri Way Extension, despite this being raised in Parliament by local member Ellen Sandell. Readers can help Railway Place residents by signing the petition at www.ellensandell.com/noisewall. Construction of a much-needed shared overhead path next to the Dynon Road bridge has commenced, at least a year behind schedule. There was some encouraging news from our **Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek** representative. Although much of lower Moonee Ponds Creek looks degraded, birds seem to be able to cope with this, such as this elegant great egret photographed in late May. Following questions in Parliament, graffiti removal has become systematic, and the litter trap near Racecourse Road now has a solar-powered camera monitoring rubbish build-up. Recent plantings on the west bank are thriving thanks to increased rainfall, while the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail has become very popular with cyclists and walkers exercising locally under COVID-19 restrictions.



THE LIFE OF THE PARTY Ellen Sandell



There have been many days during this pandemic that I would love to forget. But the one I cannot get out of my mind is 4 July last year. On that day I received a call from the Premier's office telling me that nine public housing towers in North Melbourne and nearby Flemington would be surrounded by police and plunged into a 'hard lockdown'. I spent the following days at the makeshift relief centre set up by young people from the local mosque or frantically calling government officials and emergency services trying to get help to people in desperate need. Some of the more distressing cases I dealt with included a mum who was prevented from getting expressed breastmilk to her sick baby in the neonatal intensive care unit. There were parents desperately trying to get insulin for their diabetic six-year-old. There was the local school that was prevented by police from delivering laptops to students. We spent hours, often late into the night, trying to get translations, medicines and specific foods to residents who were locked in their home by authorities who really had no plan for how they would get essential items to those people.



Ellen at pop-up vaccination centre at North Melbourne public housing in June.

The residents understood the need for the lockdown, as did I, but they were baffled and hurt by the forceful, police-led nature of it. So it was no surprise that I was hit with a sense of dread when I received a similar call last month to tell me of eight new cases in the public housing towers. I was worried we might see last year's awful history repeated. However, I was relieved to see the government approached this outbreak with more humanity, efficiency and care. Rather than sending in police, they sent health workers and locals trained to provide health advice in local languages. Positive cases were transferred to hotel quarantine to keep everyone safe. Testing and vaccination clinics were promptly set up on-site. Residents were given timely information, including a 24-hour hotline to request specific food or medical care. As a result, the response to testing has been phenomenal. That outbreak was quickly contained. This is a testament to the hard work of residents, who kept themselves and all of us safe despite living in very close quarters with many shared spaces. I'd like to thank all the community organisations, workers in the Department of Health and in coHealth in West Melbourne, who have worked so hard on this improved response. It's wonderful to see how things can be turned around.

Ellen Sandell is the state MP for Melbourne.

Want to know more?
If there's anything I can do for you, or if you'd like to know more about my work in the community, please get in touch: email office@ellensandell.com or phone 9328 4637.



Premier Health Partners

A warm welcome to
Dr Bee Meng (Bambie) Lee

Dr Lee's areas of interest include paediatrics, women's health (including Pap smears), chronic disease management, dermatology, preventative health and mental health.
English, Malay, Mandarin and Hokkien.
New patients are welcome.



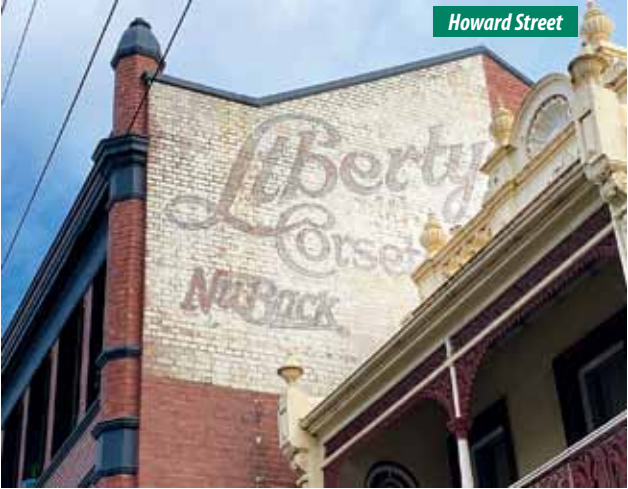
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Signs of the times

Photographs and story: Nancy Lane

As you walk through the streets in the neighbourhood, don't forget to look up. Among the contemporary signage, graffiti and street art, you'll spot some of the ageing, hand-painted signs that adorn the front or side walls of the shops, pubs and factories in North and West Melbourne. On some, you can still read the words clearly. On others that are faded or peeling, you can only work out a letter here or there. No doubt some of the long-term locals can remember when these signs were freshly painted, and perhaps even who the shopkeepers were at the time. One give-away for dating a sign is the telephone number. If seven digits, the sign must pre-date 1995, when phone numbers changed to eight digits. A local sign painting business in Queensberry Street had probably moved on by that year, as their phone number was never updated. The signs pictured are only a small sample of the many gracing our neighbourhood's buildings from times gone by.





Rotary members hard at work at the barbecue.

Rotarians in action

Neville Page

North Melbourne Rotary has been in full action mode since we last reported on club activities. Just before the most recent lockdown, we ran a barbecue as part of a City of Melbourne community consultation process. This was to collect the views of community members to proposed changes to the Bedford Park region. The club's annual changeover meeting, held as usual at the start of July in North Melbourne's Mercure Hotel, also preceded lockdown. In front of a healthy roll-up, two of our members were presented with the highest Rotary award, one that recognises Rotary founder Paul Harris. The two worthy recipients, Larry Robb and Sainab Sheikh, have both been valuable members of our club for a number of years. Just a fortnight earlier, Sainab had spoken at a branch meeting about her trip to Somalia to check on medical and hospital supplies sent by our club. She reported that local hospitals lack the power to run the equipment. The club had several other speakers before the lockdowns began. Elly Brooks and Nicole Brown spoke about Project Dignity, which provides support for refugees and asylum seekers who are without government assistance. A new member, young architect

Kammy Leung, told her own story in her 'Member Behind the Badge' talk. Lockdowns naturally put a stop to our regular meetings at the Mercure. Like everyone else, we had to adapt to the challenging situation and we had to resort to holding our meetings online. However, we have been fortunate in securing interesting speakers who have shared their stories with us via Zoom. Award-winning speaker Lindsey Leigh Hobson covered the topic of emerging leaders and outlined the difference in approaching Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y. Microbiologist Mohamed Mohideen OAM, president of the Islamic Council of Victoria, spoke on the COVID-19 vaccine program. A recent speaker was Ariel Valent, director of The Centre. He outlined how the neighbourhood house had responded creatively when lockdown forced the doors to close. Many activities, including the programs covering health and wellbeing and also the creative arts, moved online. Ariel told the meeting that The Centre had offered free online activities including choir, Pilates, listening to music, and dance. Homework Club participants were supported via phone, social media and messaging.

Neville Page is past president of the club.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

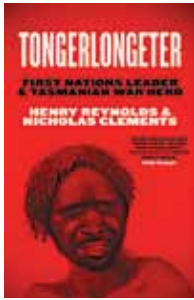
Chris Saliba



Songbirds

Christy Lefteri (Manilla Press, RRP: \$29.99)

Nisha is a Sri Lankan maid working in Cyprus. She works for Petra, a widowed professional woman with a nine-year-old child, Aliki. Nisha is almost a mother to Aliki, having raised her since she was a baby. But Nisha has a life of her own, a daughter named Kumari still back in Sri Lanka. She must work in Cyprus to earn money to send back to her impoverished family. Yiannis lives in an apartment attached to Petra's house. He lost his job during the financial crisis and now ekes out a living by illegally poaching birds. Yiannis and Nisha have developed a relationship, an intimate one. When Nisha unexpectedly goes missing one day, it brings Yiannis and Petra closer together as they desperately try to figure out what has happened. Based on the true stories of migrant workers in Cyprus, *Songbirds* is a compelling story about class and racist assumptions. The employers of these maids take little interest in their lives and presume they are somehow subhuman. When they are reported as missing persons to the police, no action whatsoever is taken, until the shocking truth is exposed. An expertly crafted novel of topical interest.



