

46th Year

NW MN

NORTH & WEST MELBOURNE NEWS

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Roos take the trophy – again

North Melbourne Football Club have another premiership cup after the AFLW Kangaroos won their second consecutive Grand Final, beating the Brisbane Lions with a scoreline 9.2 (56) to 2.4 (16).

A crowd of 12,741 at Ikon Park witnessed the spectacle of a night grand final on Saturday 29 November.

Eilish Sheerin was the unanimous choice for Best on Ground with a dominant 28 disposals, nine clearances and two goals.

The team has now won 27 games straight, a record across both men's and women's AFL competitions.

The team was awarded the Keys to the City by Lord Mayor Nick Reece in honour of their achievement.

Thrilled fans score a snap with AFLW Best and Fairest winner Ash Riddell.



Hawke Street Park delayed for further consultation

Locals who packed a public meeting in West Melbourne in November learned the Hawke Street Linear Park isn't expected to start until the last quarter of 2026.

They were told a gas main and high voltage power lines meant it is not possible to plant the trees included in the proposal endorsed by the Council in May 2023.

Instead, residents will be consulted through December and January on whether to stick with that plan but with grass and low-level plants instead of the trees or agree to a new proposal.

The latest plan includes 130 trees in the middle of Hawke St, bike lanes between Victoria and Adderley Streets, removal of 52 car parking spaces and an expansion of the Hawke and Curzon Street Reserve.

The meeting, which was at times feisty, happened in the lead up to the opening of the Westgate Tunnel. Many residents expressed concern it would lead to more traffic and 'rat running' through their streets.

Jennifer Howard from Transport



Speakers get down to business at public meeting for Hawke Street Linear Park.

Victoria apologised to residents about recent work in the area, telling the meeting the noise and disruption was under-estimated and locals weren't given enough notice. "I don't think we got that right," she said.

Ms Howard promised to consult and seek feedback from locals in coming months.

The recent reduction in on-street parking on Victoria Street prompted vocal criticism from some attendees at the public meeting.

Other frustrated locals expressed

concern about an increase in big trucks on local streets and many people called for immediate reductions in speed limits to improve safety.

Officials were pushed for information about how much more traffic is expected in local streets with the opening of the tunnel. That modelling is expected to be released around the same time as the tunnel opening.

Meeting attendees were told there will be six months of traffic pattern monitoring after the Westgate Tunnel Opens.

International award for River Nile School

Louise Yaxley

River Nile School in North Melbourne won global and local recognition recently, as the only Australian finalist in the World's Best Schools awards.

The prestigious T4 awards listed River Nile in the top ten schools in the world for overcoming adversity, noting that it is breaking down barriers to education for young women and providing a pathway to economic independence.

River Nile in Capel St is a not-for-profit secondary school for refugee and asylum-seeking women aged 15 to 24.

It was recognised alongside schools in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Palestine, Pakistan, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the USA. The top award went to a primary school in São Paulo, Brazil.

Being part of that list feels amazing, student Batool said. "It is an honour, and it makes everyone – students, teachers and families – feel proud. It shows that all the hard work, kindness and teamwork in the school really matter and are recognised," she said.

At the local level, River Nile recently won the City of Melbourne Community Award. It was described as a vibrant, multicultural community and welcoming zone, full of hope and transformation.

"They celebrate diversity, amplify young refugee voices and help every young person to their strengths, purpose and place in the world," the awards body said.

Both awards left the students with an enormous sense of pride.

Student Sarah described the school

as encouraging and special, "because everyone is kind and supportive. The teachers help us learn in a safe and welcoming environment."

Another student, Waad, described the school as a wonderful community. She noted the variety of opportunities provided and highlighted the cheerful teachers.

Student Yeabsira noted the support she received in "building my confidence, improving my English, discovering my hobbies and working toward my dream course."

School Principal Charles Hertzog said the awards recognise River Nile's trauma-informed approach and the way it tailors learning for each student.

Community Engagement Officer Eva Corifeo highlighted the benefits of having a very diverse staff, with a range of journeys and experiences to support and understand students.

Her aim is for the school to help more communities in outer Melbourne, "where a lot of young refugees are settling and might find it hard to engage in meaningful educational opportunities."

Charles Hertzog's goal is to see stronger support available beyond the school, "strengthening the systems around them so they can access long-term opportunities. There's huge goodwill in Melbourne," he said. "The work ahead is turning that goodwill into sustained, practical support."

Louise Yaxley is Deputy Editor of the News.

Our News makes news

North & West Melbourne News starred at the Community Newspaper Association of Victoria's (CNAV) 2025 awards.

We were joint winners of 'Best newspaper' and one of three finalists for 'Best design and layout'.

Centre director Ariel Valent's column, 'Finding safety if food security makes it hard to set the table', in the Autumn 2025 issue, was joint winner for 'Best editorial

comment'.

CNAV is the peak body representing more than 70 not-for-profit community newspapers across Victoria.

With media companies closing local papers across the country, these volunteer-driven news outlets, in print and online, are playing an increasingly important role in keeping communities informed about local issues and activities.



Page 5



Page 6



Pages 12-15



Page 17

Volunteers recognised for their years of contribution

The value of North Melbourne Rotary's signature project, the Phonse Tobin awards, was highlighted by Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece in October.

The lord mayor presented awards to Madeleine Scully, Janet Graham and Karl Hessian for their service as volunteers.

Madeleine has been a long-serving volunteer with the City of Melbourne Bowls Club, including spending two years as Chair. For the past decade she has been on the Board of Management. Her contributions have included regularly writing articles for this paper.

Janet was recognised for her many years of service for our paper, the *North & West Melbourne News* and Karl for his voluntary work with the North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre.

Neighbourhood Centre director Ariel Valent said Janet Graham is a legend.

"Janet's roots with the paper go deep into the past and I love hearing her talk about how she and others used to gather around a big table to do the layout. She is still involved



Award winners: Janet Graham, Karl Hessian and Madeleine Scully.

today as our advertising manager, helping local businesses communicate with the broader community, while making our social enterprise model thrive," he said.

Karl's contribution with NWMNC began as a tutor in the Homework Club before going on to become the Neighbourhood Centre's chair. Ariel said he was an "erudite and inclusive chair who led our organisation through some very challenging times" and noted he had been a big supporter of the Queensberry Cup.

"In its first year, there were myriad challenges, but Karl's encouragement to keep going

was key to it getting off the ground. He retired from the committee in 2023, but he's volunteering and was a great MC on stage at the recent Queensberry Cup."

The awards are sponsored by Tobin Brothers Funerals to honour the memory of Phonse Tobin, a founding member of the North Melbourne Rotary Club. They have been going for 26 years, but this was the first time a Melbourne Lord Mayor has attended.

All three of this year's winners donated their \$500 award prize money to charity.

50th Birthday Gala Dinner

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of
North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre

Thursday 12 March 2026

Time: 6:30 pm
Panarcadian Hall
570 Victoria St,
North Melbourne

A night full of entertainment and surprises.

MC Richard Piper

Two-course dinner by Al Makan.

Bookings and Info



North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre
Tel: 9328 1126
58 Errol St
North Melbourne



From the editor's desk: Keeping 'cool' in the summer heat

Liam Heitmann-Ryce-LeMercier

This issue of the *News* is a nod to *Time Out's* ranking North Melbourne among its top-25 'coolest' neighbourhoods in the world.

Many of the stories explore what makes our fantastic suburbs so cool, along with our usual celebration of local voices and achievements.

You will also note the introduction of two new columns – recipes and sports – as well as a new member of our Editorial Team, Swagata

Majumdar. We are delighted to have her on board.

The Summer 2025 issue also marks my third and final effort as *News* Editor. I have moved to Berlin at the end of November, and wish to thank everyone who made my time at the paper so pleasant and organised. The paper is left in the excellent hands of the Editorial Team, who will keep the ship on course.



Simonds students' bounty of donations for Uniting's Food for Family initiative.

Simonds students learn the joy of giving

Ryan Bentley

Simonds Catholic College students recently collected more than 850 items to help Victorians experiencing homelessness or hardship. Students and staff joined forces to collect non-perishable foods, hygiene products and cleaning items as the college proudly participated in the Food for

Families initiative, run by Uniting.

The drive was organised by the school's Community Service students, who visited each homeroom to set up donation boxes and speak about the importance of generosity and social responsibility. Their efforts inspired an enthusiastic response from the college community, with the majority

of top donors coming from Years 7 and 8. In total, more than 850 items were collected, a testament to the compassion and community spirit that continues to thrive at Simonds. The initiative was led by Community Services Coordinator, Akyra Tran.

Ryan Bentley is the Arts Faculty leader at Simonds Catholic College.

Laneway's new name honours historic figure

Nineteen-year-old Irish migrant Anastasia Leahy moved to the Benevolent Asylum in North Melbourne 168 years ago. Now, a laneway on the site has been named after her.

The area between Curzon and Abbotsford Streets in North Melbourne is now designated as Anastasia Lane to recognise that she was the longest-standing resident, having spent 54 years at the site.

Naming previously anonymous spaces is intended to make the area safer by helping emergency services

find them easily.

The naming rules also encourage a link to the site, and Anastasia Lane certainly meets that criteria.

Anastasia Leahy was born in Tipperary in Ireland around 1838 and arrived in Melbourne in 1853. Just four years later, as a completely blind 19-year-old, she entered the Benevolent Asylum, which had opened in 1851.

Anastasia lived there until the asylum was demolished in 1911 and she and all other residents were moved to Cheltenham, where Anastasia

died in 1921 at the age of 83. She was described in the annual report for that year as having a "happy disposition".

The Hotham History Project has championed the plan to name the space after Anastasia, especially Mary Kehoe who wrote a history of the asylum in 1998.

"I am thrilled that Anastasia has finally been recognised on the land where she spent so much of her life," Mary told the *News*.

Changes coming to 57 tram route – have your say

The Department of Transport and Planning is calling for feedback on proposed tram stop changes along Route 57.

New G-Class trams are on their way. These 25-metre-long trams are about 50% longer than current trams, and so changes at tram stops are required.

There are proposed changes to Stops 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14. These represent some of the busiest sections of the route, from the corner of Victoria and Howard Streets to the corner of Queensberry and Abbotsford Streets.

Community feedback will inform a decision on Errol Street tram stops. Make sure you have your say before 24 December.

engage.vic.gov.au

A day for kids to learn through play

Swagata Majumdar

Despite the rain, energy was high at the North Melbourne Community Centre as more than 25 families came together for the city's first Open Playgroup Day.

Hosted by the City of Melbourne's Parenting Services team, the October event transformed the centre into a vibrant space filled with art and music.

The Open Playgroup Day featured a mix of hands-on activities: an open playroom with sensory toys; a painting corner with ArtBus; a community mural led by the YMCA; and interactive displays by the Park Rangers. The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) also participated, engaging parents interested in their free, home-based early learning and parenting program. HIPPY helps parents become their children's first teachers through fun, play-led learning at home.

The event was part of Children's Week, which this year had the theme *Everyone should know about children's rights*, reflecting Article 42 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF Australia reinforced that message, noting that "play is how children learn, grow, connect and heal. Every child has the right to play – no matter who they are or where they live."

Councillor Gladys Liu, Chair of the City of Melbourne's Community and City Services portfolio, said the event embodied the spirit of Children's Week. "Children's Week celebrates every child's right to play, learn and be heard – and that's exactly what our Open Playgroup Day at the much-loved North Melbourne Community Centre was all about," she said.

"Families from all walks of life came together with a spirit of curiosity and connection. Programs like this lay the foundations for lifelong wellbeing and



learning – while building social connection and a sense of belonging right across our community."

Parents shared the enthusiasm. Laila Maqsoodi from West Melbourne said her two-year-old son Abraar "was mesmerised by the Park Ranger displays and circle time." Laila connected with a few other parents herself at the event.

Anirban Bhattacharya from Southbank noted, "The painting tables were a hit. My toddlers wouldn't leave the colours

behind. They didn't want to leave at all."

The morning was full of giggles, music and colour. As families left at midday, the walls of the community centre, now covered with their toddlers' artworks, were proof that North Melbourne's youngest residents had enjoyed a morning dedicated to what they do best: play and connect.

