

Cafe brews up skills and confidence

Alex Hall

West Melbourne patisserie Gingersnap Cafe recently partnered with social enterprise All Things Equal to support six trainees with disability in paid roles, offering consistent, hands-on experience in a real-world setting.

Gingersnap was founded by Brett Duncan, a qualified pastry chef who was born profoundly deaf, and his sister Jess Colgan. Their menu for the pop-up was fully plant-based, including Brett's signature desserts, vegan toasties, grab-and-go breakfast pots, seasonal salads and specialty coffee.

The pop-up was designed as a stepping stone for people with disability to enter the hospitality industry by encouraging confidence in a work setting that can be daunting.

"It's about creating real employment opportunities and inviting the community to experience inclusive employment in action. Every visit helps build confidence, skills and pathways for our trainees," All Things Equal's Sarah McLellan Mee said.

"Working here means a lot to me, because I'm working in the local community and meeting all kinds of people. I also get to work with people of all abilities and amazing trainers who teach me great skills," trainee Andres said.

Alex Hall is a regular writer for the News.

Want to know more?

www.allthingsequal.org.au or www.gingersnap.com.au

Right: Trainee Andres builds skills at Gingersnap Café via All Things Equal enterprise.



Take a hike and stay for a chat on page 18

From the Editor

Our paper always aims to show you the surprises hiding in our community. This issue, we bring an insight into the sport of blind tennis and meet a French Knight living among us. We introduce the 'Willy Wonka' of badges and his long-running North Melbourne factory; he would have made the Abba badge I proudly wore in 1977.

Speaking of the '70s, congratulations to the Neighbourhood Centre for 50 years of great work. Give us a shout if you can help solve the mystery of the gorgeous quilt that turned up during the celebrations.

While we are time travelling, this issue will have memories flooding back for long-term residents. We highlight photographer Viva Gibb's images of some of the people and places of North and West Melbourne from the 1970s and '80s – check out the young Helen Garner. I reckon we've delivered some fascinating winter reading, including John Langmore's lifelong campaign for peace. Enjoy!

Louise Yaxley is Editor of the News.

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Founding and current North Melbourne Women's Dinner members Sue Allnut, Robyn Phelan and Mary Nicholson at the 2025 Dinner. Photograph: Kaye Oke

Women's Dinner returns for 19th year

Robyn Phelan

The much-loved North Melbourne Women's Dinner is set for Thursday 20 August in Loco Hall, within the Panarcadian Association on Victoria Street.

Following the overwhelming response to last year's event, organisers are expecting another marvellous evening.

Now in its 19th year, the dinner brings together women who live, work and connect across Docklands, North Melbourne, Parkville and West Melbourne. The event has long been a celebration of community, fostering meaningful connections and ongoing support among local women.

This year, a portion of proceeds from ticket sales will go to the Homework Club, an educational program run by the Neighbourhood Centre that has supported local children for many years. In 2025, funds were raised for the River Nile Learning Centre on Capel Street.

The evening features a reflection on local

photographer Viva Gibb's retrospective 'The Street Where I Live'. Special guest Savannah Smith, curator of the City of Melbourne Art and Heritage Collection will speak about Viva's three decades of documenting the life and character of our neighbourhood.

Guests can look forward to a fresh and authentic menu as Al Makaan Mediterranean returns to cater.

The first Women's Dinner was held in 2003, and the event continues to thrive under the care of its current organising committee – Ann Corry, Christine Bohan, Colleen Pearson, Finella Oakley and colleagues.

Robyn is a local arts educator and writer for almost three decades who is passionate about clay. Visit www.robynphelan.com.au

Want to know more?
Tickets are available via the QR code on the event flyer. All are invited to what promises to be another memorable evening.



The 19th

North Melbourne Women's Dinner

'Connecting women who live, work & play across Docklands, North & West Melbourne & Parkville'

Thursday 20th August 2026
6.30 - 10.00pm

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Tickets: \$79

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Catering by AL Makaan, prizes and good times.

Ticket price includes donation to the North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre Homework Club.



Protect your pets from winter woes

Suzana Talevski

With winter upon us, Lort Smith Animal Hospital is urging pet owners to take care when considering feeding pets left over "winter warmers".