Tongerlongeter: First Nations Leader & Tasmanian War Hero

Henry Reynolds & Nicholas Clements (NewSouth Publishing, RRP: \$34.99)

Tasmania's Black War between the Oyster Bay Big River clans and white settlers raged from the mid-1820s until 1832. There were many shocking atrocities on both sides. Initially the First Nations tribes thought the Europeans were their returned ancestors, but then their lands were appropriated and women abducted, raped and murdered. Life became an intense struggle as food sources were dramatically reduced and comfortable resting places taken. Out of this chaos the leader and war strategist Tongerlongeter emerged. He organised and maintained a dogged resistance against impossible odds, causing a general terror among the white population. Surrounded and with no other option, he and the last 25 of his people made a peace agreement. He was offered land to live on and guaranteed protection from whites. This promise was broken, and they were sent to Flinders Island, which was rife with disease. He died there, never seeing his homeland again. An excellent work of scholarship that chronicles a terrible war and acknowledges Tongerlongeter as an extraordinary fighter, one that history must remember.



Kafka and the Doll

Larissa Theule & Rebecca Green (Viking Press, RRP: \$29.99)

One autumn day, German writer Franz Kafka and his friend Dora Diamant are walking through a park in Berlin. They hear a little girl crying and ask what is wrong. The child, Irma, has lost her doll, Soupsy. Trying to alleviate the girl's grief, he assures her that Soupsy isn't lost, but travelling the world instead. And he can prove it. He has a letter from the doll at home in his coat pocket. He will bring it the next day. Patiently, Irma waits for the letter. She soon discovers that Soupsy jumped into the basket of a passing bicycle and went hiking. Over the following weeks more letters arrive: from Paris, England, Barcelona, Morocco and Egypt. The final letter announces Soupsy has gone on an expedition in Antarctica and won't be back. Based on true events remembered by Kafka's partner, Dora Diamant, Larissa Theule and Rebecca Green have created an enchanting picture book highlighting the power of the imagination to heal grief. Rebecca Green's bold, retro-style illustrations, full of birds and dolls and falling leaves, are the perfect match for this whimsical story.

3+

Chris Saliba is co-owner of North Melbourne Books, 546 Queensberry Street. He writes regular reviews for the News.

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the centre
connecting community in
north & west melbourne inc.

FROM THE CHAIR
Karl Hessian



Responding to a pandemic

Community groups and organisations are founded on relationships and maintained by personal connection. The policy responses that are required to combat the pandemic curtails much of the activity and engagement that sustains such groups.

As with many other community organisations, the last year has been highly disruptive for The Centre. We have spent the year adapting and revising programs, making plans and then shelving them, organising activities and cancelling them and then reinstating them and so on.

The Centre is neither special nor alone in that regard. The remarkable thing is how successful The Centre's accomplishments have been, given everything that has happened over the past year. It speaks volumes about the underlying and enduring need and desire of the community to come together whenever it may safely do so.

More so than ever I thank the staff, contractors and volunteers, past and present, who have continued to do their work against a backdrop of high uncertainty. I have been deeply impressed with their commitment to their activities, fully understanding that they may not see their efforts come to fruition, but working towards to them regardless.

During the past year we bade farewell to our highly regarded Director, Tom Seddon, who we then promptly welcomed as a member of the Committee of Management. We were very fortunate to secure the appointment of Ariel Valent as his replacement in December 2020, allowing for a period of crucial in-person hand-over.

In concluding I would like to thank the City of Melbourne and the Victorian State Government for their invaluable and ongoing financial support.

FROM THE DIRECTOR
Ariel Valent



Centre keeps community contact

It was an honour to be appointed Director of The Centre in December 2020 and lead our dedicated team for the second half of the 2020-21 financial year.

Through the long months of the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, The Centre in Errol Street and the Pop Up Neighbourhood House in Docklands were both closed, and staff worked from home. Many hours were spent on the phone, online and through social media with local community members to ensure that people could meet their basic needs and to create social connections, particularly for isolated older people. The Centre also supported other agencies that provided direct relief and acted as a hub for reliable locally relevant information.

Many of our community programs were suspended; others continued online. Spring Fling could not go ahead.

The Centre was heartened by the resilience and mutual support offered within the North and West Melbourne communities. With people restricted to five kilometres from home, many were more connected to their local community than in pre-COVID times.

Towards the end of 2020, restrictions eased, allowing more people to come together. The end-of-year celebration on Errol Street served as a new beginning and The Centre finally opened its doors on 11 January 2021.

From that point, our programs were delivered largely as hoped. The Spanish Language Fiesta in March was a highlight, as was April's Come & Try Day. Home Away From

Homework Club returned at full strength at the beginning of Term 1, health and wellbeing programs could return to in-person delivery and the long-standing community choir was reinvented as SING NoW, with an enthusiastic group in a new venue and with a new music director. The Live Like a Local program gave international students still in Melbourne a diverse range of cultural and social opportunities.

The Centre's experiment with a Pop Up Neighbourhood House in Docklands continued. Online cooking sessions were a hit and the development of the District Docklands Community Garden was an important achievement in an area lacking in both green and communal spaces.

Special mention must be made of the *North & West Melbourne News* whose volunteer team kept the flow of local news, views and information going despite the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions.

Financially, The Centre benefitted from JobKeeper and other government support offered in direct response to COVID-19 restrictions. Despite our ability to earn income being severely curtailed, The Centre posted a surplus for the second year in a row and is well placed to serve existing and emerging needs in our local communities.

Sincere thanks to the voluntary Board of Management, to the dedicated staff, to all the volunteers, to our growing membership base and to our funders and supporters.

Centre Staff, Contractors and Volunteer Program Leads

Director: Tom Seddon (to 12/20);
Ariel Valent (from 1/21)
CFO / CIO: Craig Barry
Community Development Co-ordinator:
Stacey Halls
Community Development Officer:
Jason Butcher
Business & Operations Co-ordinator:
Ragn Hannah
Reception: Karen Kirsopp; Gary Dowling
Foundation Skills Co-ordinator (to 12/20);
WorkOut Tutor (from 1/21): Frances McMillan
Homework Club Supervisor (to 12/20); Homework
Club Co-ordinator (from 1/21): Laurence Angwin

Homework Club Supervisors: Jack Yang,
Hannah Merrigan
Digital Literacy Tutor: Louise Cindric
Pilates and OAE Tutors: Sue Gertzel, Fernanda Cury
Community Choir Tutor: Maryanne Clements (to
12/20); Jane York (from 1/21)
Dance Tutors: Catalina Gomez, Studio J
B-Friend Live Like a Local: Julie Turner
News Editor: Maurice Gaul
News Production Manager: Anne Burgi
News Advertising: Janet Graham
News Distribution: Tom Seddon (to 5/21);
Rashi Jain (from 6/21)
Spanish Language Fiesta Co-ordinator: Yulay Perez
Cleaner: Mitsalal Zufi

Centre Board
members

Karl Hessian, Chair
Lorna Hannan OAM, Deputy Chair
Kay Oke OAM, Secretary
Kathleen McPherson, Treasurer
Bill Liddy
Ben O'Connor
Kate Ritchie
Gary Dowling
Tom Seddon (from December 2020)

Report to the community 2020/21

MAJOR EVENTS



The laneways came alive with colour and music during the Spanish Language Fiesta.

Spanish Language Fiesta

As reported last year, the Spanish Language Fiesta scheduled for March 2020 was an early COVID-19 casualty.

With flexibility from both the producing team and our funders, the 2020 event was presented as an online streaming festival, the first time The Centre has ventured into this arena. Presented across 5-6 December, the Spanish Language Fiesta was a great success, with 210 people participating in seven sessions, including themes such as cumbia, storytelling for children, Afro-Caribbean dance, percussion, and the highlight, The Big Latin Flavours cooking demonstration.