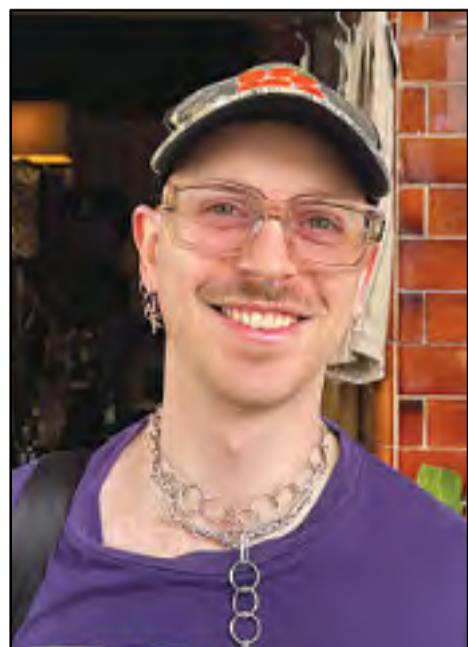
Swagata Majumdar is the new Deputy Editor of the News.



HIPPY staff lend a helping hand at the Open Playgroup Day.

Community Comment

After *Time Out* named North Melbourne one of the coolest hoods in the words, we asked four locals, "Why?"



Dior, Optical dispenser, North Melbourne

The feeling of history. It all feels very present, especially with the iron facades on Errol Street.



Martin, Martin Feller, North Melbourne

Small independent businesses doing lots of interesting things, whether its food or bars or fashion.



Monique, Social worker and naturopath, North Melbourne

The green spaces. Gardiner Reserve and the median strip on Errol Street are my favourites.



Will, Accountant, North Melbourne

The abundance of bike lanes and quiet tree-lined roads. There are also plenty of cool laneways tucked away to explore.

Community school finds a new home after 20 years

Kymie Simpson

For two decades, North Melbourne Language and Learning has offered English classes and community programs at 33 Alfred Street to residents of the North Melbourne Public Housing Estate.

When the Victorian Government announced the high-rise redevelopment, planning to replace 44 towers, our building was listed among the first to go.

After 20 years, we suddenly needed to find a new home.

We explored several sites across North Melbourne, each with strengths and limitations, but one stood out: a space in the Arden Gardens Shopping Complex, a five-minute walk from our current location.

Its size, accessibility and proximity to the communities we work alongside made the decision clear.

Our new venue at 174–178 Macaulay Road will offer more learning spaces, more community programs and greater opportunities to collaborate with local services.

For staff and volunteers, the move brings real optimism.

The upgraded facilities and additional space will support smoother operations and better working conditions.

Two classes, along with our Community Development and Administration teams, will shift to the new site. Our programs at Djerring Hub in Flemington will continue without interruption.

For the community, staying close is what matters most. Remaining within

walking distance of the public housing estate honours our long connection to the neighbourhood. Being in the same complex as Woolworths, Australia Post and a pharmacy also makes it easier for learners and community members to fit errands around classes and appointments.

We're excited about what the new building will allow: larger classrooms, flexible seating and spaces that suit the wide range of programs we run. Extra offices mean more room for partner services that directly support community needs.

We're also pleased to finally offer a dedicated prayer room, something many community members have requested for years.

There are things we will miss. Our outdoor gathering space at Alfred Street has long been a place of connection, and leaving it is bittersweet.

Our community garden will move to St Albans Anglican Church on Melrose Street.

We plan to move in late December, with the new site ready for visitors from late January. We invite the community to visit once we're settled. If you're seeking regular short-term space hire after classes or on weekends, please get in touch.

Kymie Simpson is North Melbourne Language & Learning community development coordinator

Want to know more?

Email: enquiries@nml.org.au; phone: (03) 9328 2135; website: nml.org.au

PARLIAMENT TO POSTCODE

Sarah Witty



If you live anywhere in inner Melbourne, you are probably familiar with cohealth. About 12,000 people in our electorate rely on cohealth's services. Their clinics in Kensington, Fitzroy and Collingwood grew out of Victoria's unique community health model.

The announcement that these three cohealth clinics were set to close in December came without warning and led to a flood of people visiting and contacting my office, all deeply upset by the news. For patients, there was no warning and no transition plan to alternative clinics.

I've worked closely with my colleague Jo Briskey, Member for Maribyrnong, to find a way through this. We have attended large community meetings in Kensington and Fitzroy, and met with health ministers and their departments, community health providers, health funding experts and unions.

Jo and I requested that cohealth pause the closures to extend their patients some grace, and give us more time to work on keeping these services in our communities.

The three cohealth clinics will stay open until the end of July next year after the Federal Government provided short-term funding while a longer-term solution is developed.

In other news, I was excited to visit West Melbourne business Relectrify. This innovative local business has secured \$25 million investment through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) to fast-track the roll-out of its world-first

battery energy storage system. Their product is projected to deliver 20% more energy compared to standard batteries, meaning greater returns for battery-owners and lower costs across the grid.

Relectrify was also awarded \$2.9 million in matched funding through the Government's Industry Growth Program, to enhance and develop its cell-level control technology to be ready for use in electric trucks and buses.

I'm proud that our government is investing in a Melbourne-made solution that directly supports clean energy.

In North Melbourne, I held my first Constituency Café at a great local business, Temple Arden. It was nice to be able to hear directly from constituents over a cuppa, while enjoying Temple Arden's delicious pastries.

And finally, I cannot sign off without talking about the Queensberry Cup. It was my first time at this fantastic community event and it definitely won't be my last.

Congratulations to the organisers for delivering a free, fun, family-friendly festival for everyone to enjoy. I am not sure if I was more excited or terrified about racing a billycart down that hill, but it did feel good to win my race against comedian and all-around gentleman Dane Simpson.

What to know more?

Phone: 7066 6595

Email:

Sarah.Witty.MP@aph.gov.au

Local musical talent to make a splash

Local musicians will be performing again during January and February at the North Melbourne pool. "Music By the Pool" is returning on weekends with a variety of talented locals given the chance of a paid gig.

Dates are still being finalised but will be advertised on the pool's social media accounts.

A \$2 Pool Splash entry fee will apply from Mondays to Fridays from December 1 to February 28, except on public holidays, for all City of Melbourne residents.

The discount is designed to

provide cost-of-living relief and will be evaluated, to determine whether it should be extended to the new Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation centre in future.

For those not yet confident in the water, the pool offers swimming lessons run by the YMCA, which has been teaching Victorians to swim for more than 100 years.

The council is also offering a free, five-day intensive learn-to-swim program for 600 residents at Melbourne City Baths and the Kensington Community Aquatic

Recreation Centre in January. North Melbourne pool swimming lessons are available for all ages through the summer.

"There's no better place to spend a sizzling summer's day than at North Melbourne Pool," Councillor Gladys Liu told the *North & West Melbourne News*.

"This year we're turning up the fun with the return of our \$2 Pool Splash initiative, and an exciting program of events for the whole family to enjoy."

"From swimming lessons to community events, we can't wait to see everyone dive into

summer at the North Melbourne Recreation Centre."

The summer fun will be hosted at a historic facility. The pool was constructed in 1909 as the North Melbourne Baths.

By the 1980s, the pool was showing the signs of age and suffered leaking issues. It closed in 1991 and might have stayed that way had local residents not organised a campaign for a new one, which opened in 1996.

The North Melbourne pool is at 39 Macaulay Road, next to the Arden Street football ground.

Spot the Difference

News illustrator Ed Zhao cooled off at the pool and set readers a challenge. These illustrations may look the same, but there are 18 differences. Track them down and colour in the drawing. (Answers: page 23)



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Phong Chi Lai gives new life to textiles

Mahek Patalia

Quilt-maker Phong Chi Lai says textiles are his passion: he simply follows his instincts when working with fabric. Usually, people cut fabric into different pieces to create clean shapes, but Phong keeps materials in their original form, experimenting with new ways to connect them.

He wants to extend the life of pre-made fabrics or someone else's work, acknowledging the time, emotion and labour behind any piece of cloth. His intention is to give it new purpose and new life, almost as though he is giving it a reason to keep existing.

He shows me a quilt dyed entirely in indigo, set to be exhibited in Tokushima, Japan. The work began years ago in Tasmania, where he started the dyeing in 2017; different parts came together slowly until the piece was completed in early 2025. Though he didn't work on it continuously, it evolved from idea to conception, quilting it entirely by hand.

His career as an artist has also included a community project with Maribyrnong City Council: a three-month-long initiative at Braybrook Community

Centre, where he helped produce a community banner. From dyeing the textiles all the way to stitching the final piece, more than 70 people contributed to the project.

Phong, who works from River Studios in West Melbourne, talks about the simplicity of quilting, saying we often overlook how familiar and comforting fabric is. Through his practice, he wants people to realise they don't need to spend heavily on quilts, as anybody can make one with needle, thread and fabric. And in doing so, they make something deeply personal.

Before becoming a textile artist, Phong ran his own footwear label, until its closure in 2014. He then moved to Vietnam, working for a Quilting Social Enterprise in Ho Chi Minh City for two years. It was an experience that sparked his love for textiles.

He now owns quilts from Japan, China and India, as well as the pieces he has made himself. His practice didn't truly begin until he moved from Vietnam to Kathmandu, where he worked with the Federation of Handicraft Associations of Nepal as a mentor before returning to Tasmania.



Far left: Phong with one of his creations; Above: One of Phong's reworked textiles.

Phong's love for quilting is so strong that he believes he would be doing it in some form even if it wasn't his profession. He finds it therapeutic and is grateful to do something that makes him

feel alive. He hopes to eventually work with Indigenous art centres across Australia.

Mahek Patalia is a regular writer for the News.

Nelson Alexander

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Margaret Peril leading the team.

River Nile carnival boosts students' confidence

Eva Corifeo

The 2025 River Nile Sport Carnival was a high-energy event that brought the school community together, showcasing the athletic talent and leadership of its students.

Held at the North Melbourne Recreation Centre, it featured a full program including soccer, volleyball and basketball; as well as relays, sprints, an obstacle course, and an all-school dodgeball opener.

The event aimed not only to promote physical activity, but also to provide young women with opportunities to build confidence, teamwork skills and a strong sense of belonging.

River Nile School works with young women from refugee and migrant communities, many of whom face barriers to participating in organised sport. The annual carnival is part of the school's broader commitment to creating inclusive pathways that support wellbeing and social connection.

The event's success was strengthened by the support of valued community partners, such as The Huddle, North Melbourne Recreation Centre and the North Melbourne Football Club, who assisted with set-up and on-ground coordination. River Nile School thanks all partners and volunteers who helped create a joyful and empowering day, highlighting the vital role sport can play in helping young women thrive in their new community.

Eva Corifeo is community engagement officer, sports teacher and VET teacher at the River Nile School.



Super swim for sick kids

Margaret Peril

I've signed up for the Starlight Super Swim challenge in February, and I'm looking for some awesome people to join – or sponsor – the 'Being a Melburnian' team.

The team includes 'Being a Melburnian' international students, enabling them to continue with an activity beyond the sessions with North and West Melbourne seniors this year. Together, we'll be raising life-changing funds for seriously ill kids across Australia.

This is the third year that I have been involved with the Super Swim. The Swim will take place in February but the campaign starts now, so participants can practise their strokes over the summer holidays.

I am committing to swim 20 km in February and, as a team, I am hoping that we can raise

\$1,000 for the Starlight Children's Foundation.

The Starlight Children's Foundation brings happiness to seriously ill children. They help kids of all ages regardless of disability, injury or illness because what happens in childhood lasts a lifetime.

One of the international students, Ana Paula Soares Muller, was an early volunteer for the team. "My aunt in Brazil likes swimming like me and I've invited her to participate," she said.

Let's take this epic swim challenge on together!

Want to know more?

Join or donate on the team page: superswim.org.au/t/being-a-melburnian



Want to know more?

Join or donate on the team page: superswim.org.au/t/being-a-melburnian

'Being a Melburnian' connections continue

Swimming for charity is one of many activities to spring from the Being a Melburnian program that ran in August and September connecting international students from Melbourne University and older members of the local community.

Members of the two groups have become friends, sharing coffees, meals and outings to see local wildlife - kangaroos, parrots and the odd snake.

Barracking for the ultra-successful North Melbourne Women's AFL team, joining in the community choir and experiencing the drama of the Queensberry Cup have also brought the two groups together and hopefully relieved some of the pressure of student life.

Local Melburnian, Laurence Angwin said he found it inspiring to

see international students speaking confidently in English when that was often their second language.

Alba Gatto described being fascinated to connect with people from diverse backgrounds. She believes local support networks have an important role to play in relieving homesickness and challenges.

Student Hildan Muhladin called the program transformative, explaining that having a better understanding of Australian language and accents gave him more confidence in tutorials and daily interactions.

Sarai Silaban said being an international student can create anxiety, but the Being a Melburnian program made her feel supported, accepted and like being part of a family away from home.



Sarah Witty

Federal Member for Melbourne

I am your local Federal MP and I'm here to help. Please get in touch.

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 Sarah.Witty.MP@aph.gov.au
 (03) 7066 6595



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Your City of Melbourne community update

A FREE 15 FOR EVERYONE: PARK, DASH, DONE



You can now park for free for 15 mins in any City of Melbourne metered parking space.