Lort Smith chief veterinarian, Dr Jessica Wilde, said cooler weather makes it likely more people will be staying home and cooking meals that could contain ingredients toxic to pets.

"Dogs in particular, can be very opportunistic when it comes to swiping ingredients and food off a bench or table," Dr Jess said.

"Because these dishes are often slow-cooked, the aromatic smells can be particularly tempting for 'counter-surfing' animals."

Recent cases include Suki the Groodle who managed to devour 12 mini sausage rolls when their human wasn't looking and Lucky the beagle who demolished almost an entire pork knuckle.

"Thankfully both Suki and Lucky have made full recoveries but we really do need to take extra care in the kitchen and around the home this winter," Dr Jess said.

If you suspect your dog has ingested any toxic food, contact your local emergency vet immediately. Do not wait for symptoms to appear."

The list at right comprises the most dangerous winter warmers for pets according to Lort Smith Animal Hospital's admission data.

Suzana Talevski is a copywriter at Lort Smith Animal Hospital.

Onion and Garlic

- Why: Can damage pets' red blood cells and lead to serious illness, even in small amounts.
- Winter Threat: Common in soups, casseroles, gravies and roast dinners.

Cooked Bones

- Why: Cooked bones can splinter, causing choking, internal injuries or digestive blockages.
- Winter Threat: Leftover chicken, lamb, pork, ham and beef bones from roasts.

Sausages

- Why: Often high in fat, salt and seasonings that are harmful to pets.
- Winter Threat: Sausage rolls, party pies

Stuffing

- Why: Frequently contains onion, garlic and rich fats that are toxic or difficult for pets to digest.
- Winter Threat: Roast dinners and stuffed poultry dishes.

Chocolate

- Why: Contains theobromine and caffeine, which are toxic to dogs and cats.
- Winter Threat: Hot chocolates, desserts, baked treats and winter snacks.

Alcohol

- Why: Even small amounts can cause vomiting, breathing difficulties, tremors and potentially life-threatening complications.
- Winter Threat: Mulled wine, liqueur desserts and unattended drinks at gatherings.

Poultry Skin

- Why: High-fat foods can lead to vomiting, diarrhoea and pancreatitis.
- Winter Threat: Skin from roast chicken or turkey dinners.

Pork Crackling

- Why: Extremely fatty and salty, making it difficult and dangerous for pets to digest.
- Winter Threat: Roast pork meals and crackling

Stews and casseroles

- Why: Often contain toxic ingredients like garlic, onion and cooked bones, as well as rich sauces that can upset pets' stomachs.
- Winter Threat: Family casseroles, baked dishes and slow-cooked winter meals.





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Viva Gibb’s portraits of our lives

Joel Becker

When asked to write about an exhibition featuring Viva Gibb’s photographic work, I felt, as a fairly recent ‘émigré’ to West Melbourne, I was being gifted the opportunity to get to better know this community.

Viva Gibb (1945–2017) was a Prahran Institute of Art graduate who chronicled the lives of the people living in Hawke and Capel streets, Victoria Market and the shops in the area. These were not stagy studio or landscape images. They are photos of people in their doorways, at community events, in their shops and restaurants, having spontaneous parties in front of Hound Dog’s Bop Shop or making espressos at Don Camillo.

The black and white images take the viewer on a journey to seemingly more innocent times, when people were in each other’s houses and life happened on the streets. Viva’s photographs are candid portraits and it is clear that people relaxed in front of her camera. She was a friend, a neighbour, a mother and a citizen.

The images reflect a diverse community – mostly of renters, Irian Jayan refugees, artists and writers; a community where the dock workers lived alongside bohemians and squatters. There are photos of the author Helen Garner, and her daughter Alice, who lived with Viva



West Irian refugees, The Miami Hotel, 13 Hawke Street, West Melbourne, c. 1982.

and her kids at the end of the ‘70s while she worked on *Monkey Grip* as well as the writer Gregory Roberts, who wrote the celebrated novel, *Shantaram*, after run-ins with the law.

Viva’s photographs provide a visual account equivalent to an oral history. More than a chronicler of her place, she was also an activist. The area of West Melbourne, where she lived, was earmarked for ‘urban renewal’. This came with the threat of demolition, the building of high-rise apartments and the widening of streets. Viva’s images capture a time when everything could have changed but

didn’t. A committed political activist, Viva spent years battling in court and partnering with the National Trust to preserve our historic 1850s streets and structures.