The online nature of the event allowed for global participation, with people as far away as Venezuela, Canada and Turkey logging in. As Melbourne was re-emerging from lockdown, this event served as the start of the Christmas in North Melbourne program of events and as a bridge to the 2021 event.

The 2021 Spanish Language Fiesta was presented as a one-day event in George Johnson Lane, North Melbourne, on 27 March. The event was a vibrant exploration of Hispanic cultures, with a full program of storytelling, poetry, music, dance, theatre, film, food and market

stalls. A silent disco dancing tour took the colour of the fiesta down Errol Street. The event overcame a wet start and an additional layer of COVIDSafe regulation to be a real celebration for more than 2000 festivalgoers. The aims of sharing Spanish and Latin American culture with the broader community were realised with about half the attendees coming from a Spanish-speaking background.

Congratulations to Yulay Perez and her dedicated volunteer team for producing two vastly different but equally successful fiestas. Thanks also to our many partners without whom the festivals could not happen.

Spring Fling

Unfortunately, there is little to report about Spring Fling. An extended COVID-19 lockdown in the second half of 2020 meant that the festival could not take place.

With his background in festivals, new Director Ariel Valent set out to review Spring Fling and convened consultations with residents, businesses and community



The Come & Try Day offered the chance to see what The Centre offers, including the Living History project.

groups. Views about Spring Fling were both strongly held and divergent; as a result, The Centre decided to reinvent the festival as a celebration of connection and creativity. While the financial year ended in optimism with 50 expressions of interest to be involved in the festival, the decision was subsequently made to cancel the 2021 event due to the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions. We wish for a different result in 2022.

Christmas on Errol Street

With support from City of Melbourne, The Centre partnered with North & West Melbourne Precinct Association to create Christmas on Errol Street on Friday 18 December. This family-focused event also marked the last day of school. The street

was closed (north of Queensberry Street) to allow the community to take over the street. A Grinch Hunt and buskers encouraged people into shops to get their Christmas shopping done. Meanwhile dancers, magicians and of course Santa were hits with the kids.

Come & Try Day

The Centre hosted an Open Day on Saturday 24 April, utilising our own spaces, as well as North Melbourne Library and Legion Hall. More than 100 people attended on the day, testing out everything from children’s playgroups to photography, from singing to historical walks. The Come & Try Day also hosted the inaugural meeting of the North & West Melbourne Bicycle Users Group and served to relaunch the local community choir.

Volunteers and students

Student Placements: Lisbeth Castrillon, Jack Mitra, Sylvia Tran, Loan Nguyen, Meg de Young, Jessica Arnold, Thilini Vithanage, Nicholas Cowley, Rebecca Mazzini, Anthony Denehey

Volunteers include: Abisheka Wanigasekara, Adithee Rawal, Agnes Girdwood, Alba Gatto, Alexandra Kent, Amelia Phan, Andrea Mairoth, Ani Verma, Anna Huynh, Anne Burgi, Annette McQuarrie, Annette Rowan, Ansh Verma, Avneet Hundel, Ayla, Ben Duong, Caity Girlie, Carlos Alberto, Carolina Sanchez, Carolyn Fyfe, Chanchal Verma, Chandrakant Verma, Chi Pam, Christopher Lin, Claire Yeoh, Craig Barry, Cuong Duong, Edward Vin, Eiko Sakaguchi, Elise Cara, Ellen O’Brien, Emily Smith, Felicity Udovicic, Flora Sciarra, Gavan Tobin, Geoff Pound, Gina Reyneke, Gloria Deng, Grace Packer, Hanna Melissa, Harriet Lancaster, Helen Michell, Isaun Wright, Jacques Peril, Jan Lacey, Janet Graham, Jennifer Priyadharsini, Joe Misuraca, John H Smith, John Smith, Joseph Misuraca, Josh Rule, Julian Blake, Karen Hayes, Kathleen Mcpherson, Kay Oke, Kennu Nguyen, Kenny Nguyen, Laura Misale, Laurence Angwin, Lei Ye, Li Melody, Lizzy Footner, Luca Guglielmino, Madeline Scully, Manuela Roca, Margaret Howden, Maria Taracena, Mary Kehoe, Maurice Gaul, Maya Ruth Pilbrow, Megan Fitzgerald, Melanie Karipidis, Melissa Villate, Mia (Thuc Mi) Quach, Michelle Brett, Nancy Lane, Nancy Nankervis, Natalie Chow, Nicolas McLeod, Nicole Pereira, Nidhi Singh, Nigel Pereira, Paola Yaguez, Pat Lightfoot, Patricia Harewood, Peter Robert, Phuong Vy Le Nguyen, Rahul Velumani, Rashi Jain, Rebecca Hough, Rob and Kay Oke, Robyn Dowling, Rosemary Tonkin, Rowan Hill, Ruby Ramsden, Sagalee Aba-Omer, Sandra De Luca, Sara Ochoa, Sarah Shaharizan, Shanon Colee, Shimi Kannoly, Shu Yea Lau, Shweta Patil, Stanley Parker, Stephanie Maniatis, Stephen Hatcher, Steven Muncaster, Susan Harraway, Suzie Luddon, Tamalika Saha, TejaSri Kaja, Thea Oakes, Thilini Vitanage, Thuc Mi Quach, Tienyi Long, Tim Cremean, Tina Jiao, Tom Seddon, Uma Poomalai, Very Impressive, Yunesca Harris, Zoe Sheridan



Christmas on Errol Street was a joyful celebration for adults and children alike.

Report to the community 2020/21

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development

Community development is a pillar of The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne. Community development means we work with and empower our local community; we are responsive to the needs, strengths and aspirations of our community members, and we create programs of value to our community.

An essential element of being a Neighbourhood House is simply being there: a safe and inclusive space that welcomes local people. The Centre provides a comfortable space to relax, to get a cuppa and to interact with others.

For half of the past year, we were unable to provide this service, creating somewhat of an existential crisis. We were not alone and we needed to change direction. As our community members could not visit us, we reached out to them using phone, messaging and social media.

From the re-opening date of 11 January, The Centre was open to walk-ins, and all manner of people with all manner of queries came inside. We try to understand the individual's needs and help them with the next steps, whether that is engaging in one of our programs or referring them to other agencies.

Advocating for our community is another vital role for The Centre. COVID-19 has provided some key directions for where this advocacy is most needed. The hard lockdown imposed on housing commission towers in North Melbourne and Flemington was a travesty and an insult to these communities, as was described in the resulting Ombudsman's report. The Centre has been involved with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Paving The Way Forward initiative that has gone some way to repairing relationships with public housing tenants. The Centre also convenes the North & West Melbourne Bicycle Users Group, advocating for improved cycling experiences in the neighbourhood.

Towards the end of the reporting year The Centre created a brief for a Community Needs Analysis for North and West

Melbourne, and has engaged Strategic Development Group to work with us on this vital piece of work through the remainder of 2021. At the conclusion of this analysis, The Centre will develop a strategic plan that will include reviewing our programs, setting priorities to directly benefit our diverse community and collaborating with other community organisations.

Errol's Angels / SING NoW Community Choir

The Errol's Angels choir has a history going back to 2002. The past year was a major challenge for many choirs, and Errol's Angels was no exception. By the end of 2020, some members of the group were singing online but this was far from ideal. The choir was revamped and relaunched in April 2021, a perfect time as COVID-19 restrictions were minimal.

New music director Jane York gave the group a fresh energy and a larger, central and COVID-19-friendly venue was found at Sokol Melbourne. Long term Angels joined new members to form an enthusiastic and sonorous 23-piece community choir.

The choir got through most of one term before being forced to run rehearsals online. Through multiple lockdowns, the choir has retained new members, which bodes well for the future.

Thanks to Maryanne Clements for her more than three years as choir leader of Errol's Angels, and to the Maternal & Child Health Centre for many years as the choir's practice space.