Good news for anyone who's ever needed to make a quick stop somewhere around our city - you can now park for free for 15 minutes in any metered parking space in the City of Melbourne

Whether you're dashing in for a coffee, picking up dry cleaning, or chasing that last elusive Pokémon, all paid street parking bays now offer 15 minutes of free parking through the EasyPark app.



The program was first rolled out in the CBD in 2023, and based on its success, the City of Melbourne has now expanded it across the entire municipality. Since its launch, drivers have clocked up more than 15 million minutes of free parking and saved over \$1.3 million.

The move has received a big thumbs up from the small business community.

"It's a fantastic initiative. A lot of our traders rely on convenience - people stopping on their way to work or school, or making a quick stop after hours," said Sylvia Hungria, President of the North and West Melbourne Precinct Association.

As the owner of a small business herself, Sylvia knows the difference parking can make to a business bottom line.

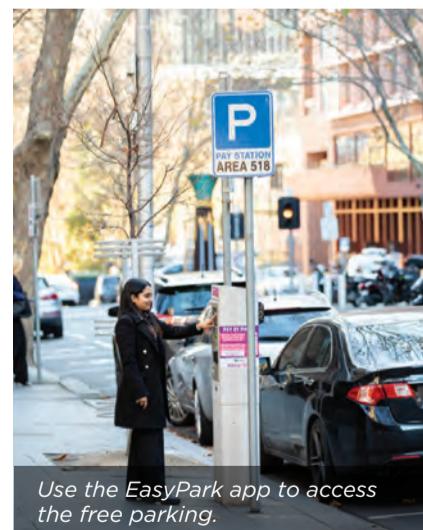
"Anything that makes it easier for people to support their local traders is a win for our small business economy. The ability to park easily for 15 minutes can be the difference between someone deciding to stop and support a local business, or driving past. It's a simple idea with a big impact," Sylvia Hungria said.

Some locals have really made the most of it. One particularly efficient Melburnian notched up around 1,100 free sessions in a single year, averaging about three quick stops a day.

Keep in mind: you get 15 minutes free parking per EasyPark zone each day. You could use 15 minutes in one area, then 15 in another, but multiple stops in the same zone count toward the same 15-minute daily total.

Melbourne is also making short-stop parking easier with 2-minute 'No Parking' spaces. You can stop in these areas for up to two minutes, provided you stay within three metres of your vehicle. They are ideal for quick pick-ups and drop-offs, such as passengers, bags, or deliveries, and are usually placed as the first space after intersections in the central city, making them easy to spot and use.

So, next time you're out and about doing a quick errand, open the EasyPark app, start a parking session and stop that session when you leave. If you're in and out within 15 minutes, we'll waive the parking fee.



Use the EasyPark app to access the free parking.

4 TOP TIPS TO AVOID FINES

- Read the signs.** Make sure you understand the time limits, restrictions, and whether it's a loading zone, disabled bay, or clearway. Even if you've parked there before, signage can change.
- Don't overstay your welcome.** If it's a 2P area, that means a two-hour maximum, even if you keep topping up your payment. You must leave the area after the time limit has ended.
- Use the right bays.** Loading zones are for trucks, couriers, taxis, and G-class registered vehicles – not for popping in for a coffee or a loaf of bread. Use the 15-minute free parking instead.
- Get your rego right:** When using the EasyPark app, make sure you enter your correct vehicle registration and parking zone number. Pay close attention to 'O' and zero when entering your registration.

For more info visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/free15min

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I've been with Bank Australia since 1999, when it was known as Kensington Community Credit Co Op. Today was extremely frustrating. It recently moved to Collins Street, among the diamond sellers, and is no longer interested in taking over-the-counter deposits. It pays stupid amounts of rent, but is no longer willing to do essential banking.

How more annoyingly pathetic can banks get?

❖❖❖

I love fascinating things from history. One of the most mysterious ancient objects is the Sayhuite Monolith, in Peru. It is 3.3 metres long and 2.1 metres wide and carved from a single piece of stone.

It has more than 200 detailed figures. The carvings, more than 1,000 years old, make it look like a small landscape with paths, ponds, canals and caves.

Some experts believe it may have been used for hydraulic tests or to make models of old methods for managing water. Others think it might have been a part of rituals to worship water, an important part of Andean society. The stone doesn't have any writing on it to tell us what it was used for.

The craftsmanship is amazing, showing how skilled and knowledgeable the people who made it were.

❖❖❖

Elizabeth the First had a few blemishes. They were easily covered up with a layer of lead-based white powder, little bit of rouge and some lippy to make it look *au naturel*. Add an assortment of spectacular wigs 'n' dresses 'n' jewels just to keep the perfect blend of natural and feminine beauty.

She would never be seen wearing anything too outrageous or overtly ostentatious, of course. Wouldn't want the general peasantry to think that WE were looking down upon them at all.

❖❖❖

At Saturn's north pole, there exists a bizarre and massive weather phenomenon: a giant hexagon-shaped storm system, unlike anything seen

VERY'S WORLD Very Impressive



elsewhere in the solar system.

First discovered by NASA's Voyager spacecraft in the early 1980s and later studied in detail by the Cassini mission, this storm is about 30,000 kilometres in diameter, large enough to easily fit Earth inside it. What makes it especially strange is its sharply defined six-sided shape, which rotates with Saturn's atmosphere but has remained remarkably stable over decades.

Scientists believe the hexagon is a result of a standing wave pattern created by high-speed atmospheric jet streams.

Unlike Earth's cyclones, which tend to be circular, Saturn's extreme rotational speed and fluid dynamics may contribute to this unusual geometric formation.

❖❖❖

When I was a kid at my maternal grandparents' house (across the street from the paternal grandparents' house) there was a Dress Up Box. I recall a dress of note. It was electric blue velvet, with a high neck, long sleeves with a skirt down to the floor, fabric-covered buttons up the sleeves and at least 20 down the back.

I used to run around in the dress all the time. But then suddenly overnight the dressing up box disappeared never to be seen again.

I later asked the grandmothers all sorts of questions: did it have a hat, handbag, what shoes, whose dress was it but after much debate and deliberation neither of them knew what dress I was talking of. Have I only been imagining it all these years?

❖❖❖

A film recommendation: *The Roses*. Bloody excellent. One of those films where I was writing my review in my head from the moment it started. Coleman and Cumberbatch are at their excellent best. Amazing fashions, food and architecture all the way through.

❖❖❖

Astronomers are celebrating a ground-breaking discovery as scientists have officially confirmed the existence of a ninth planet in our solar system.

This long-speculated planet, often referred to as Planet Nine, has fascinated researchers and space enthusiasts for years, but now its presence has been verified through detailed observations and advanced simulations.

Planet Nine is believed to be a massive object orbiting far beyond Neptune, influencing the paths of icy bodies in the outer solar system. Its discovery answers long-standing questions about unusual orbits of distant objects and provides exciting insights into the formation and evolution of our cosmic neighbourhood.

Its immense size and mysterious orbit make it one of the most intriguing discoveries in modern astronomy. It opens the door to understanding how gravitational forces shape the outer reaches of our planetary system. Scientists hope further study will reveal the planet's composition, atmosphere and potential for hosting unique phenomena.

With advanced telescopes and observational technology, humanity continues to push the boundaries of exploration, uncovering secrets that were once thought impossible to detect.

Planet Nine is more than just a new planet; it is a symbol of human curiosity and the endless pursuit of knowledge.

Very Impressive has been sharing his views on life with the News for 17 years.

FROM THE ARCHIVES Michelle Brett

The North Melbourne Advertiser was distributed in the North Melbourne area from 1873 to 1894. Some of the most intriguing articles involved the criminal cases heard in the North Melbourne Court. Here are some of the stories that ran in early December in the 1880s.

No skin off my teeth (1882)

William Towan was charged with stealing a cat skin rug, valued £4 10s. Mr Clarke allowed Towan to sleep on his factory premise and provided him with two cat skin rugs to use as blankets. Towan left in the morning, taking one of the rugs with him, and was seen at the Sarah Sands Hotel with it rolled up. Towan stated he did not know what had become of the rug and pled guilty. The Bench sent him to gaol for three months with hard labour.

High-class criminal (1882)

George Lewis was proceeded against for travelling in the first-class carriages with a second-class ticket. The case was dismissed, as it appeared that there was no notice on the door as to whether it was a first-class carriage or not.

Watch your mouth (1883)

Edward Goggins was charged with using obscene language to Constable Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick had been at Goggins' home looking for an escaped convict when the incident occurred. Goggins claimed that Fitzpatrick searched his house without a warrant and by force. Goggins added that he was trying to live an honest life, but Fitzpatrick wouldn't leave him alone and had prosecuted him in the past for stealing a whip when he hadn't. Fitzpatrick denied the accusations and both complaints were dismissed.

Shooting his mouth off (1886)

Edward O'Connor was charged with shooting Andrew Mclean with intent to murder. O'Connor had gone into Mclean's store to discuss his credit and, after using threatening language, was ejected from the store, falling over in the process. Minutes later he returned with his rifle, though Mclean just told him not to be so foolish and went inside. That evening, Mclean heard the sound of falling glass and found a hole in his window; he saw that plaster had been knocked off the opposite wall. O'Connor was found in his house by the Constable with a rifle that had recently been fired. While being handcuffed, he stated he would go quietly. The prisoner was committed to trial.

A stone's throw from prison (1888)

John Lane and Richard Dorman were charged with playing Pitch and Toss on Bendigo Street. Lane was fined 5 shillings and Dorman 7 shillings, as he had previously been in court for throwing stones.

Michelle Brett writes regularly for the News.

Take one slow step, then another and another

MOSTLY UPRIGHT Phil Gijsbers

Walking gives a chance to recalibrate, look around and take a breath. Walking isn't just a slower form of the same thing and it's not pausing progress. It's an essential part. The slower pace doesn't just add quality; the moments build on each other and add longevity. It's about finding a way to enjoy and embrace the middle bit, the mediocre.

A couple of weeks ago I raced a 50 km ultramarathon through the brutal, beautiful and technical escarpment of the Grampians Peaks Trail.

The route took me up and over 2 km of vertical ascent. Once again, slowing down was a necessity and the mediocre part was anything but bland; it was challenging, character building and stunning. The point is that we don't need to focus on the pace to get started or to improve.

And that's the thing: the slow kilometres, the walking breaks, a pause to drink a beer – it can seem mediocre, but it all counts.

Phil Gijsbers is a marathon and ultramarathon runner, podcaster and a co-owner of Bobbie Peels.

Want to know more?

You can follow Phil's running adventures at [@bobbiepeels](#) on Instagram and at [Phil Gijsbers](#) on Strava. Listen to the *Gariwerd Trail Running* podcast on Apple or Spotify.

Make sure you protect what you value online

SAFETY IN CYBERSPACE Nebojsa Pajkic

employee details and intellectual property; while others are less so.

For example, the relationships you've built with your clients or the number of highly regarded researchers in your organisation.

But not every asset is equal. Just as that man on Errol Street valued his phone more than his wallet, each business must decide which assets are most critical to its survival.

These are the ones that, if compromised in any way, would cause the greatest damage financially, reputationally, operationally or otherwise.

The first step in choosing what to protect is to document what you have. This sounds simple enough, but with the amount of digital information

that exists, sometimes this can be quite challenging in practice. Then, ask yourself which of those assets are most essential to you.

Which assets would cause an unacceptable level of damage to you if, for instance, they got corrupted or stolen? Every person and business will have a different answer.

Once you know what matters most, you can prioritise security in a more practical way. As a business, this will also help to determine how you spend your allocated budget.

For example, if you know that the cost of replacing your phone is far greater and more inconvenient than the cost of getting a new wallet and spending a bit of time cancelling a few credit cards, then you're more likely to just grab one thing – in this case, your phone – as you exit your car.

I'm sure the man on Errol Street had that same thought!

Nebojsa Pajkic is a local resident and an information security professional.



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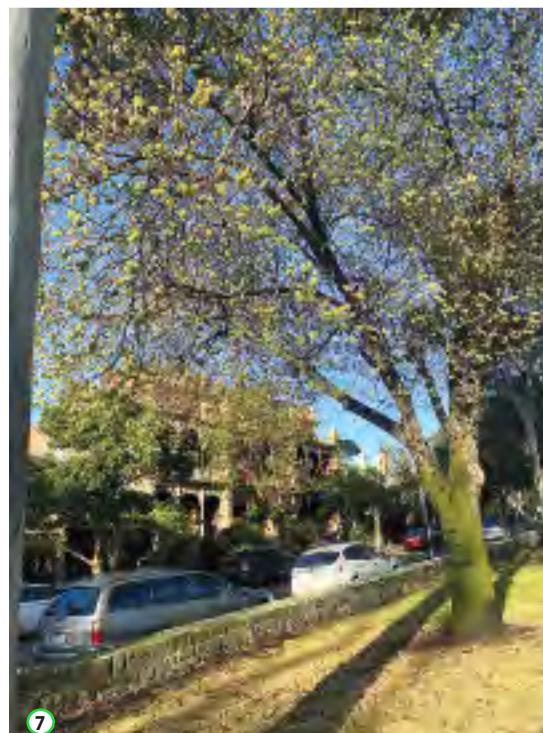
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Springing into summer

The emergence from winter dormancy in our leafy inner-city suburb was, as always, a joy to witness. In our own backyard it all seemed to happen suddenly.