At the exhibition, a visitor pointed out a photograph of him and his family making a prayer offering at home. His name is Agus Bagus. He owns the Balinese restaurant, Warung Bagus, on Victoria Street, and still lives upstairs.

He was a long-time friend of Viva, and it was illuminating to hear him wax enthusiastic about her importance to the area, and the outpouring of love from the community at her funeral, a feeling shared by everyone when her name is mentioned.

I now have a clearer sense that what makes West and North Melbourne special is the community: the people that lived alongside Viva, the people she smiled at through her camera.

Joel Becker OAM is a regular writer for the News.

Thanks to Savannah Smith, Sybil Gibb, Agus Bagus and Laurence Angwin (former next door neighbour to Viva) for providing information for this article.

Sybil Gibb remembers the people in the pictures

Sybil Gibb

City has many stories, some big and bold, some quiet; many are either forgotten or never told.

A new exhibition of photography by Viva Gibb at the City Gallery shines a new light on North and West Melbourne – documenting the daily lives of residents from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s.

It tells the story of the shopkeepers, market stall workers, migrants, wharfies, squatters, punks, artists and the many people who have called North and West Melbourne home.

Viva Gibb was a West Melbourne local from 1975 until her death in 2017. She was always a colourful presence and could be seen walking her dogs at Royal Park every day or tending her beautiful garden in Hawke Street.

Viva loved the proximity to the city, the shops, the houses, the market and most of all, the amazing characters that made up this very diverse, often overlooked multicultural working-class suburb.

Change and gentrification came slow to North and West Melbourne – Errol Street was like a country town that had barely changed since the 1940s or ‘50s. It was this that fascinated Viva –

her photos are remarkable because it’s very hard to tell what era some of the photos are taken in.

Moving to West Melbourne in 1975 as a single mother of two in a share house, Viva started to document the people and daily life around Capel Street and the market and then around Hawke Street in the 1980s.

She was an accomplished and well-known artist across many mediums – printmaking, photography, drawing and painting but was best known for her photography.

Her son, Rupert Duffy, observed: “As a photographer I believe she achieved a level of mastery that surpassed her other artistic output. She was an incredible darkroom technician, and I was one of the lucky few to be taught this now almost extinct art by her. She had an amazing collection of beautiful photographic papers, the likes of which are not produced any more and never will be, and she often shot to print on particular paper. She knew exactly how black she wanted her blacks to be and how bright her highlights were and knew her exposures so well that she was rarely wasteful with film.”

In 2025, Rupert and I donated more than 200 black-and-white silver gelatin prints to be managed and displayed by the City of Melbourne’s Art and Heritage Collection.

“Viva’s work is a beautiful ode to the character, resilience and warmth of the people who lived and worked in Melbourne’s inner city during the fervent decades of the late twentieth century,” exhibition curator Savannah Smith said.

Sybil Gibb is the daughter of the artist and long-term resident of North and West Melbourne.

Want to know more?

The exhibition runs at the City Gallery, Town Hall, Swanston St, Melbourne, until 7 August. The gallery is open Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 5 pm.



Helen Garner, 64 Capel Street, West Melbourne, 1975.



Giuseppe Lanteri ‘The Boss’ at Don Camillo Cafe, 215 Victoria Street, West Melbourne, 1979.

Community Comment

Volunteer Joel Becker checked in with commuters at the new Arden Station



Bernadette, Footscray

The new train line saves me a half-hour each way commuting to work in Caulfield, and I’m using it a lot on the weekends with the kids. The station is a great argument for building infrastructure to cater for future development. I love the brickwork.



Paul, Yarraville

The new train is a fantastic service. I go to the Arden Station to meet friends in West Melbourne and it makes it so much easier and faster to get to Carlton and the City. I used to have to go into the CBD and back out.



Isaac, Ringwood

I’m a student and I use the train almost every day to come into West Melbourne to study in the cafes. I started coming in after the station was built. The free transport and half-price from June on is a real bonus.



Peter, Carnegie

I commute to work from Carnegie at least twice a week. I used to drive. The new line and the ability to go directly to Arden Station saves me about 40 minutes, which is a massive bonus. I’m really positive about the line and station.