Viva La Seniors

Viva La Seniors is a program that celebrates getting older in North Melbourne, providing senior local residents with opportunities to connect with others, to improve their physical and mental health and to visit places that would otherwise be out of reach. Participants come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

When COVID restrictions allowed, the following activities were undertaken:

Monthly Morning Teas: A casual social opportunity, meeting at The Centre. While



Catalina Gomez led an enthusiastic group of seniors in the Young @ Heart Dance Club.

sharing food was no longer possible, the conversation still flowed, with a notable event being the celebration of long-term participant and The Centre volunteer Pat Harwood's 80th birthday.

Centre Adventures: Once a month, a group of seniors visits historical, cultural or horticultural places of interest and significance, normally outside Melbourne. Despite the challenges of lockdown rescheduling, and the unavailability of the City of Melbourne bus, we managed to run five trips including to Phillip Island, Mount Macedon and Melbourne Zoo. Special thanks to volunteers Craig Barry and Megan Fitzgerald.

Young @ Heart Dance Club: Following a successful trial at Come & Try Day, Catalina Gomez led a small and enthusiastic group of seniors in weekly sessions that combined Zumba and Latin dance styles in a relaxed, convivial environment. Classes also ran via Zoom when necessary.

Older Adults Exercise: This long-running program run by Sue Gertzel and Fernanda Cury is an opportunity for participants to improve and maintain strength, balance and aerobic capacity, while also catching up with friends and neighbours.

B-Friend International Students

Through a partnership with B-Friend, we created a Live Like a Local program that gave international students positive experiences of living in Melbourne, while also allowing social connections to develop and flourish. While many international students returned home when COVID-19 first hit, many remained and North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Docklands are all suburbs with a high concentration of international students. The Centre employed several students to help develop the program, and more worked in a volunteer capacity. Initially planned to run virtually, the easing of restrictions meant that activities could take place in person. In total, there were 349 attendances across 20 fun activities plus 20 volunteer team sessions. A wide range of students participated in weekly activities including picnics, photography excursions, guest speakers, a trivia night, panel discussions, and visits to local festivals and places of interest. The program also led to

the creation of an international student newsletter currently going to more than 400 subscribers. Thanks to Julie Turner for making this program so successful.

The Legion & Anzac Day

The Centre enjoys a fruitful relationship with the Legion of Returned Ex-Servicemen and Women (North & West Melbourne Sub-Branch).

This year, we presented an Anzac Day ceremony at the Memorial Cenotaph. Melbourne MP Adam Bandt was guest speaker and President of The Legion, Charlie Elliot, read the Ode for the Fallen to a group of 40 veterans and community members.

The Centre hires the unique Legion Hall for regular programs and special events. We worked with The Legion and City of Melbourne to make some overdue upgrades including replacing rotten boards, new heating and air conditioning and plumbing.

Health & Wellbeing

Pilates classes were run by Sue Gertzel and Fernanda Cury. The Centre offers graded classes that focus on body awareness, breathing, strengthening postural muscles and flexibility. Classes are offered at the Meat Market and Legion Hall and were run online during periods of lockdown. This long-standing program also provides social opportunities for participants.

Other Programs

- The Centre also:
- Implemented the Human Library project, encouraging locals to explore telling their personal story. This project will have outcomes in 2021-22.
 - With West Melbourne Baptist Community Centre hosted a Community Dinner that featured a one-off vibraphone and violin musical performance
 - Hosted monthly historical walks, led by 'Mrs North Melbourne' Lorna Hannan
 - Participated in local networks including the NAC (North Melbourne Agencies Collective), North Melbourne Good Karma Network and North & West Melbourne Precinct Association.
 - Lent practical support to local groups such as Hotham History Project
 - Hired out our facilities



The Live Like a Local program gave international students positive experiences of living in Melbourne.

Report to the community 2020/21

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Docklands Pop Up Neighbourhood House

City of Melbourne funded The Centre to establish a Neighbourhood House in the Docklands. This two-year project saw the Pop Up established at District Docklands in November 2019. This proved to be a spectacularly challenging time in which to launch something new. Despite the challenges 2020-21 has presented, The Pop Up Neighbourhood House has continued to engage with community and stakeholders, to facilitate activities and to provide relevant information.

With City of Melbourne, the Docklands Pop Up Neighbourhood House convened the Docklands Collective, a working group of more than a dozen Docklands stakeholder organisations. The first meeting was held online in September 2020, and the group has since met regularly. Activities of the Collective include coordinating service delivery, collaboration on initiatives, information sharing and cross-promotion of activities and events.

The Pop Up empowered several resident volunteers to become Admins/ Moderators for the new Docklands Good Karma Network, launched in January 2021 through Facebook. This platform promises to become a valuable resource for engaging and supporting Docklands residents.

The Pop Up was an important collaborator on the B-Friend Live Like a Local program. Seven of the activities were held in Docklands. One highlight was the March 2021 Neighbour Day picnic at Buluk

Park where more than twenty international students engaged in games and activities and volunteers from the Pop Up performed Bollywood dances. The preceding Bollywood dancing classes were popular amongst Docklands' significant Indian community.

District Docklands supported the Pop Up to rejuvenate and use the District Docklands Community Garden as a shared community asset, running twice-weekly facilitated gardening sessions. Collaborations with the Docklands Toy Library to hold weekly playgroup sessions have proved a popular way to engage with children of the nearby, recently opened Docklands Primary School.

During periods of lockdown, Pop Up activities have transitioned online. The Pop Up has hosted regular virtual morning teas, cooking workshops and other ad hoc activities. Looking to the future, our Engagement Survey will help determine future programming. We will also continue to build the case for the establishment of a permanent Neighbourhood House in Docklands and for a permanent site for the community garden in the New Quay area.



Pop Up Neighbourhood House @ Docklands

A project of the centre



The District Docklands Community Garden is a shared community asset and an oasis in a sea of concrete.

EDUCATION

As a Learn Local, The Centre provides pre-accredited training for adults, as well as our long-running Homework Clubs. Frances McMillan retired as Foundation Skills Coordinator at the end of 2020. Frances remains as the lynchpin of the Workout program, and a mentor to all she trained. Former Homework Club supervisor and tutor of 17 years, Laurence Angwin stepped up to become the Homework Club Co-ordinator from January 2021.

Home Away From Homework Club

The Centre runs four Homework Clubs for local students from Grade 4 to Year 9: one at The Centre, one at North Melbourne Library, one at North Melbourne Language & Learning in Alfred Street and one at Hobsons Bay Library in Altona North. The lockdowns meant the program has operated in fits and starts; even after lockdowns lifted, the libraries remained closed to groups.

Fortunately, the North Melbourne clubs were offered space at West Melbourne Baptist Community Centre. Without this generosity we could not have continued. Unfortunately, the Altona North club was cancelled during and after lockdowns due to the closure of their meeting rooms. There are no other community venues in the vicinity of the local schools.

When the clubs could not run, co-ordinators and tutors contacted students and their families by phone or text. We sent care packages to the students, which included a letter, puzzles, quizzes and various activities. This was the first time many students have received post. Our feeder schools recommended against an online homework club, after a day of remote schooling.

Sessional supervisors Hannah Merrigan and Jack Yang led a dedicated group of volunteers, with 14 new tutors trained, many of them university students. In March, two former homework club participants joined as volunteer tutors.

Thanks to everyone who held fast during the lockdowns; we recognise that many of our volunteers had their own trials during the pandemic. Sometimes the tutors have had only a day's notice about homework clubs' recommencement, but they turned up full of enthusiasm. Their community



spirit shows the students that we care. Thanks also to the North Melbourne and Hobsons Bay library staff and especially to the students and their families who support this institution of 17 years.

Workout

The Centre's very successful Workout program is a partnership with Judy Lazarus Transition Centre (JLTC) in West Melbourne. Tutors Frances McMillan and Louise Cindric take small groups of residents who are about to re-enter society following a prison term. The six-week program combines digital literacy, job search, practical measures and personal growth.

In 2020/21 the trainers proved their capacity for flexible delivery to JLTC in exceptional and difficult times. The original program was delivered in whichever way was possible to comply with COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns, from face to face in The Centre and North Melbourne Library, to visiting the JLTC premises, to delivering via Zoom.