As mid-spring advanced sprays of bright yellow loquats appeared on their tree, while splashes of glowing red geraniums, and orange nasturtiums lit up the garden. Pale roses began to crowd over the rose arches, and the bronze new leaves of our huge copper beech covered its previously bare branches.

In the front garden, heavily-scented white jasmine formed a bridal-like veil over the fence, pale yellow roses clung to the veranda, and deep pink blossoms crowded the crab-apple tree (1).

A line of orange Clivia blooms burst out dramatically from their strappy deep green leaves across the length of the front garden bed (2).

North Melbourne is notable for its generous street tree plantings and green spaces – and its many keen gardeners.

This year, on our daily morning walks, my dog Billy and I observed spring awakening in the front gardens of the many terraced cottages we

GARDEN GLORIES

Marion Poynter



passed, admiring the little gardens that people have made, on their own land, and often, as well, around the foot of the street trees on their nature strips (3).

In the area where we live – Hotham Hill – many of the streets are divided by grassy central median strips, usually planted with lines of trees. In Chapman Street rows of towering spotted gums in the road centre bordered along each side of the street by plantings of striking deciduous Robbinia trees with the vivid citrus-coloured foliage that reappears each spring (4).

Spotted gums can grow to 40 metres or so and are useful to disguise tall buildings such as the harsh outlines of the high Housing Estate blocks in Melrose Street (5).

It was good to see that a group of locals have set up big planting boxes on the medium strip in nearby in Erskine Street where vegetables and flowers flourish (6).

In the Canning Street Pleasance Gardens, the

emerging blossom-like leaves of the elm trees were a sight to behold (7).

Dotted through the suburb there are so many open spaces to be enjoyed: parks and squares and grassy strips – including the local football ground, the off-lead dog park, children's playgrounds (8) and, just nearby, the vast expanse of Royal Park, where Billy feels that he's really in the country (9).

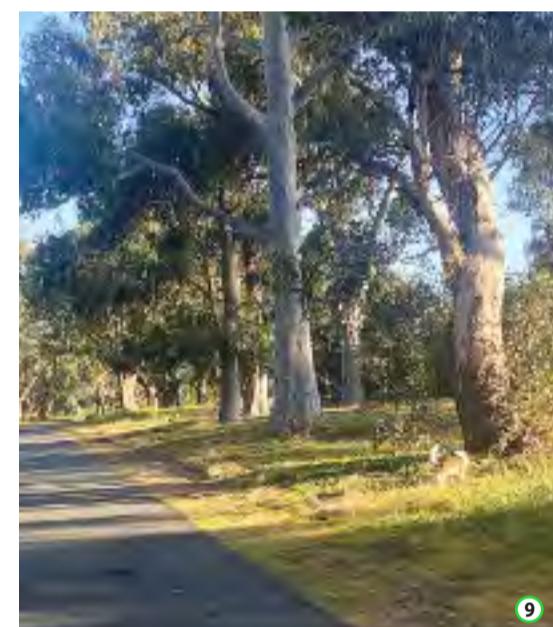
When we come across a new family of ducks in a pond (10), it is hard to believe that we are just walking-distance from the centre of Melbourne.

Passing other dogs and their walkers we wish them good morning. Dog walkers are an integral part of North Melbourne – a friendly suburb, with a congenial mixture of cultures, young and old. Over the 40 years we have lived here we have been enriched by this beautiful, cool green place!

Marion Poynter is a North Melbourne local – and keen gardener.



8



9



10

Lort Smith Animal Hospital is urging the local community to watch for heat distress in their pets this summer.

Hot weather conjures up images of fun at the beach, lounging in the shade and iced drinks with umbrellas. However, very high temperatures can be dangerous for those more vulnerable to heat, including pets.

Lort Smith chief veterinarian Dr Jessica Wilde said now is a good time to remind pet owners to keep their furry friends cool in the sweltering temperatures across Victoria over the coming months.

"Pets most at risk include the very young, senior pets, and those with underlying medical conditions," Jessica said.

"Flat-faced dog breeds, including pugs and bulldogs, are at particular risk of heat stroke as their face shape prevents adequate cooling in hot weather, even when panting."

Jessica emphasised that pets should not be tethered out in the sun. Importantly, pets should never be left in cars, even for a short

Help your pets beat the heat

time with the windows down. In a car, heat stress and death can occur within minutes.

"If you see an animal locked in a hot car, call 000 and ask for police," she said.

"Heat stroke can set in extremely fast in an animal. Pet owners are urged to seek immediate veterinary attention if they spot any signs."

Three top tips to protect your pet in the heat:

- Make sure pets have constant access to cool water and shade, or keep them indoors. Heat stress can develop extremely quickly on hot days.
- Have more than one source of water and put them in different areas, in case one of the bowls is knocked over or the shade disappears.
- Avoid walking or exercising your pet on hot days. Walk your dog in the morning when the air is the coolest.

Warning signs of heat stroke in pets include:

- excessive panting
- dark or bright red tongue and gums
- staggering
- seizures
- diarrhoea
- vomiting.

"If you are concerned a pet has been affected, get them into a cooler environment. Use wet cloths to cool them, but not iced water. Offer the animal water, but don't force them to drink," Jessica said.

"Even if the animal cools and appears to recover, take them to a vet for a thorough check, as internal organs could be affected."

WHISPERED TALES

Stories from our streets

Produce paparazzi

Chris Saliba

In the early '90s, I lived opposite the Victoria Market at the top end of Elizabeth Street in a third-floor warehouse. It was a dodgy yet delightfully bohemian setup, furnished with odds and ends from abandoned buildings.

The McDonald's had just gone up on the corner, opposite the Market's Dairy Hall, and there was consternation that this corporate presence was at odds with the Market's authentic spirit.

Ever since, I have always lived within a 10-minute walk of the Vic Market, shortcircuiting across it on closed days, ignoring keep-out signs and roped-off areas. I considered the empty sheds my own personal playground.

In those pre-internet, pre-smartphone days, a banana was still a banana; and a head of lettuce, earnest

yet unremarkable, was still a head of lettuce. But all that has changed.

With so many cameras within easy reach, itinerant shutterbugs have become ubiquitous at the Market, working like fevered paparazzi on unsuspecting fruit and vegetable displays.

A banana is now potential content for an Instagram post, and a tomato might find a second career as an online upload. Apples, pears, oranges and other attractive produce tremble under the sheds awaiting their next close-up.

Once I used to find myself in arm-to-arm combat with flinty bargain-hunters, wrestling over cheap zucchinis. Now, I step back so tourists can zoom in and take snaps of strawberries. These everyday fruits and vegetables, home staples anywhere in the world, you would

think unworthy of a traveller's special attention. But you'd be wrong.

Over at the Dairy Hall, intrepid visitors are photographing coffee cups, half-eaten bratwurst sausages and other lunchtime comestibles. Once, outside the American Doughnut Kitchen, I saw a woman buy a hot jam doughnut, take a bite, gently squeeze out the jam, and in a tricky balancing act between phone and half-eaten, oozing bun, photograph the sodden mess. The half-eaten doughnut soon became an afterthought while the woman fiddled with the phone, editing, cropping, filtering and adding text before it was sent off to its lucky recipient.

Technology has not only promoted the market's mouth-watering produce to a global audience, but has also brought in virtual visitors. FaceTime interactions are a popular way to shop, with people conducting simulated tours while chatting to conversation partners somewhere else in the world.

All of this is none of my business, of course until it is. It would be okay if this was just a case of simply capturing interesting organic matter, but smartphone cameras now pan the busy action. Digital enthusiasts march through the sheds with GoPros like conquering armies, capturing every aspect of the market's bustling atmosphere.

There's no way to avoid this surveillance. As someone who is at the market several times a week, there must be hours of video captured of me, incidentally considering a cabbage or surreptitiously squeezing an avocado. Where does all this footage end up? Uploaded to various big tech apps and platforms, stored on the servers of foreign governments? Used by corporate businesses, sold onto law enforcement?

No doubt it would be easy to build up a profile of what I get up to in the mornings. Arrival, departure time, shopping duration, purchasing history, cash or card preferences, food obsessions, queue-jumping, banana-hoarding – you name it.

Or perhaps I've got it wrong entirely. Perhaps it's all part of our evolutionary

journey. After spending so many decades under the sheds, so many happy hours on those beautiful early sunny mornings where the light catches the colour on bright red capsicums and snowy white cauliflowers, I have been woven into the very fabric of the market itself.

I have become a variety of market produce, fodder for content-hungry tourists. The next time I am captured on film in a seemingly anonymous moment, I won't complain that I have inadvertently ended up in a stranger's holiday snaps. Instead, I will embrace this personal transformation. I will think happily, *This is where I belong.*

Chris Saliba is a regular writer for the News.

What makes North Melbourne so cool?

Wilson Cheng

It's a cool, breezy day in North Melbourne as I set out to ask people what makes North Melbourne so, well, cool and breezy.

Every now and then the sound of thunder(ous trams) rumbles through the neighbourhood, but otherwise it's quiet. Unbelievably quiet when I think of the neighbourhood's proximity to the sardine-packed Swanston Street, and all the piano-playing and yelling and milling of Melbourne Central.

So there aren't many people to quiz. There are also rejections, either a brisk 'you're all right' or assertions that they're not from the area; others have theories about who's controlling the news. Others refuse the interview but give me a long spiel about themselves, which is equally fascinating and tragic.

One man said he largely agreed with North Melbourne's ranking. He lives in the country and comes to the suburb monthly for a doctor's appointment and "to relax and wine and dine".

"There's always something to do." Seeing that it has harder than expected to procure the voice of the people, I made my own investigation. Walking along uncharacteristically wide pavements, I was met with such a frenzied stirfry of cuisines that I wanted to visit them all with money I did not have.

I coveted a shawarma from Al Makan; Auction Rooms was filled

with chatty diners; and Manzé serves Mauritian cuisine!

A librarian at North Melbourne Library told me it would be loud from 3:30pm to 5:30pm because they were making water slides with primary school students.

Along Victoria Street, I passed storefront after storefront with little blurs on the doors or looming signs. Some were complete mysteries, with red velvet covering the entrance and windows I couldn't peek into. Another read 'Tofu for Dolphins', which I thought might be a vegetarian restaurant or a pet store. It ended up being a yoga studio. There's a Brazilian Jiu Jitsu training centre tucked away in there.

I wonder if the person who nominated North Melbourne as a cool neighbourhood lives here. I imagine if you are always surrounded by it, the suburb simply becomes comfortable. But for someone who isn't from the area, it feels so different from the Melbourne I know.

If it was a character in a movie, it'd be the broad-shouldered, solemn type: wide and atypically quiet. But inside the quiet is a rich and varied life of cultures and ideas and foods. It has its own community newspaper (you're reading it right now).

It's all simply very unexpected. That's pretty damn cool to me.

Wilson Cheng is a new writer for the News.

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Sing NoW! is about more than the music

Rosie Greenfield

Coming to the end of the year there is a flurry of performances to celebrate our year singing together. On stage at the Queensberry Cup and at Sokol and Christmas songs for end-of-year celebrations on Errol Street.

Performance for others is one thing, however singing with each other is mostly what we relish. In a world that often feels rushed and disconnected, we are focusing on the joy of singing together. There is a growing number of community choirs across Australia who, like us, do not use auditions or seek perfection, but pursue connection through song.

"Singing is about feeling relaxed in yourself," says one choir member. "When your body is centred and calm, the breath flows naturally. That's when the magic happens."

For many, returning to singing has unlocked memories of childhood joy. It's not just about music – it's about rediscovering something deeply human.

Groups like Sing NoW! and the celebrated Pub Choirs, founded by Astrid Jorgensen, have built their success on inclusivity. No auditions. No pressure. Just people coming together to make music. Harmonies

are simple and people who thought they couldn't sing find their voices.

Finding your voice can be a process of building trust in yourself through listening and copying. Susie our choir leader provides practice tracks for every part, encouraging members to mimic sounds and learn by listening. "If you show up, be present, and listen to one another," says a long-time member, "you'll discover the magic of community singing."