Blind tennis advocate Gigi Richards has competed internationally.

Gigi hit the court in her latest adventure

Thu Trang Tran

Gigi Richards relishes telling her “funny sporting history” just as much as she enjoys her coffee at Auction Rooms. It is not a typical sport coming-of-age story.

“I already had a vision problem. And when you can’t sight a ball precisely, you are not invited on teams,” Gigi said with her self-deprecating laughter.

But Gigi found a way on to the social sporting field – through acting.

“I’d be in a sports pavilion, on a day when it was bad weather. And I remember telling them stories. I would have this great audience,” she said. “They’d say, ‘Tell us about how you swam to Tasmania.’”

Gigi did not swim to Tasmania. “I’d spice up the stories!”

Fast forward to 2006. She moved to North Melbourne after decades of working as a musician, then as a yoga and kids dance instructor. She joined a local walking group, and through a chain of friendly people, she came to give blind tennis a red hot go in 2010.

“I had to be really convinced. My history was not sport, and certainly not balls.

“But the [tennis] ball has a bell in it. Given my musical training, I thought, that’s a whole different approach; I am going to try it!”

SPORTS REPORT Playing the field

Inspired by Maurice Gleeson, then president of Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria (BSRV), who started the tennis program and is himself blind, Gigi has gone on to many tennis adventures.

To suddenly become an athlete, she says, is bizarre.

She competed internationally on the Australian blind tennis team, including in Japan, home of the current 70-year-old world champion, and where the sport was invented in 1984 by 16-year-old schoolboy Miyoshi Takei.

She was gobsmacked by how young Japanese players slide over on the court (marked by wire lines with tape) on their tummies (so they can feel the lines) and jump up on their feet to hit the ball (which can have up to three bounces depending on the competition category).

Gigi has a vision for a sport that is growing in numbers and competitiveness in Australia and globally.

“The ball needs updating! In Spain, the foam ball would blow away in the wind.”

The foam disintegrates rapidly and doesn’t bounce well and the bell can only be heard on impact. Each ball costs \$20.

So, Gigi’s next adventure has been working with and inspiring RMIT biomedical engineering students to design a new ball. The project is supported by the Freedom Solutions Australia Foundation, a not-for profit organisation that makes custom disability equipment.

The students want to introduce more spin to create a more competitive edge and also meet Gigi’s wish for it to be heard in the air, not just on impact.

A student has created an inexpensive mesh ball that is durable enough to survive a car running over it. Gigi tells me that Maurice is excited about the new mesh design, which is being trialled. He, and many others, appreciate the work Gigi is doing as a BSRV Ambassador.

ThunTrang Tran is a new writer for the News.

Want to know more?

Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria:
www.blindsports.org.au; info@blindsports.org.au;
03 9822 8876

Freedom Solutions Australia:
www.freedomolutions.org.au;
info@freedomolutions.org.au;
1300 663 243

Making memories for the future

Nancy Lane

Patrick Derecho didn’t take long to make a name for himself with his back page photographs in the News of North and West Melbourne locals. “I love that lots of shopkeepers say hi now, whenever they see me,” Pat says with a smile.

However, Pat’s backstory is one of hard work and struggle. He was raised in Davao City, Mindanao, in the south of the Philippines where he completed his Bachelor of Nursing and worked for a year in a hospital emergency department. He secretly decided that he wanted to work in Australia, an English-speaking country

needing nurses that was only eight hours away by plane. When he was accepted to migrate and told his parents, his mum was in tears.

Life at first proved very difficult. He was required to study another year to qualify as a nurse in Australia and he held down multiple jobs to earn his tuition fees.

“My life was very hectic, just work and study, until I got my nursing licence,” he said.

To gain permanent residency, he then had to work two years in a regional area – first in Corowa, then Geelong.

The move to Geelong was prompted by meeting his wife-to-be, who lived in Melbourne. He was reading a book and she was walking her dog near the State Library. He discovered she was also from the Philippines, from Luzon in the north.

“At first she played hard-to-get,” Pat jokes. “I asked her to go for a coffee, but she said she didn’t like coffee. When we finally went on our first date, we fell in love and eventually got married.” They have one daughter, who just turned five.