JLTC's unique nature meant the restrictions had harsh effects on the residents. In response, Louise developed an Advanced Computer course with great success and Frances delivered a Community Connection Program that saw residents assemble construction kits that were sent to children in foster care. These developments and adjustments continued through later lockdowns.

Frances and Louise appreciate the support of all staff at The Centre and JLTC for managing the difficulties and share the pride in the tangible achievements as evidenced in this testimonial from a case manager at JLTC: "Both Orhan and Said really appreciated you making yourself available to help them get their email operational. You really understand how much this lockdown impacts the guys and being positive and passionate in helping with things like this really helps the guys cope."

Other Adult Education

Other courses offered by The Centre, and delivered by Louise Cindric, focused on digital literacy. While COVID-19 disruptions created challenges for the delivery of these courses, we were able to complete courses in Computing Essentials and iGadgets, both providing vital skills for both the workplace and life more broadly.

North & West Melbourne News

The North & West Melbourne News is a key project of The Centre. We are delighted that every aspect of our thriving community newspaper – writing, editing, layout, advertising and delivery – is performed by volunteers.

In the 12 months covered by The Centre's annual report, the News was published four times, three during lockdowns, when it proved invaluable in keeping everyone connected with our local community. The print run was increased to 7,700 with the paper now delivered to an ever-increasing number of letterboxes in North Melbourne and West Melbourne.

Apart from the News' consistent

excellence, there were two highlights. Firstly, Community Newspapers Association of Victoria recognised the paper at the group's annual awards night. We were a finalist in two categories (best newspaper and best community content), won a statewide award for best design and layout, and two stories received special commendation. Congratulations to the entire team, especially editor Maurice Gaul and production manager and designer Anne Burgi. Secondly, a January writers meeting enjoyed an excellent roll-up and allowed us to celebrate the paper's recent awards and the contribution of our wonderful volunteers.

Report to the community 2020/21

The Centre steers a steady financial course

Kath McPherson, Centre Treasurer

At this time last year, I reported that after the challenges of the previous year, we hoped that this year The Centre would be back on track. I don't think any of us appreciated that a year on we would still be dealing with COVID-19's effects. Like most organisations another year of lockdowns and restrictions has had a significant impact of The Centre's finances.

The most obvious impact has been a significant 12.5% reduction in the overall income. This was almost exclusively due to another reduction in fees and charges income, which fell by 36.5% over the year. This means that since COVID-19 began, income from fees and charges for fee-for-service programs (e.g. Pilates, the Community Choir) and activities like our Centre Adventures and morning teas has fallen more than 52%. Income from the Department of Education for delivery of ACFE-funded pre-accredited training program courses also fell by a significant amount. Both these falls in income were directly related to our inability to deliver our programs over a large part of the year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Fortunately, a significant amount of this lost income was offset by financial support from both the Federal and State Governments through initiatives such as the Job Keeper program and Business Support Packages. These programs meant that The Centre was able to keep staff employed during the lockdown period, allowing us to continue to support many of our regular clients while ensuring we were prepared to begin delivering our normal program of activities immediately after lockdown restrictions eased.

Our core funding provided by the City of Melbourne and the Department of Human Services, which together account for around 50% of The Centre's overall income, was maintained at pre-COVID levels. This on-going commitment from both agencies has been instrumental in maintaining The Centre's financial security.

The impact of the loss of income was

The Centre – Summary Financial Data

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income	486,359	556,079	518,988	497,509	518,152	522,839	468,903	431,295
Expenditure	434,165	504,317	564,688	536,880	507,697	472,605	408,677	466,419
Surplus /(Deficit)	52,194	51,762	(45,700)	(39,371)	10,455	50,234	60,226	(35,124)
Assets	309,350	205,938	157,640	199,082	262,112	271,805	237,387	195,331
Liabilities	143,395	92,177	95,641	91,383	115,043	135,191	151,007	154,126
Net Assets / Equity	165,955	113,761	61,999	107,699	147,069	136,614	86,380	32,873

also mitigated by a significant reduction in expenditure directly related to those programs that we were unable to run. As a result, program expenditure fell by more than 52% compared to the previous year. The maintenance of fixed costs at pre-COVID levels and tight control of other variable costs meant that overall expenditure fell by about 14% over the year.

The Centre also secured several small project grants during the lockdown periods. These included funding for 'The Human Library' project, the Docklands-focused 'Live Like a Local' project, delivered in partnership with B-Friend, and Christmas in Errol Street, delivered in partnership with the North & West Melbourne Precinct Association. These projects, along with self-funded programs like North & West Melbourne News (which has continued uninterrupted despite COVID-19 restrictions) and The Spanish Language Fiesta (delivered as a virtual event in December 2020 and again as a laneway event in March 2021) also made a significant contribution toward The Centre's fixed costs that would otherwise have to be solely funded from our core grant income.

Overall, despite the challenges associated with COVID-19 and the impact on our programs, I am pleased to report that The Centre finished the year with a healthy surplus of \$52,194. This surplus, on top of a similar surplus reported last financial year, has significantly strengthened The Centre's balance sheet. This places The Centre in a strong position both in relation to managing the on-going challenges

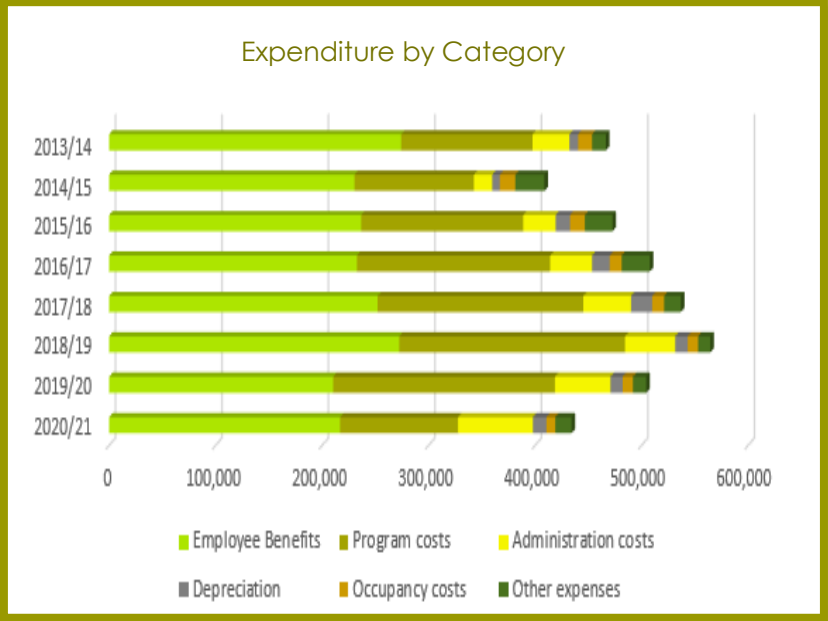
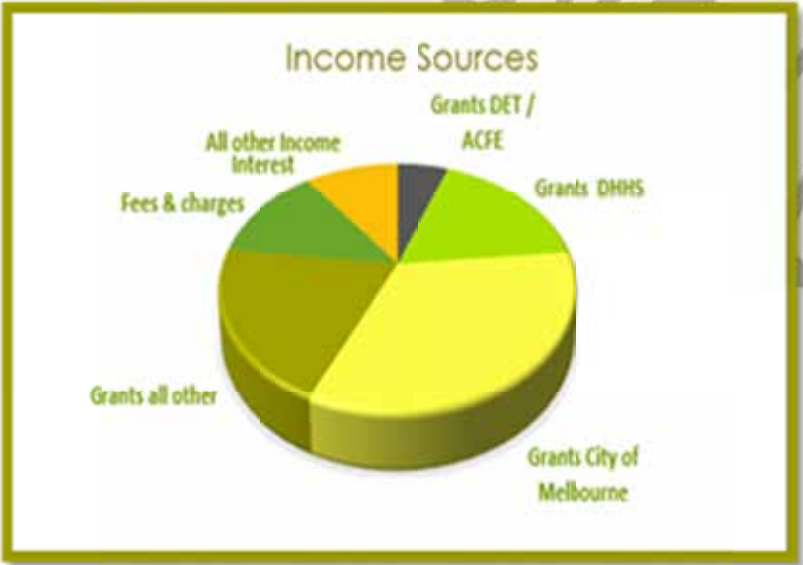
associated with the pandemic as well as rebuilding the programs that have declined over the last two years.