Beyond the music, choirs offer something more profound: a sense of belonging. "When you sing with others, it's like going on a run together," one participant explains. "You feel the endorphins. You feel alive."

Recent performances, including the Queensberry Cup and local showcase events, have highlighted the power of collective voices. Whether someone has been singing for three weeks or 20 years, the joy is never far away.

In a time when many are searching for meaning and connection, community choirs remind us that sometimes, all it takes is a song.

Rosie Greenfield is a Sing NoW! choir member.

Want to know more?

Sign up for SingNoW! online, via email or at NWMNC on Errol Street. Or just rock up from 7 pm to 8.30 pm Thursday nights at SOKOL Czech Club on Queensberry Street. (school terms only). Email: admin@centre.org Online: www.socialplanet.com.au/at/north-west-melbourne-neighbourhood-centre

Ceramics studio opens its doors

Robyn Phelan

As a local ceramic artist, I opened my laneway studio to the public on 9 and 10 November as part of the Australian Ceramics Open Studios (ACOS) program.

Curious locals, long-standing neighbours, pottery enthusiasts and many of my past students visited to view and buy ceramic work. I was delighted and amazed to have so many visitors despite the cold snap and driving rain.

Visitors enjoyed the highly resolved conceptual ceramic sculpture as well as some functional pottery. Alongside the 'sale' tables, I have an installation wall that archives 20 years of different making theatics, materials and techniques.

It is endlessly fascinating to have conversations about which work people most admire and for so many different aesthetic reasons.

November is the end of the academic year and as a lecturer in ceramic and history and cultures



Robyn Phelan in her Raglan Street studio. Photograph: Leni Ciuro Photography



alongside and art practice, ACOS is opportunity to sort through my playful experiments and tested ideas in preparation for new work in the coming summer months. Open Studio is also an excellent time to deep clean and reflect on what has been made and where to move forward into the next iteration of making.

As an ACOS board member, I am proud of this coordinated opportunity for potters, ceramicists and artists working with clay to sell their work in the context in which it is made: the working studio. This year more than 170 ceramicists took part.

Dr Robyn Phelan is an artist, writer and educator who has lived in North Melbourne since 1997.



Shaping men of the future



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Photographs: Jim Weatherill and Marg Huxtable

Queensberry Cup full of fun and festivities



Liam Heitmann-Ryce-LeMercier

A warm, bright afternoon that eased into a cool evening of gentle pink sunlight, the 2025 Queensberry Cup on Saturday 18 October was another busy and exciting entry into the young event's history.

Since its inception in 2022, the event has proven to be an adventurous day of fun and engineering feats for families and community members.

About 50 homemade billycart racers slalom down a winding stretch of Errol



Street against a backdrop of live music, global cuisine and much good cheer.

Previously the annual street carnival was known as Spring Fling, but the pandemic prevented its taking place in 2020 and 2021. In the years following, local residents rallied for a new way to celebrate their community.

Ariel Valent, Director of both the North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre and the Queensberry Cup, says the billycart race format was his idea.

"It formed in my head as I rode my bicycle up and down the hills of North Melbourne," he reflects, "learning about the history of the local area as a centre for horse carts."

The Neighbourhood Centre follows a strong community agenda, encouraging everyone to be active participants in the festivities and exercise their creative streaks. The billycart race, Ariel emphasises, is a great platform for this.

"It encourages people to work as a team and to show everyone what they can do," he says. "And for those on the sidelines, it's an opportunity to cheer on their friends, as well as the people they might see down the street but never talk to."

Ariel hopes that the large community presence will inspire locals to strike up conversations based on their race day experiences when they next cross paths with a racer they saw barrelling down Errol Street.

This philosophy is woven throughout the event, Valent feels. "The performers are local people; the businesses selling food are local restaurants; and there are community groups showing what they get up to, often behind closed doors."

With its diverse array of live entertainment and people dancing in closed-off streets under the warm evening air of early spring, the Queensberry Cup is a fantastic way for North and West Melbourne residents to come together.

For lifelong Melburnian Alex Cummaudo, 31, the day proved a stellar example of how local residents add to the soul and character of a suburb.

"I have lived in Melbourne my entire life and I have never felt a stronger sense of community before," he says.

"Errol Street reminds me so strongly of a country town, where local independent businesses add so much character to a location that is just a stone's throw from the CBD."

As he prepared to move to Berlin at the end of November, the experience of living in West Melbourne is one that he will carry with him in the years ahead.

"Ultimately, living here has made me feel like I really belong somewhere – in just under the two years I have spent living there – in a way that I have never experienced anywhere else."

This is Liam Heitmann-Ryce-LeMercier's final issue as Editor of the News.



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The Flying Potato takes the prize

Not every billycart at the Queensberry Cup was vying for a trophy. Each cart entered is eligible for Most Creative category.

In 2025, this prize went to The Flying Potato, made and raced by Dale and Flynn Mihaly, and Dale Kealy. Their prize is the original artwork that is re-produced here. The artwork is by North Melbourne-based artist Ruth Selover, who at the age of 72 has recently been announced as a finalist in the Luxembourg Art Prize.

"I paint to celebrate the beauty of everyday life and the warmth of human connections," Ruth says.



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Locals of all ages enjoyed the treats and terrors of Halloween. Lucia Di Mauro was out among them and provided these photographs.



Somalian refugee connects with primary students

Shaun Andrews

A former refugee's story hit home with students at North Melbourne Primary. Abdi Aden shared his journey of escaping Somalia's civil war as a child, eventually coming to Melbourne as a 16-year-old with no English, no family and no money.

He spoke to the Years 3 to 6 classes about the challenges along the way, and his path to a successful life in Australia. For some of the children, fleeing war and arriving in Australia as a refugee is part of their own family's experience.

Abdi's message included the importance of respecting others and standing up against racism.

As North Melbourne Primary's Wellbeing leader, I believe that the visit left a lasting impression on students, who responded with heartfelt messages expressing their gratitude and reflections.

Some of their thoughts included:

"You inspired everyone! I'm shocked that you went through all that without dying – but you're not the only one. My dad, who is Vietnamese, survived a war, too. When he was 16, he went on a boat with 30 other people and he didn't eat for 10 or 11 days. He's 60 now, has a family and is living a normal life, just like he wanted."

"I want to say a big thank you to you for telling

us how to be a clever, cool person. I want to tell you that I am from Ethiopia. I really feel bad about what happened to you when you were 12. I think you are really good person to meet; I can't believe you met the prime minister in real life. I hope when you are in Australia you are happy."

"Travelling from a war country is very hard, I understand, like separating from your family."

"I liked how you described how you went from Somalia to different countries and arrived at Australia with different people."

"My dad was in the war: he was 10-years-old and went to Australia with his aunty, while his mum went to Saudi Arabia. It was hard growing up without his mother."

"I learned not to be rude to other people, even if they have different backgrounds, different skin colour or different religion as you do."

"I really like when you said, 'I think everyone is cool'. Your message really wanted me to be a better person."

"You inspired me to do better. I also liked how you were funny. But it must have been scary and hard; I can't imagine."

The students' responses reflect the powerful effect of Abdi's visit, highlighting lessons of empathy, resilience and respect for diversity.

Shaun Andrews is the Wellbeing Leader at North Melbourne Primary School.

St Michael's students race to get up close to a piece of history

Fiona Dunne

On Tuesday 7 October, St Michael's Primary School experienced an exhilarating morning as the iconic Melbourne Cup visited our school.

The excitement was palpable as students donned race-inspired outfits, creating their own hats and costumes to celebrate this special occasion.

The highlight of the morning was seeing the prestigious Melbourne Cup up close. Sam Swaine, from the Victoria Racing Club, brought the Cup to St Michael's and spoke to the children about its significance, while Danny O'Brien Racing general manager Matt Harrington shared his experiences training a Melbourne Cup-winning horse.

Matt also announced the winners of a colouring competition featuring a previous Melbourne Cup winner, Vow and Declare. Each year group showcased their creativity and flair on a makeshift catwalk in an inspiring Fashion on the Field display.

Families of the St Michael's community were invited to take photographs with the Cup and question the Danny O'Brien Racing team and Sam Swaine.

It was a hugely successful day that brought

together fun, learning and the thrill of Australia's most famous horse race.

Fiona Dunne is Community Engagement Leader at St Michael's.



ELLEN SANDELL

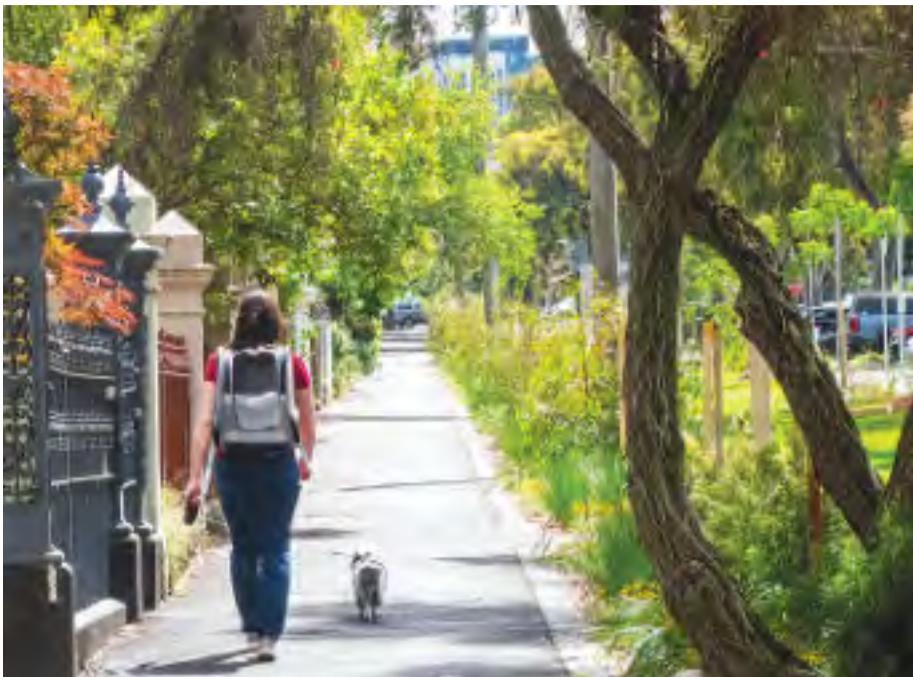
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60 Leicester Street
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Reinventing Roden

Ian Woodruff

The City of Melbourne has been busy greening the stretch of Roden Street in West Melbourne between King and Spencer Streets. Photographer Jim Wetherill and I took a wander through the now complete rejuvenation to see what locals thought of the refresh.

Our first encounter was with Michael Truong (pictured left), who was out walking his dog, Wasabi.

(Although it appeared that Wasabi was in charge, taking Michael for a walk!)

Michael has lived on Roden Street for more than 12 years and sees the recent changes as a welcome upgrade. He feels the area is safer, the open space is more inviting, and Wasabi (along with every other four-legged resident) now has a far more stimulating place to sniff around. He did note, however, that a few "rogue" visitors still refuse to pick up after their dogs.

For Michael, the new streetscape has also strengthened the sense of community, drawing neighbours out of their homes and into shared space.

"They [the council] should do this to all the streets in the area," he said. We couldn't agree more.

Next, we chatted with Mitchell (pictured left), a former Roden Street resident who moved to the Victorian coast during COVID but kept his property on the street. He's enjoying the sea change but admitted that if he ever returned to Melbourne, "Roden Street would be my first choice."

A little further along, we met Zhengjun and Ding (pictured left), who were happily settled on the new street furniture, soaking up the sun and enjoying the calmer feel of the street.

Our final conversation was with Rose Mircevski (pictured top right with me) from Our Community, the national organisation based on Victoria Street that supports Australia's not-for-profit sector (full disclosure: your author once worked there).

Arms full of groceries from the nearby Aldi, Rose told us she had always avoided Roden Street because it felt deserted and uninviting. Now, she says, it's "much prettier than before," and she even reroutes her

walk back to work to enjoy the greener, softer streetscape.

Dogs are required to stay on leash along this section, and judging by recent sightings, local cat owners appear to be following that rule too.

Our overall impression? A massive improvement to the look and feel of the street. There's more open space, more pedestrian-friendly paths, thoughtfully chosen tree plantings that support native wildlife, and a noticeably warmer community atmosphere.

The only downside is the abrupt shock you get when leaving this calm, green pocket and stepping straight into the relentless traffic of Spencer or King Street. A pedestrian crossing on either or both of those busy thoroughfares would dramatically improve walkability in the area.

Ian Woodruff is the Strategy Coordinator of the News.



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SPORTS REPORT

Playing the field



Young Eofy orienteering through the park.