After Pat moved to Melbourne, he started work as a nurse for Nucleus Network, which runs clinical trials on drugs and vaccines. But this work was short-lived, when he was hit by a truck riding his bicycle home. His right leg was crushed, requiring five surgeries followed by months of physiotherapy. No longer working as a nurse, he has taken on a desk job with the company to recruit new participants into their

clinical trials.

Despite his pain and trauma, the accident had an upside. While recovering, Pat started taking pictures with his old camera. His mother was his inspiration, as she had always carried a camera when he was growing up. Pat’s wife decided that Pat needed a better-quality camera, and with it, he developed his skills in street photography by experimenting, always trying new techniques. It soon became his passion.

“Taking photos on the street enables me to connect with people, to meet and chat with them,” he says. “Many come from completely different walks of life, and I always learn from them.”

Soon, some of his gritty black-and-white photos attracted the attention of the Little Collins Café, which offered Pat his first exhibition. “That’s when I felt it was real,” he said. His photos still line the café’s walls.

Although Pat has been hired to take photos at events such as baptisms and weddings, making money is not his main aim. “If you’re doing what you love, money isn’t important,” he says. “You can offer your talents, your craft, your art for free. You can do it any time you want.”

One of Pat’s goals with his photography is to ‘make memories’ for the future – not only for his own family, but for those he meets on the streets. Talking with and photographing a wide range of people, being able to document their looks, their actions, at a particular point in time, is a joy.



Photographs: Pat Derecho

His advice for other aspiring photographers: “Do what makes you happy, do it with all your heart. There are no right or wrong ways to take photos. Beauty is how you see it yourself – you can’t try to please everyone. Follow your dreams and do it because you love it.”

Nancy Lane is a regular writer and photographer for the News.



CHAT MAN FRIDAY

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

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Leading the charge for a nuclear-free world

Phoebe Nguyen

From outside, John Langmore’s residence resembles a modest Victorian building. Inside, visitors are greeted by a warmly lit hallway adorned with souvenirs from travels, gifts from friends and paintings by his wife, Wendy. The shelves stretch to the ceiling, jammed with books, magazines and academic journals. I noticed a bird guide on his coffee table. John explained, “Bird watching is one of those activities that gets you outside doing things, at peace and with purpose.” “That sentiment sums up the life of a man driven by service and advocacy. John was born on the day World War II was declared. He was in school when news broke of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. “I began to think about what causes violent conflict while I was still a very young primary school boy,” he recalled. “I could see that some people were behind what happened. Why were they doing it? How did they have the power to do it?” He credits his father and grandfather – both doctors who cared deeply about the quality of healthcare – with sparking his interest in public policy. In 1963, as a fresh commerce and economics graduate, John headed for Papua New Guinea (PNG) where he led the preparation of PNG’s first national plan. When PNG achieved independence in 1975, John returned as an economic adviser to Gough Whitlam. He still holds high respect for Whitlam’s conviction in championing progressive reforms. “The ones who are willing to do the difficult stuff usually face bigger fights than people who want to play it safe.”

Whitlam’s style left a lasting footprint on John’s parliamentary career from 1984 to 1996. He was well-known as a ‘disruptive backbencher’ who did not flinch from difficult conversations, even with his Labor party peers. Most notably, John challenged the Keating government’s decision to privatise government enterprises like Qantas. The debate was immortalised in a *Canberra Times* caricature that sits proudly on his wall.

ICAN: A Nobel path to peace

John was a founding member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) in 2007. ICAN’s mission reflects John’s ideals, seeking an uncompromising stance on eradicating nuclear weapons altogether. Within the following decade, 122 UN member states signed the treaty and 50 ratified, allowing it to become international law. When ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017, John had a quiet celebration with colleagues and family. The Australian government at the time notably offered a muted response.

Building the next generation

John believes that conflict prevention is achievable, not through an arms race but through diplomacy. “A lot of the weapons Australia has been buying will intensify conflict rather than make us better protected. What will be good for Australia is working cooperatively with other countries in the region to find ways of peacefully coping with disagreements.” John believes more funding is needed for the diplomatic corps. With that in mind, he instigated the Initiative for Peacebuilding at Melbourne University – it researches causes of conflict and, by

next year, will offer training on negotiation and conflict resolution. I asked John for a book recommendation for a curious-minded millennial. His eyes lit up as he pored over his library, before pulling out *The Echidna Strategy: Australia’s Search for Power and Peace* by Sam Roggeveen. The book describes a defence doctrine where Australia becomes powerful and independent from USA without appearing aggressive to its neighbours. “Spiky, but unthreatening,” as the metaphor brilliantly puts it.