It is important to mention that at all times over the past two years The Centre has remained solvent. The Centre's Board monitors this closely. With cash and liquid assets totalling nearly \$295,000 at 30 June this year, the Board has no concerns with regard to The Centre's solvency at this time.

Despite the uncertainty regarding returning to normal operation The Board has reviewed and approved a full year budget for 2021/22, which envisages a return to normal operations this year and a reinvigorated program of activity under the

stewardship of The Centre's new Director, Ariel Valent. It also envisages a small surplus of around \$4,000 for the year to 30 June 2022.

The full set of audited financial statements is available on our website. Our auditor reported no issues with The Centre's finances and reporting again this year. I would like to thank the Board for their diligence and support in overseeing the accounts and treasury of The Centre. The day-to-day management of The Centre's finances and reporting is exemplary and sincere thanks to our CFO, Craig Barry, and our Director, Ariel Valent, for ensuring this high standard is maintained.



The Centre Courses & Activities (Sept – Dec)

The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne hosts programs and activities for local residents. All programs subject to COVID restrictions. Check details and call if unsure.

Book online at www.centre.org.au, by phone on (03) 9328 1126 or in person at The Centre, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne. The Centre is reviewing its programs for 2022, if you have an idea for a course or activity or if you have some skills that you would like to share with others, please contact us.

Health & Wellbeing

Pilates

Pilates aims to improve your awareness of how to use your body correctly and strengthen your postural muscles to allow you to support your spine. Pilates classes are graded so it is possible to find the level that suits your ability, experience or limitations. Exercises can be adjusted to suit all ages. Graded classes are taught by Brazilian-trained physiotherapist Fernanda Cury.

Intermediate

This class provides the next step up with more challenging exercises. Strengthen your postural muscles and exercise in a manner that is safe for all your joints.
Tuesdays 5.30 pm-6.30 pm
(starting 5 October for 10 weeks)
Plus school holiday specials
21 & 28 Sept
Thursdays 8 pm-9 pm
(starting 7 October for 10 weeks)
Meat Market, 5 Blackwood St, North Melbourne

For Seniors

Older Adults Exercise

A general strengthening class for those 60+. Includes low impact aerobics, balance exercises, strengthening exercises using exercise band resistance for all parts of the body. Suitable for people of all abilities.
Cost: \$19.70 (\$14.40) per class when booking for the term.
Wednesdays 10.30 am-11.30 am
(starting 6 October for 10 weeks)

Community Morning Teas

Join this group of multicultural seniors for an informal chat over morning tea – a place where friendships can flourish. Sometimes with a guest speaker. \$5 per session.
1st Tuesday each month
10 am – 12 noon (ongoing)
The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
In person only (when restrictions allow)

General/Intro to Pilates

A class that caters for all levels of experience.
Wednesdays 9:15 am-10:15 am
(starting 6 October for 10 weeks)
Legion Hall, George Johnson Lane (behind North Melbourne Library)

Beginners

The basics are still covered but some knowledge is assumed. Over the term the exercises will progress to more challenging options as you build strength and flexibility.
Thursdays 5.30 pm-6.30 pm
(starting 7 October for 10 weeks)
Meat Market, 5 Blackwood St, North Melbourne

Intermediate Plus

Our hardest class is suitable for people with a good level of body awareness and strength. Designed to improve your trunk strength and provide a really stable base for your other sports or daily activities.
Thursdays 6.45 pm-7.45 pm
(starting 7 October for 10 weeks)
Plus school holiday specials
23 & 30 Sept
Meat Market, 5 Blackwood St, North Melbourne

Pilates and Older Adults Exercise Classes: \$19.70 (\$14.40) per class when booking for the term.

Young @ Heart Dance Club

Join Catalina for a fun dance class for seniors. One part zumba, one part cha-cha-cha and three parts laughter. It's a super-fun community event, where you can meet other local seniors. All levels, genders, abilities and dance skills welcome. It's a follow-the-leader format and no partner is required. Improve co-ordination, keep active, learn new dance steps and dance to beautiful music from all over the world. Bring your friends along.
Cost: \$15 (\$12 Concession) per class when booking for the term.
Mondays 12 noon – 12.45 pm
(starting 4 October for 10 weeks)
Legion Hall, George Johnson Lane (behind North Melbourne Library)

Centre Adventures

Visit historical, cultural or horticultural places of interest and significance. Normally a full-day bus trip, Centre Adventures are a great way to socialise and get out beyond the everyday.
\$43 (\$33 Concession).
4th Tuesday each month
9.30 am – 5 pm
Departing from The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
In person only (when restrictions allow)

Health & Wellbeing classes
run via Zoom if government restrictions prevent in-person gatherings

Bicycle Users Group

A group for cycling enthusiasts who live and work in North Melbourne and West Melbourne. A new group in 2021, we are getting established to provide a friendly network of locals who love to ride.
Second Tuesday of the month, 6pm- 7.30pm
The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
Or via Zoom when required

Community Dinner

Celebrate our re-discovered sense of freedom (hopefully). Gather together with neighbours for a meal, some music and a treasure hunt. Food provided; donations welcome.
Sunday 5 December 5:30pm onwards
Miller St Reserve (cnr Hawke and Curzon streets), West Melbourne
Presented with West Melbourne Baptist Community Centre

Computers, Tech & Digital

Computers: Beyond Basics

Learn how to take your computer beyond basics: Windows 10 settings, updates, backups, cloud computing and using your computer to enhance productivity. Cost: \$60 (\$45 Concession)
Fridays 1-3.30 pm
(starting 22 October for eight weeks)
The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne OR via Zoom when required

iGadgets

Develop the skills and knowledge in using your mobile device to its fullest potential. Calendar, email, accessing files, social media and online accounts. Cost: \$30 (\$20 Concession)
Wednesday 1pm-3pm
(starting 3 November for six weeks)
The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne



Business

Introduction to Accounting and Bookkeeping

This introductory course will explain the fundamentals of accounting and bookkeeping. By the end of this course, you will have the bookkeeping skills needed to run a small business or work in a position requiring an understanding of accounting and bookkeeping. Learn how to record financial transactions and produce balance sheet and profit and loss reports. Cost: \$76 (\$50 Concession)
Mondays 4-7 pm
(starting 18 October for 8 weeks)
The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne OR via Zoom when required

Out and About

A walk for neighbours around the neighbourhood. Join ‘Mrs North Melbourne’ Lorna Hannan for a short walk around North Melbourne. Learn about the hidden history of those places you walk past every day. **FREE**
Last Saturday of the month 10 am-11 am
Leaving from The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
Contact us to discuss online options



For Kids

Home Away From Homework Club

Friendly and inclusive, students come to complete their homework (or our extra material) with the assistance of tutors. There are also games, and a nutritious snack and drink provided. For children in Grades 4 to Year 9. **FREE**
Wednesdays 3.30 pm-5 pm
– The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
Wednesdays 4.30 pm-6 pm
– North Melbourne Language & Learning, 33 Alfred St, North Melbourne

Creative Arts

Sing NoW Community Choir

A renewed version of the much loved Errol’s Angels. Join new music director Jane York in this inclusive, all-ages community choir. The choir sings beautiful arrangements of popular songs from 1960s to the present day. No previous experience required.
Cost: \$17.50 (\$11 Concession) per session when booking for the term, or buy a 5-session pass for \$100 (\$65).
Thursdays 7 pm-8.30 pm (starting 7 October for 10 weeks)
Sokol Melbourne, 497 Queensberry St, North Melbourne
OR via Zoom when required

Music Club

Bring your current favourite music track. Share what you love about it and expand your musical knowledge by listening to others. Every genre is welcome. BYO dinner and drinks if you want. **FREE**
Monthly on last Wednesday of the month 7 pm-8.30 pm
The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
OR via Zoom when required