Bistro de Paris' Valrhona chocolate fondant

Serves 8

Fondant ingredients

200 g unsalted butter
250 g 80% cacao valrhona dark chocolate
125 castor sugar
5 whole eggs
100 g egg yolk
50 g plain flour

Method

Preheat oven to 175°C and line a tray with baking paper. Set aside.

Melt the butter and dark chocolate



FLAVOURS OF THE SEASON

Local chefs share their secrets

together in a microwave (or double boiler on low heat) until fully melted.

Slowly add the castor sugar and whisk until fully incorporated.

Slowly add the whole eggs and whisk continuously before adding the egg yolk. Keep whisking until smooth.

Add the plain flour and mix until smooth without any lumps.

Pipe the mix into 6 cm diameter rings with baking paper lining and leave it to rest.

Bake at 175°C for 10 mins and serve with vanilla bean ice cream.

Mörk's Cinnamon bun and brown butter toast

Serves 8

Cinnamon citrus custard ingredients

135 g full cream milk
300 g thickened cream
70 g caster sugar
100 g egg yolks
1 cinnamon stick
Zest of 1 orange
Zest of 1 lemon
1 vanilla pod

Toast base ingredients

400g Mörk cinnamon buns, cut into roughly 2 cm cubes
75g brown butter, melted

Method

First infuse the milk: Place the vanilla bean (scrape the seeds out and set aside) in a pot along with the milk, cream, cinnamon stick and both citrus zests. Bring to a simmer. Remove from heat, wrap with cling film and infuse for 30 to 40 mins.

Orienteering: the thinking sport

Stuart McWilliam

Do I turn left or right at the next intersection? Which seat am I looking for? Is it quicker to go via the park or take a shortcut down this cobbled laneway? Is my map orientated the right way? Am I in the correct street?

These are some of the things you might need to think about when you go park and street orienteering. That's why orienteering is called the thinking sport: you exercise your mind as well as your body.

Most weeknights, Melburnians are out exploring their local parks and streets, getting some fresh air as well as a fresh perspective. Tuesday night events are in the inner and outer western suburbs, with daylight savings allowing for plenty of light to help navigate. In winter we wear headlamps or take a torch to guide us.

Orienteering is suitable for all ages and abilities. For runners, there are four courses available. For the 'A' course, you'll need to find 23 of the 25 controls in about 9 km, whilst on 'D' course you're looking for nine controls in about 3.5 km. You decide which ones to visit and in which order – that's the mental challenge. For powerwalkers, the aim is to score the most points possible in 65 minutes, without losing points for being late. Are you like some of our regular participants?

Opus, 12, is striving to be one of Australia's elite orienteers by his late teens. Judi, in her late 80s and with two hip replacements, loves to run and exercise her brain and body. Shane, 29, finds it perfect training for endurance running. Sue powerwalks faster than some runners. Heather follows her granddaughter around a short course.

What do you need for all this, then? Not much, just comfortable shoes and clothes for running and walking, as well as \$6. You'll be given a map with the control locations marked.

Volunteers explain the basics so you can go out with confidence.

Download MapRun app on your smart device. It beeps at each control, so you know you've found it. At the end, you can view everyone's results and compare tracks. It's great for learning to improve your route choices.

Stuart McWilliam is a legend of Victorian orienteering, having completed more than 1,200 events, as well as many more in NSW.

Want to know more?

Our next outings are at 6:30 pm Tuesday 30 December at Royal Park's Oak Street car park, and 6:30 pm 6 January at Gardiner Reserve, Dryburgh Street. Find out more at www.vicorienteering.asn.au/parkstreet



Place the scraped seeds from the vanilla bean into a mixing bowl along with the caster sugar and egg yolks. Whisk together until well combined.

Heat the milk mixture again to just under a simmer and pour over the egg mixture, quickly whisking to combine. Strain the custard into a pouring jug and set aside.

To assemble and cook the toast

Preheat oven to 160°C. Line an 8.5 inch x 4.5 inch loaf tin with baking paper. Toss the cinnamon bun cubes with the melted butter and arrange loosely in the loaf pan. Pour the custard slowly and evenly over the cinnamon bun cubes.

Sprinkle the top of the toast liberally with raw sugar crystals.

Place the loaf tin inside a larger baking pan that has high sides and fill the pan with boiling water to come halfway up the sides of the loaf pan to create a water bath. Place in oven and cook for approximately 40 to 50 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 75°C. Remove from the oven and remove the loaf pan from the water bath.

Serve warm as is, or take it up a notch by chilling the loaf until firm then cutting into 2-to-3-cm thick pieces and pan frying in a little more butter until golden brown.



Dr Elysia Robb – GP

Meet Dr. Elysia Robb - our newest GP and proud North Melbourne local! As a mum with kids in local schools, she truly understands our community.

University of Melbourne trained with specialist qualifications in women's health, Dr. Elysia provides compassionate family care.

Now welcoming new patients.



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THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

Ellen Sandell



West Gate Tunnel takes its toll

Everyone who lives in North and West Melbourne knows there's something unique about this suburb. It feels like a village, even though it's just a stone's throw from the CBD. Our wide, tree-lined streets; our pocket parks; the local shops and sense of community are really special.

TimeOut recently declared its village-vibe as one of the reasons for its choice as one of the world's coolest suburbs.

But our neighbourhood is facing a new threat.

With the opening of the West Gate toll road, people across North and West Melbourne are bracing for the impact. The new road is expected to send thousands of vehicles straight into our neighbourhood, putting extra pressure on local streets and raising concerns about congestion, safety and pollution.

Residents haven't forgotten how this project began. The toll road emerged from an unsolicited proposal by Transurban, a private toll road operator, driven largely by profit motives rather than any integrated or holistic transport plan for our city.

At the time many locals questioned the decision, and my Greens colleagues and I opposed the plan, warning that it would increase traffic and pollution. Sadly, those warnings are now coming true.

Our quiet streets will soon experience heavy car and truck movement with drivers speeding through residential streets to avoid bottlenecks, a practice known as 'rat-running'. For children walking to school, cyclists heading to work, and anyone who enjoys simply strolling their neighbourhood, the risk is obvious: more traffic means less pedestrian safety.

To make matters worse, the \$100 million promised by the State Labor

Government to help manage the extra traffic and make our streets more liveable is nowhere to be seen. Progress on the promised Hawke Street Linear park has been delayed, and it is unclear when exactly the project will be delivered – although recent community pressure has helped put this on decision-makers' agenda.

No other modern city is building private toll roads right into the centre of their urban hubs. Instead, they're investing in public transport, cycling, walking and decentralised infrastructure to create healthier, more sustainable communities. Melbourne deserves the same.

I'm working with local residents to keep the State Labor Government accountable and get better outcomes for our communities. It is too late to stop this private toll road, but the least the government can do is fulfil their promises to our local communities.

Community action has already made a difference. Because of public pressure, two of the seven proposed road changes that would have made local traffic worse have already been dropped. That's a huge win, but there's much more to do.

Our community has fought and won before, and we can do it again. With enough public pressure, we can make our streets safer, greener and more liveable for everyone.

If you share our frustration about the government's broken promises, add your voice. Sign our petition at ellensandell.com/issue/westgate.

What to know more?

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to get in touch: ellen.sandell@parliament.vic.gov.au

Hotham History celebrates a major milestone

Hotham History Project recently celebrated its 30th anniversary and founding member Lorna Hannan has been chair for the entire time.

Lorna (pictured right, cutting the anniversary cake) described the goal as finding out "the sort of people we are and what goes on here".

That has certainly been delivered. In its three decades, the group has organised at least 200 events including history walks and talks. It has published 15 books on the people, and places of North and West Melbourne and supported the publication of others.

Lorna will remain on the board, but has stepped down from her duties as chair.



Want to know more?

Hotham History Project is keen to attract new members. Details: www.hothamhistory.org.au



New book explores a family 'character'

John Smith and Louise Yaxley

A new book, *A Most Chequered Career*, was launched in November. It details the life of John Smith's great-great grandfather, Samuel Francis Smith (1811-1889).

Readers may know John from his time as the Minister of the congregation of Mark the Evangelist Church in North Melbourne, a position he held from 2000 until his retirement in 2013. John is also a long-term contributor to this newspaper, writing stories on local identities, features on quirky businesses and local characters, to musings on smashed avocado.

His book's title is a quote from an obituary that hinted at Samuel Smith being quite a character. Curiosity about that quip prompted John to bring to light a complex and intriguing life.

Samuel and his second son Henry left Liverpool in 1854 to join the Victorian Gold Rush. Within a few years, they settled in Shea Oak Log, South Australia, where both men bought land and worked as Pound Keepers. Henry married and started a family.

John describes Samuel as having a life-long wish to be a man of substance, unable to refuse a new

entrepreneurial challenge. While still a Pound Keeper, he leased a hotel and married a widow who had property. Samuel used her financial resources to start trading in land, but his entrepreneurial fervour was not matched by his management skills. He was soon summonsed to appear before the Insolvency Court.

Samuel never lost his long-held wish to become a person of substance. He developed a lime-burning and brick-making business, before eventually going to prospect for silver at Thackaringa, in far western New South Wales. That venture ended with him being summonsed this time before the Supreme Court, where he earned the epithet as "the first among the Thackaringa 'Claim Jumpers'".

John says this book was a project he had long considered. It was following the passing of his brothers Roger and Andrew in recent years, and since his retirement he was spurred to get on with the job.

The book was launched in November by historian, Emeritus Professor Graeme Davison AO at Ample Café. Copies are available at North Melbourne Books.

John Smith is long-term contributor to the News. Louise Yaxley is Deputy Editor of the News.



BETWEEN THE COVERS

Chris Saliba



Pictures of You

Tony Birch
(UQP. RRP: \$45)



Having recently won the Age Book of the Year award for *Women and Children*, and with a substantial body of work now to his name, it feels the time has come to celebrate writer Tony Birch. Hence the lushly produced *Pictures of You*, a collection of 22 previously published stories.

Birch doesn't stray too far from what he knows, concentrating on his gritty Fitzroy upbringing, a time when people's lives played out on the street. It was a time, too, when technology was whatever tools you had on hand, and what you could do with it. In a favourite story, 'The Bicycle Thieves', a foul-mouthed neighbour donates a bicycle he cobbled together to some adventure-seeking local kids. In other stories, Birch tackles his fraught relationship with his father; scenes of domestic violence; terrible working-class jobs; the vulnerability of children and the lives of Indigenous people.

Considering the difficult subject matter of many of Birch's stories, they should be harrowing to read. Instead, they provide warm, sympathetic portraits of people under duress. These are timeless stories written in a simple, unadorned prose, every word compelling.

Against Identity: The Wisdom of Escaping the Self

Alexander Douglas
(Allen Lane. RRP: \$45)



Philosopher Alexander Douglas was born in Canberra and now teaches at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. His book explores how we cultivate our identities, how such a pursuit can harm us personally and how identity - with clans, nations, social groups, ideologies - leads to social disharmony, conflict, and even war. How to break out of this mindset and perhaps find peace? Douglas examines three philosophers from different times and cultures: Zhuangzi (4th century BCE China), Spinoza (Dutch Enlightenment) and Rene Girard (20th century French theorist).

The overarching theory that Douglas weaves together is that identity is mimetic, and that we look to others and emulate people we think of as ideal. We imitate identity models; we also like others to emulate us. But identity can never be fixed, as our subjective selves change constantly, and so does the world around us. The remedy is "to embrace all possible identities while being defined by none of them".

A deeply thought-out theory of being presented in lucid, accessible prose.

The Adventures of Pongo and Stink

Lisa Nicol
(Penguin. RRP: \$19.99)



Pongo and Stink are two pigs living in the barn at Farmer Nic's. Life is pretty good, despite the occasional midnight visit from a menacing fox. But Pongo aspires to more. When she sees Farmer Nic's dog Rollo living it up at the farmhouse, enjoying affectionate pats and scones with jam and cream, she starts to get ideas. She suggests to her good friend Stink that they dress up as dogs. Stink is cautious, and he takes some persuading, but soon enough they find themselves being fitted out at Mr Waleed's costume shop. All goes to plan. Farmer Nic is fooled by the costumes and the pigs enjoy all the delights that the farmhouse has to offer. Until they are asked to perform real dog tasks, like rounding up sheep. Lisa Nicol's piggy adventure is a zany romp full of delightful improbabilities, where costume sellers speak pig and a farmer doesn't recognise his own animals wearing fluffy zip-up suits. But the story has such a wonderful energy that the reader is happily taken along for the ride. Think Shaun the Sheep meets Roald Dahl, with delightful illustrations by Karen Blair.

Ages 6 to 10.