Human Library

Join in this empowering project where you get to tell your story. A workshop series to help people find their voice and be confident sharing about themselves. With magnetic presenters to help break through perceptions, gain resilience and learn how to present in person and to camera. See page 9 for more detail. **FREE**
Saturdays 11 am-1 pm
(Starting 9 October for seven weeks)
The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne

Food & Gardening

To Market, To Market

With Queen Victoria Market on our doorstep, North and West Melbourne residents are lucky shoppers. Learn some history, meet the stallholders and most importantly stock up on good value, healthy produce. **FREE**
Second Thursday of the month 11 am – 1 pm
Departing from The Centre, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne



Digital Gardening Club

An online meet-up for those passionate about urban gardening, growing food and sustainability. Whether you are an experienced green thumb, or compost-curious, learn together as locals share their tips, tricks and gardening stories. **FREE.**
Sundays, 1pm - 2pm
(Starting 26 September)
Online as long as restrictions last

Costs:
We don’t want cost to be a barrier to participation. Those with the means are encouraged to pay a bit more so that others can also participate. Some programs have fixed costs but The Centre is trialling ‘Pay What You Can’ for new programs. Contact The Centre for more information. Programs with low interest may not go ahead.



Take a walk into our history

1) 263 Adderley Street (Corner of Abbotsford and Adderley streets)

The two-storey house at the corner of Abbotsford and Adderley streets was built in 1875. Many original features have survived to make a significant contribution to the presentation of Adderley Street. Note the arcaded verandah and fine cement detailing, including a frieze separating the levels.

The rear of the property has been developed by the owners with a focus on self-sustainability and nature, with these elements visible from the street due to a low sidewall. A 1970s' era anti-nuclear mural is painted on the Abbotsford Street frontage. The greening of the adjacent footpaths makes the corner a contemplative and inspirational place.

2) 617-643 Spencer Street

This site (over 5,000 square metres) consists of a collection of one-, two- and three-storey buildings of mixed commercial use. Most of the site was used for sawmills in the 19th century, with the rest of the land consisting of half a dozen cottages and open land at the rear of properties on Spencer, Abbotsford and Ireland streets. While no 19th century structures have survived, the present land use has more or less retained the large central courtyard of the sawmill with buildings constructed around the perimeter. Access it from either

This is the fourth in a series of walks. Words and photographs by Karl Hessian. Information for 1 and 3 draws on Graeme Butler's West Melbourne Heritage Review (2016).

Want to know more?

Hotham History Project researches and records the history of our surroundings and runs regular walks, talks and workshops. A number of books it has published can be purchased through the website. The Project is keen to attract new members and encourage people to participate in whatever way they can. Details: www.hothamhistory.org.au



Spencer Street or Ireland Street during business hours.

3) 109-111 Hawke Street

This building was erected in 1926 by Widdis Diamond Dry Cells, a battery manufacturer operating out of the adjacent building at No. 117. Designed by the same architect, they share similar features, notably tall ornamental columns (pilasters) and a "bowed raised entablature to the central bay". After Widdis relocated in the 1930s, the building housed a pram manufacturer then a gymnasium when occupied by Paul Anderson ('Mighty Apollo'). This usage is reflected in the name of the adjacent public lane and the retention of the Mighty Apollo signage on the Hawke Street facade after the building was redeveloped in the 2010s.

4) The Adderley and Hawke streets park

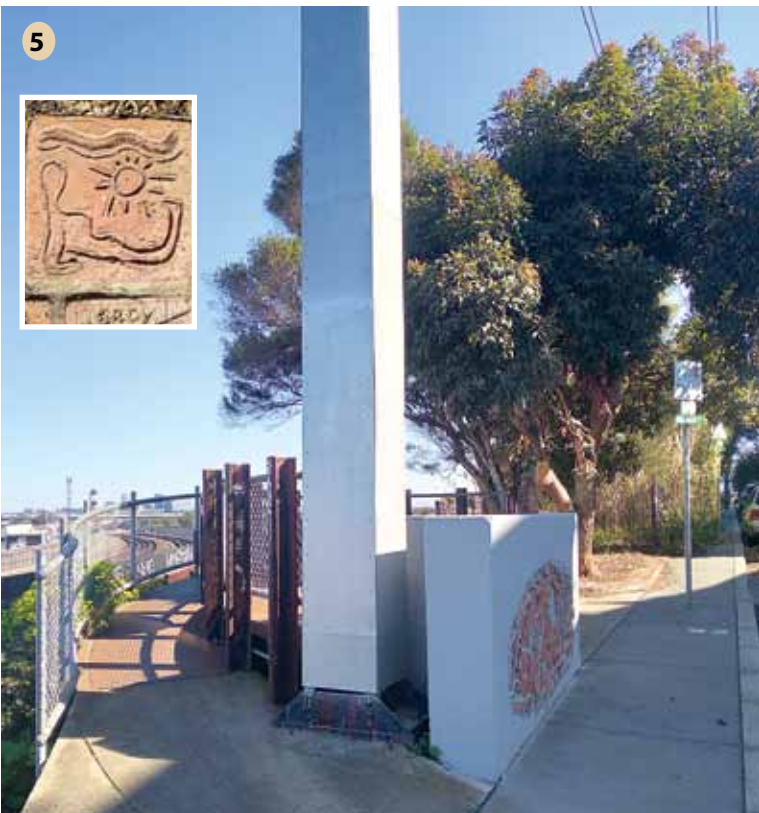
This popular local park was established not on reserved crown land but on private land. As recently as the 1960s it consisted of three properties fronting Adderley Street, a private lane, and two properties fronting Hawke Street. The City of Melbourne acquired the five titles and developed the first park on the site in 1985.

In 2015 the City acquired and demolished an adjacent warehouse and further expanded the park footprint into Hawke Street. The private lane, long physically gone, was formally discontinued as a road, and Madden Lane was declared a public highway and brought under City management.

5) Railway Viewing Platform

The platform, along the escarpment as it rises up Railway Place, has a commanding view over the track and trains below. Wonderfully asymmetric, it is built out of concrete and steel and incorporates repurposed track and train wheels.

At one end there is a curious looking obelisk, a section of signalling tower that was originally exposed but has since been covered to prevent it from being climbed. The approach from North Melbourne station consists of concrete edging in which are laid over 70 etched clay tiles, many by children. A plaque records that the platform was launched by Michael Leunig in 1994.



Design a Flag for North & West Melbourne

Entries close 20 November
Winning flag will be printed and flown
Plus \$100 to spend at local shops
See page 2 for details

Enquires to (03) 9328 1126 or e-mail admin@centre.org.au

NOTICEBOARD

There is a flipside of COVID isolation

This time last year, we all believed that 2020 was a one-of-a-kind year and that 2021 would be much more fun and free.

Sadly, it hasn't been the case, globally or locally. Our community was returned to lockdown and we have had local COVID-19 cases, sending many people into isolation.

On the flipside, people in our community have reached out to lend a hand to others, whether by delivering food and supplies, being an exercise partner or simply providing welcome distractions on the phone or online.

The Centre's programs have been severely affected by the restrictions necessary to stop the spread of COVID-19. Our doors were shut for both community and staff, our homework clubs were shuttered, our creative arts and health and wellbeing programs were delivered online and many other activities postponed.

FROM THE CENTRE DIRECTOR Ariel Valent



Alex has worked extensively with Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and is studying for a master's in public policy and management. As we welcome Alex, we also thank former coordinator Stacey Halls, who has taken on a key role at Rainbow Health Victoria.

Nevertheless, we continued to reach out to provide assistance, and we remain a vital resource for the local community.

It was only in the last issue of the *News* that we were spruiking a reinvented Spring Fling Festival for October. Unfortunately, we have had to cancel Spring Fling for the second year running. Check page 2 for alternative activities that attempt to capture the fun and community spirit of the festival.

At The Centre, we are not only dealing with the present but also looking ahead. We have commissioned Sarah Dyer from Strategic Development Group to conduct a community needs

analysis for North Melbourne and West Melbourne.

The analysis will focus on community empowerment and will help the local community sector understand priorities, gaps, strengths and opportunities. It will guide the next stage of evolution for The Centre. If you would like to contribute, please see below.

Alex Gyles has just joined The Centre team as community development coordinator. He is an experienced community development professional with expertise in cross-cultural communication, strategy development, project management and facilitation.



Alex Gyles has joined The Centre.

Let's find out what community needs

The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne is undertaking a community needs analysis for North and West Melbourne. While many of The Centre's programs have been successful for many

years, the local community has changed a lot, and continues to do so. As we recover from the effects of COVID-19, new approaches may be called for.

The Centre has commissioned Sarah Dyer from Strategic

Development Group to conduct this analysis. Sarah has a wealth of experience in community engagement, international development and disability services and is also a North Melbourne resident.

"I am very excited to be bringing my professional expertise to my own neighbourhood for the first time. This project is designed to uncover the strengths and assets of our community, as well as identifying the priority needs, barriers to engagement and gaps."

Through September, Sarah will be conducting targeted initial interviews, which, depending on

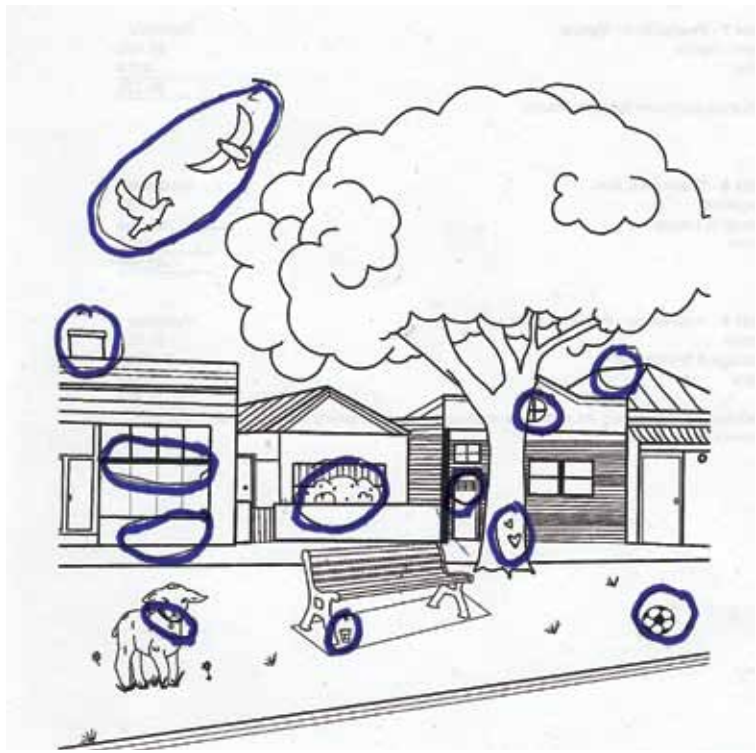
COVID-19 restrictions, will lead to a more thorough engagement across October and November. In particular, the analysis will attempt to reach those people whose voices are not normally heard.

What's your opinion? Do you know someone whose needs aren't being met?

Join in a quick conversation at:
<https://bit.ly/northwestmelb>



Spot the Difference (page 14) answers



Send contributions, letters and feedback to:

North & West Melbourne News
The Centre, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne 3051
Email: editorial@centre.org.au Telephone: 9328 1126

Summer 2021 issue:

Copy deadline: Friday 5 November

Publication date: Friday 3 December

Autumn 2022 issue:

Copy deadline: 5 Friday 11 February

Publication: Friday 11 March

NWMN advertisement sizes and rates for 2021

Size	Colour	Mono
Full page (24 cm wide x 34 cm high)	\$1732.50	\$1457.50
Half page (24 cm wide x 17 cm high or 12 cm wide x 34 cm high)	\$841.50	\$731.50
One-third page (24 cm wide x 12 cm high or 12 cm wide x 17 cm high)	\$451.00	\$390.50
One-eighth page (12 cm wide x 8.5 cm high)	\$225.50	\$198.00
One-sixteenth page (12 cm wide x 4 cm high)	\$121.00	\$104.50
Business card (in Services Directory) (9 cm wide x 5.5 cm high)	\$104.50	\$88.00

- Prices inclusive of GST
- Book a repeat advertisement for four issues for a 20% discount, total amount payable at time of booking.
- Prices are for supplied artwork (high-resolution PDF). Layout services are available — talk to us about how we can help.
- The *News* reserves the right to reject advertising bookings that are outside the standards for a community-based publication.

• For info and bookings, email: advertising@centre.org.au

Take a walk with a purpose

If you enjoy walking around North and West Melbourne, a great way to explore areas you may not usually visit is to help with delivery of the *North & West Melbourne News* to homes and businesses.

If you are interested, please email admin@centre.org.au



The *North & West Melbourne News* is a quarterly publication produced by volunteers predominantly from North and West Melbourne. Readers' contributions and letters 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. Send articles by email to editorial@centre.org.au. Please send photographs of suitable resolution for reproduction as graphic files attached with the article.

Finance

The *News* is a program of The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne Inc, a registered charity. Costs of producing the *News* are met through advertising, sponsorships, subscriptions and donations. Donations of more than \$20 are tax deductible through the ANHCA Public Fund for DGR.

News distribution

The *News* is distributed free throughout North and West Melbourne. Get in touch if you know of anyone not receiving their copy. Further copies are available from The Centre, the North Melbourne Library and online at www.centre.org.au. Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$20 per year (four issues) sent anywhere in Australia.

Volunteers

The *News* welcomes new volunteers. If you have skills in writing, drawing, photography, archiving, subediting and proofreading, computer technology, social media or design and layout, please consider joining the team.

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Publisher: Ariel Valent

Circulation: 7,700

Printed by Express Print
5 Jones Road, Morwell 3844



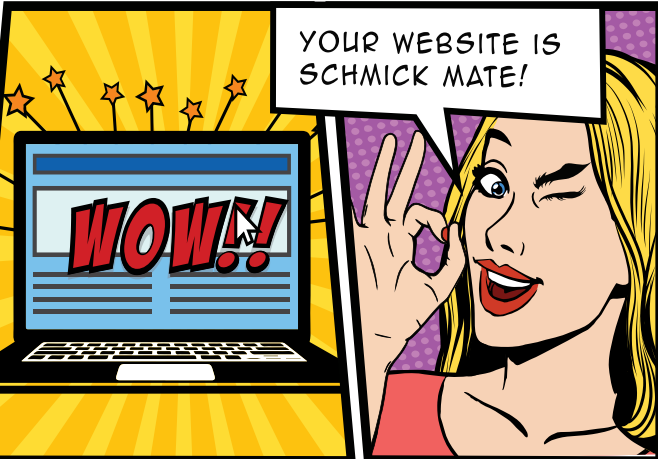
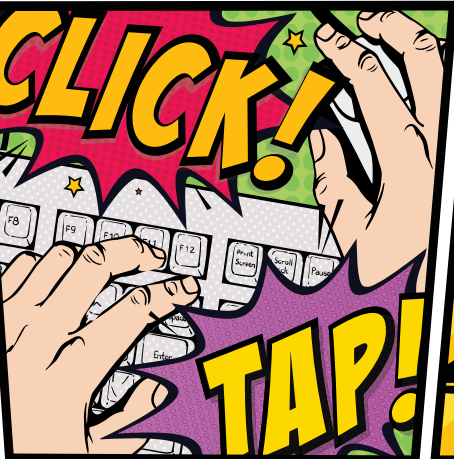
Stepping out in style

Our local Greyhound neighbours have brightened the streets on many a dreary lockdown day with their formal attire, fancy dress and leisure wear. Thanks to Rachel, from GAP Cafe, and her customers and friends for sharing these photographs.

Want to know more?
Call in to GAP Cafe, 477 King Street, West Melbourne.
Visit gap.grv.org.au for more information on adopting a greyhound.



Check out the booties!



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