Courses & Activities (January to April 2026)

North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre (NWMNC) hosts programs and activities for locals.
We try and offer programs that people in our community want to see happen.



Use the QR code to register your interest for forthcoming programs and share your ideas about what you think we should offer. If you are interested in a course but the time doesn't suit, let us know. Maybe you even want to offer something yourself.

**Bookings: nwmnc.org.au, 9328 1126, in person at NWMNC,
58 Errol Street, North Melbourne**

Minimum enrolments are required for courses to run.



Creative Pursuits

Sing Now! Community Choir

Join music director Susie Kelly in this inclusive community choir for adults of all ages. Sing music from across the world and spanning many decades. No previous experience required.

Thursdays 7 pm – 8.30 pm, from 29 January for 10 weeks
Sokol Melbourne, 497 Queensberry St, North Melbourne
Cost: \$18 (\$11.50 Concession) per session when booking for the term. Casual enrolment \$25 per session, if available.
New singers can trial first session for free.

Painting on Canvas

Shyamasree Bose will guide you through the art-making process with acrylic paints on canvas. At the end you'll have your very own masterpiece to take home. Bring something you want to emulate or get inspired by our examples.

Tuesdays 1.30 pm – 3 pm, 10 & 24 February, 10 & 24 March
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$45 (\$35 concession) per session
\$150 (\$120) for term

Craft Circle – NEW

Bring along your knitting, patchwork, card making or whatever creative project inspires you. Learn from others including super-crafter and group facilitator Jane Saleeba. An intergenerational social experience for anyone who loves to craft.

Thursdays 10.30 am – 12 noon starting 12 February fortnightly
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE (bookings essential)

Spanish for Fun

Learn the language spoken by more than 500 million people across the Americas and Spain: Español. A small and friendly conversation-based class that will prepare you for travelling. With Anna Trigos.

Mondays 5.15 pm – 6.15 pm starting 2 February for 8 weeks
(No class Labor Day 9 March)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$140 (\$100 concession)

Beginners' French

Join native French teacher in a relaxed and supportive environment. Over the term, build your vocabulary, practice conversations and grasp grammatical structures while exploring French culture and tradition.

Friday 4 pm – 5 pm – Basic Steps 1 (no experience necessary)
Friday 5 pm – 6 pm – Basic Steps 2 (a little knowledge)
Starting 30 January for 9 weeks
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$157.50 (\$112.50 concession)

Health & Wellbeing

Walk the Talk! - NEW

Explore parks, streets and lanes around North Melbourne in this new all-inclusive walking group. Stick around for complimentary morning tea. With passionate walker and North Melbourne local Sharnee Trehan. Basic fitness needed.

Tuesdays 10 am – 11 am, fortnightly from 3 February
Depart from NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE (bookings essential)

Pilates

Pilates improves body awareness and strengthens postural muscles to support your spine. Classes are graded for all abilities and ages, taught by Brazilian-trained physiotherapist Fernanda Cury. A relaxed way to meet locals.

January Pilates

Tuesdays 5.30 pm – 6.30 pm on 13 & 20 January
Thursdays 6.45 pm – 7.45 pm on 15 & 22 January
Quaker Centre, 484 William Street, West Melbourne

General/Intro to Pilates

A class that caters for all levels of experience.

Wednesdays 9.15 am – 10.15 am
Legion Hall, George Johnson Lane
(behind North Melbourne Library)

Beginners Pilates

The basics are still covered but some knowledge is assumed. Over the term exercises will progress to more challenging options as you build strength and flexibility.

Thursdays 5.30 pm – 6.30 pm

Quaker Centre, 484 William Street, West Melbourne

Intermediate Pilates

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
Quaker Centre, 484 William Street, West Melbourne

Intermediate Plus Pilates

Suitable for people with a good level of body awareness and strength. Designed to improve trunk strength and provide a stable base for other sports or daily activities.

Thursdays 6.45 pm – 7.45 pm

Stretching and Relaxation

This class focuses on flexibility while calming down body and mind in a very relaxing session. Work on building the connection between mind and body. About 45 minutes of slow movements and muscle release techniques and 15 minutes of mindful relaxation

Tuesdays 6.45 pm – 7.45 pm
Quaker Centre, 484 William Street, West Melbourne

Timetable: Term 1 Pilates and Stretching & Relaxation classes operate on an 10-week term timetable starting on Tuesday 27 January and concluding Thursday 2 April.

Costs: \$21 (\$15.50 concession) per class when booking for full term or remainder of term. Casual enrolments online \$28 per session, if available.

For Seniors

Centre Adventures

Visit places of historical, cultural or horticultural interest and significance. Normally a full-day bus trip, Centre Adventures are a great way to get out beyond the everyday. In 2026, these trips will be more frequent and intergenerational.

Tuesday 24 February – Werribee Zoo
Wednesday 11 March – Werribee Zoo
Tuesday 24 March – Blue Lotus Water Garden, Yarra Valley
9.30 am – 5 pm. Departing from NWMNC
58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$65 (\$45 Concession), including lunch and morning tea

Also see Seniors Morning Tea in Community Gatherings

Older Adults Exercise

A general strengthening class for those 60+. Includes low impact aerobics, balance and strengthening exercises, using exercise band resistance for all parts of the body. Suitable for people of all abilities.

Mondays 11 am – 12 noon
Starting 2 February for 8 weeks
(No class Labor Day 9 May)
West Melbourne Baptist Community Centre
4 Miller Street, West Melbourne

Wednesdays 10.30 am – 11.30 am
Starts 28 January for 10 weeks
Legion Hall, George Johnson Lane
(behind North Melbourne Library)

Cost: \$21 (\$15.50 concession) per session when booking for the whole term



North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre Inc

58 Errol Street, North Melbourne, Vic 3051

Tel: (03) 9328 1126 Email: admin@centre.org.au Website: www.nwmnc.org.au

Office hours: Monday 10 am to 6 pm, Tuesday to Friday 10 am to 3 pm

Container Deposit Scheme opening hours: Monday 10 am to 6 pm; Tuesday 10 am to 4 pm,

Wednesday to Friday 10 am to 3 pm, Saturday 10 am to 2 pm

Career & Life Skills

Resume and Application Success – NEW



How can you stand out in a swamp of AI job applications? How do you distil all your experiences into a couple of pages, without under-selling your achievements (or over-selling)? Career coach and human resources executive Helena Steel will help you fix your resume and break through to the interview stage.

Saturday 7 February, 10 am – 1 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$70 (\$50 concession), including light refreshments

Podcasting

Make your own podcast pilot! Learn about storytelling, researching and synthesising information, presentation and interviewing, audio editing and podcast distribution. Presented by Chat Man Friday podcaster, TV host and media trainer Sayed Jawed Maqsoodi. Course graduates will have complimentary access to NWMNC's podcast studio for three months.

Tuesdays 6 pm – 8 pm from 24 February for 6 weeks
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$60 (\$45 concession)

Introduction to Journalism

Do you read the news and wonder how it gets done? Experienced ABC journalist Louise Yaxley will share her expertise. The course covers how to identify a potential story, interview techniques, research skills, writing styles, fact checking and digital platforms. Graduates will have the opportunity to see their work published in *North & West Melbourne News*.

Tuesdays 6.15 pm – 9 pm (21 & 28 April, 5 & 12 May)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street North Melbourne
\$60 (\$45 concession)

School Holiday Program

There's a Hole in My Book – NEW

This unique workshop will allow creative kids to write and illustrate their own book. Internationally published children's book illustrator Juliette Kent will guide children in a fun and fast-paced step-by-step process. Kids and parents alike will be amazed what can be produced in just 90 minutes. For children aged 5-12.

Monday 19 January, 10.30 am – 12 noon
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$20 (\$15 concession)

Coding for Games

Learn how to make a retro arcade game on MakeCode, the free drag-and-drop coding platform. This is a fun introduction to using loops, making 8-bit sprites, and telling stories through gameplay. With tech-wiz Anastasia Beasley. Laptops will be provided. For ages 8 – 12 years.

Wednesday 21 January, 10 am – 12.30 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$40 (\$30 concession)

Free Activities this School Holiday

Join us these school holidays for free kids' activities, including a fun Origami Workshop and a free screening of *Oddball* (2015), a PG movie based on a true Australian story. Perfect for children aged 5 to 12 years. Kids under 7 must be accompanied by an adult.

Bookings essential.

Movie screening on Thursday 22 January 11 am – 1 pm
Origami workshop on Tuesday 20 January 10 am – 11 pm (ages 5 to 10), 11 am – 12 pm (ages 8 to 12)
58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$5 per session.

Digital Skills

Computers: Digital Essentials

Make your computer work for you. Become more comfortable engaging in the digital world. This friendly course will help you maximise your productivity and minimise frustration. With tech-wiz Anastasia Beasley.

Wednesdays 10 am – 12.30 pm (from 28 January for 10 weeks)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$65 (\$50 Concession)



Making Your Phone Work for You

Who said phones were made for calling people every now and then? Modern 'smartphones' are mobile computers, used for all manner of activities. This course covers setting up your phone, choosing apps, using the cloud and phone security. With tech-wiz Anastasia Beasley.

Wednesdays 1 pm – 3 pm (starting 28 January for 10 weeks)
NWMNC, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
\$65 (\$50 concession)

Introduction to Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been touted as a game-changer in both professional and personal domains. AI-enhanced search, translation, text and image generation are already a reality. This course aims to uncover what it all means for regular users of email, social media, smartphone photos and Google search. Understand how AI is used to process information about you; discuss strategies for spotting AI-generated content; explore perspectives on AI from science fiction and philosophy. Anastasia Beasley will guide group discussions on emerging technology news and its impact in our communities and workplaces.

Saturdays 10 am – 1 pm, 14, 21 and 28 February, 7 March
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street North Melbourne
\$70 (\$50 concession)

For Kids and Young People

Rainbow Art Class

Experienced art teacher Shyamasree Bose will guide children in a colourful exploration of drawing and painting, using watercolour, acrylic, oil pastels, mixed media and pencils. Suitable for creative kids aged 4 to 12.

**Tuesdays 4 pm – 5 pm;
5 pm – 6 pm**
(starting 3 February for 9 weeks)
\$12 (\$10 concession) when booking for term (\$15 casual if available)

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 3 to Year 9.

4 February to 1 April for 9 weeks
Wednesdays 3.30 pm – 5 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne (grades 4 to 6)
Hotham Room, North Melbourne Library, 66 Errol Street,
North Melbourne (Years 7 to 9)
Wednesdays 4 pm – 5.30 pm
North Melbourne Language & Learning, Level 1/174-178 Macaulay
Road, North Melbourne (Years 4 to 8)
FREE

Community Gatherings

Seniors' Morning Tea

Join this group of multicultural seniors for an informal chat over morning tea – a place where friendships can flourish. Sometimes with a guest speaker.

First Tuesday of the month 10 am – 11.30 am
(3 February, 3 March)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$5

Men's Afternoon Tea

A casual get-together for some food and a chat with other men from the neighbourhood. New people encouraged.

**Fortnightly Thursdays (22 January, 5 and 19 February,
5 and 19 March, 2 April)**
2.30 pm – 4 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE

Sea Shanty Sing-a-long – NEW

Ahoy Captain! Dust off ye vocal chords and belt out tunes that once echoed across the high seas. Sing to your heart's content in this easy-to-learn call-and-response sea shanty sing-a-long. No experience required. With blokes from Homebrew Veranda Singers.

Thursday 26 February, 2.30 pm – 4 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE (Bookings essential)

Dungeons & Dragons

Learn the ropes of Dungeons & Dragons – a tabletop game that combines teamwork, problem solving and imagination. The session will be led by a local with years of D&D experience. All materials and characters will be provided, just come prepared for adventure. This session is designed for absolute beginners.

Thursday 12 February, 6.15 pm – 9 pm fortnightly
NWMNC, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
Cost: \$5
Bookings essential.

Afternoon Tea (Mandarin speakers)

Join this group of Mandarin speakers for an informal chat over afternoon tea – a place where friendships can flourish. Tea and light refreshments will be provided. Facilitated by a Mandarin speaker.

Fortnightly Fridays (30 January, 13 & 17 February, 13 & 27 May)
2 pm – 3 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE

与其他说普通话的人一起参加下午茶，一个可以结交新朋友的地方。现场将提供茶水和简便点心。活动由一位普通话讲者带领。免费

每周一的星期五
(1月30日、2月13日和17日、5月13日和27日)
下午2点 – 3点
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne

Also see Walking Group in Health & Wellbeing and Craft Circle in Creative Pursuits.

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. If you would like to take advantage of our flexible pricing policy, contact the North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre.

Transport options abound for future Arden residents

How one travels in and around North and West Melbourne is transforming. Whether it is by road, train or tram, changes are happening at a rapid rate. By the time you read this article, the new Metro Tunnel will be up and running. We've been hearing about this project for years, and its construction has caused sustained havoc across the inner city. We trust the result will be worth the pain endured.

In our own backyard, Arden was the first of five stations to be completed. It is impressive architecturally, but at present seems out of place to me. While North Melbourne might have earned its 'cool' moniker, it wasn't Laurens Street that got it there. Did you know there is a functioning stockfeed business there? But it won't be stock or grain on the trains moving through Arden Station; rather, there's capacity for more than 10,000 people per hour. However, it's hard to imagine the volume of people when you look around at the neighbouring wastelands.

Of course, this is a project for the future, and the bigger questions is what the surrounding Arden precinct will look like and how it will function in the coming decades. Development Victoria posits that the precinct will accommodate 34,000 jobs and 20,000 residents by 2051.

The other state government Big Build project that is coming to fruition is the West Gate Tunnel,

FROM THE CENTRE DIRECTOR

Ariel Valent



a 17-kilometre road that connects the west of Melbourne to the central city. While residents in the western suburbs might be pleased to have an alternative to the overcrowded West Gate Bridge, many residents in North and West Melbourne are concerned that the road will dump unprecedented levels of traffic into our neighbourhoods. As we have reported in this issue, the traffic modelling will be completed at about the same time the road opens. The road's developers have reneged from some commitments to traffic calming, instead preferring a 'wait and see' approach. I reckon residents will need to do the same, although see Ellen Sandell's column if you are more inclined for

immediate action.

Trams are also on the cusp of significant change. Public Transport Victoria has advised that new G-Class trams will be rolled out on the 57 and 59 tram routes. These trams are 25 metres long and can take up to 150 passengers.

Anyone taking trams into the city in October would have experienced the disruptions around Queen Victoria Market. Expect more disruption over the coming months including changes to tram stops along the route. Make sure you have your say before 24 December (see page 2). When it is all done, I expect that we will appreciate the larger, more comfortable trams and, we are told, increased frequency of services.

In the longer term, Infrastructure Victoria's 40-year plan calls for two new tram lines to facilitate movement in and around Arden. The report calls for a tram from Swanston Street to Kensington and another from Spencer Street to Flemington Bridge, with building to commence by 2030.

From my point of view, a bicycle is still the best way to get around Melbourne's inner city. No need to charge up your Myki, no parking issues, and cycling is excellent for improving and maintaining fitness. Just make sure you keep your wits and invest in an effective lock!

Walking and cycling are the best ways to experience the joys of our local neighbourhood. Check out Patrick Derecho's spread on the back page for some examples of what you can see when your mode of transport is human-scale.

Whichever way you move around, the team at North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre wishes you good cheer for the end of the year.



I am delighted to welcome Miriam Bilander, NWMNC's new Community Development Coordinator. Miriam's professional background is in disability sport and recreation, as well as youth work. One of Miriam's first jobs here will be to complete a community needs analysis for North and West Melbourne. If you would like to contribute, get in touch with miriamb@centre.org.au or 9328 1126.



Older locals bowled over community spirit

The City of Melbourne Bowls Club is excited to get people onto their greens, and – more importantly – to bring locals together.

Chatty Café is a community-driven initiative featuring a designated 'chatty table', where people can sit if they are open to talking to others. It aims to build friendly connections through simple interactions that might brighten someone's day.

A Chatty Café session is on every Monday morning from 10.30, welcoming anyone to drop in for a chat and free tea, coffee and cookies.

The club is also inviting anyone with a seniors or carers card to join a casual bowling session for \$8.

Club manager Amanda Cullen says the events are a new move by the Club to tempt people with accessibility and affordability. "Plus they aim to make us a drop-in venue for people who may be lonely, needing low impact exercise or who are shy on time," she added.

"Our gates are open and we welcome the local community for our



Bowls Club patrons spill the tea at Chatty Café.

Garden Happy Hour from Monday to Thursday, between 4 and 6. In fact, everyone is welcome!"

There are also extra discounts on selected food and drinks for seniors and carers.

Any leftover food won't go to waste, instead being sent to the Salvation Army and Vincent Care's Ozanam House in North Melbourne as part of the club's commitment to sustainability and community.

Any other food that has finished its life cycle is placed into the Club's composter and shared across farms as rich compost. Amanda notes that food waste contributes to more emissions than oil extraction!

The City of Melbourne Bowls Club is in Flagstaff Gardens (corner of William and Dudley streets), West Melbourne.



In 2026 NWMNC and Wholefoods Unwrapped Collective will run a food relief program for international students living in North and West Melbourne. Please express your interest if you would like to participate in the program.

forms.office.com/r/4xz8yYCGGn

Celebrating 50 years of community

Kate Ritchie

The North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre (NWMNC) will mark its 50th anniversary with a gala dinner on Thursday 12 March 2026, bringing the community together to reflect on five decades of service, learning and local leadership.

The event will honour the evolution of NWMNC, from its beginnings at the North Melbourne Town Hall in 1976 to its long-established home at 58 Errol Street. The evening will acknowledge the many residents, volunteers, students and partners who have contributed to its programs and community impact over the years.

As part of the anniversary, we are inviting contributions from anyone who has been involved with NWMNC. Stories, photographs,

memories and acknowledgements are welcome, whether they relate to volunteering, program participation, language classes, the Homework Club or contributions to this newspaper. These reflections will help build a collective record of NWMNC's history and its role in North and West Melbourne.

Sponsors who want to support the gala would be welcome, as plans progress for a commemorative evening that reflects the breadth of NWMNC's work and the community it serves. Any keen supporters should contact NWMNC to let us know.

Kate Ritchie is NWMNC Board Secretary.

In the year 1976 ...

- The North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre is founded at the North Melbourne Town Hall.
- ABBA's 'Fernando' tops Australian charts for 14 weeks.
- AC/DC films 'It's a Long Way to the Top' on Swanston Street.
- Cigarette advertising ends on TV and radio, and random breath testing begins in Victoria.
- VHS players, ATMs and Apple Computers are introduced.

CHAT MAN FRIDAY

Chat Man Friday is a new weekly podcast for men living, studying, or working in North and West Melbourne.

Listen on Spotify



Listen/Watch on YouTube



Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. Go to www.dss.gov.au for more information.





The *North & West Melbourne News* is a quarterly publication produced by volunteers. Readers' contributions and letters are welcomed. Where relevant the *News* may seek alternative opinions in the interests of balance. Contributors' opinions are their own 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 with the article.

Finance

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News distribution

The *News* is distributed free throughout North and West Melbourne. Get in touch if you know of anyone not receiving their copy. Copies are available from the North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre, North Melbourne Library and online at www.nwmnc.org.au.

Subscriptions are \$20 per year (four issues) sent to anywhere in Australia.

Volunteers

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

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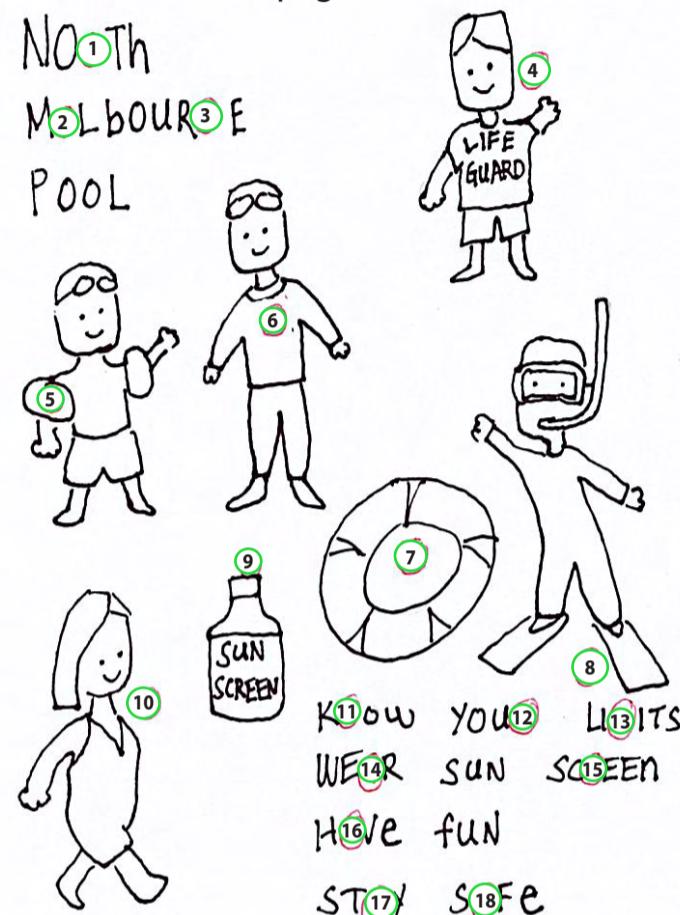
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Marion Mooney grateful for stamp donations

Thank you to our readers from Marian Mooney, who has previously asked for donations of used postage stamps. 'Many thanks to all who in the past year have dropped off used stamps and stamp albums at the Centre,' she wrote. 'The response has been overwhelming and my friends who sort them into different categories have been kept very busy. Keep up the good work.' The stamps are sold to collectors and the money raised goes to charity.

Spot the Difference (page 4) answers



Send contributions, letters and feedback to:

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

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Spring 2026

Copy deadline: Thursday 13 August

Publication date: Friday 11 September

Summer 2026

Copy deadline: Thursday 12 November

Publication date: Friday 11 December

Christmas Services, North and West Melbourne



St James Old Cathedral, Anglican

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

Sunday 14 December 10.00 am Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 21 December 10.00 am Advent 4 – Holy Communion

Wednesday 24 December 11.00 pm Christmas Eve Holy Communion

Thursday 25 December 10.00 am Christmas Day Holy Communion

St Mary Star of the Sea, Catholic

Corner Victoria and William streets, West Melbourne

Wednesday 24 December 12.30 pm Mass; 5.00 pm Vigil Mass; 11.30 pm Carols followed by Midnight Mass

Thursday 25 December 10.00 am Christmas Day Mass; 12.00 pm Lithuanian Mass

Friday 26 December 10.00 am Mass (Boxing Day)

Saturday 27 December 10.00 am Mass

Sunday 28 December 10.00 am & 5.00 pm Mass (Holy Family)

Monday 29 to Wednesday 31 December 12.30 pm Mass

Thursday 1 January 10.00 am Mass (Mary Mother of God)

Friday 2 January 12.30 pm Mass

Saturday 3 January 10.00 am Mass

Sunday 4 January 10.00 am & 5.00 pm Mass (Epiphany)

Monday 5 to Friday 9 January 12.30 pm Mass

St Mary's, Anglican

Corner Queensberry and Howard streets, North Melbourne

Saturday 20 December 5.00 pm to 7.00 pm Carols on the Corner – a family Christmas service and BBQ in the grounds

Wednesday 24 December 11.00 pm Christmas Carols; 11.30 pm Midnight Mass

Thursday 25 December 9.00 am Sung Eucharist for Christmas Day

St Michael's, Catholic

456 Dryburgh Street, North Melbourne

Information not available at time of publication

Saints Peter and Paul, Ukrainian Catholic

35 Canning Street, North Melbourne (corner Dryburgh Street)

Wednesday 24 December 3.00 pm Vespers with a Liturgy of St Basil the Great; 10.00 pm Vigil – Great Compline with Lytiya and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

Thursday 25 December 10.00 am Divine Liturgy

Uniting Church, Mark the Evangelist

29 College Crescent, Parkville (Centre for Theology and Ministry)

Thursday 25 December 9.30 am Christmas Service

West Melbourne Baptist Church

4 Miller Street, West Melbourne

Thursday 25 December 12.00 noon Christmas lunch; 1.30 pm Christmas service

NWMN Advertisement Sizes & Rates

Size	Colour	Mono
Full page (24 cm wide x 34 cm high)	\$1,885.00	\$1,640.00
Half page (24 cm wide x 17 cm high or 12 cm wide x 34 cm high)	\$945.00	\$825.00
One-third page (24 cm wide x 12 cm high)	\$685.00	\$600.00
One-quarter page (24 cm wide x 8.5 cm high or 12 cm wide x 17 cm high)	\$510.00	\$435.00
One-eighth page (12 cm wide x 8.5 cm high)	\$260.00	\$220.00
One-16th page (12 cm wide x 4 cm high)	\$135.00	\$120.00
Business card (in Services Directory) (9 cm wide x 5.5 cm high)	\$120.00	\$100.00

- 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 information and bookings, email: advertising@centre.org.au



Summer in the city

Photographer Patrick Derecho captured North and West Melburnians soaking up the summer sunshine.

You can explore more of his work on his Instagram: [@patderch](https://www.instagram.com/patderch)