Life beyond the limelight

After time in New York, John returned to Australia in 2004, looking for a place to call home. After much deliberation, he decided on a leafy street near Royal Park, so he could walk to the university. “I really enjoy the cultural life in Melbourne. The symphony orchestra is superb, and the galleries are the best in the Southern Hemisphere. Its multiculturalism creates a diversity that is fascinating to get to know.” In contrast to his intense career, John now leads a quiet life. “A typical Saturday would begin with reading; I try to read for three or four hours.” In the afternoon, he takes a walk. “I am now in my 80s, but I’m aiming to keep walking until I can walk no more.” John and Wendy widen their culinary repertoire by visiting new restaurants, though he has favourites, such as Errol’s on Errol St. His latest adventure is green tea as a new source of caffeine. “How many coffees do you have a day?”, I asked. “Just one,” he smiled.

Phoebe Nguyen is a new writer for the News.



Photograph: Phoebe Nguyen

Nelson Alexander

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Dinner celebrates Centre's 50 years

Fifty years of North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre service was celebrated with a Gala Dinner on Thursday 12 March.

It was a night full of food, fun and entertainment for the more than 180 community members who attended.

NWMNC chair Alan Cooke said a highlight of the night was presenting Kay Oke with an Honorary Life Membership of the Neighbourhood Centre.

Speakers shared their experiences of the centre's importance in our community, including the many forms of street festivals, the hugely successful community newspaper, and a

personal story of growth through the Homework Club.

The SingNoW! Community Choir, a silent auction and a musical interlude that included audience participation.

"A passing comment as the glowingly happy participants departed for home – 'we should do this every year' – drew equal parts deep satisfaction and horror to those of us who organised the event," Alan said, with a laugh.



Honourary life members: Bill Liddy, Lorna Hannan and Kay Oke. Right: Alan Cooke awards Kay Oke.



Above: The Melbourne City Council team; The North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre team; The entertainers, Stephanie Chen, Warren Wills and Romy Geermans. Below right: Richard Piper, the evening's MC.

What do you know about this quilt?



This stunning quilt was finished in September 2001 and that's about ALL we know of its history. NWMNC's Craig Barry found it at the centre sometime back and it was hung in pride of place at the 50th Anniversary Dinner. We're keen to find out more. The names (right) embroidered on it may spark some memories: Randi, Mitch, Peter, Mark, Frances, Margaret, Luigi, Amy, Katie, David, Scott, Brigid, Arlene, Gail, Fiona, Upul and Manojina. If you know anything about why and how it was made, please email Craig at craig@centre.org.au or call into the Neighbourhood Centre.



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France rewards local legend's legacy

Josephine Daly

Local resident and music legend Mick Harvey recently received a French knighthood. The French Consul-General awarded Mick the *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters) at a ceremony in Melbourne in March.

Mick was a founding member of both The Birthday Party and Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds. He's also known for his collaborations with English singer-songwriter, PJ Harvey.

He was knighted for translating the works of French musician and composer Serge Gainsbourg (1928–1991) into English and producing four albums – 'Intoxicated Man' (1995), 'Pink Elephants' (1997), 'Delirium Tremens' (2016) and 'Intoxicated Women' (2017). Gainsbourg is best known for the soundtrack to his erotic film *Je t'aime moi non plus* (1976), which was deemed 'immoral' at the time.

An adoring audience was on hand to see the Consul General of France in Melbourne, Paule Ignatio, present the award, watch a short documentary with film clips of Gainsbourg's work reinterpreted and hear Mick perform live.

"I suppose they are just acknowledging that I have made some contribution to French culture outside France. It's quite an honour and I'm quite flattered," Mick said in an interview with Paul Cashmere from Noise 11.

He said "being the centre of attention all night"

at an awards ceremony was "not my sort of thing really".

Mick encountered Gainsbourg's music when touring and living in Berlin with the bands The Bad Seeds and Crime and The City Solution in the 1980s. On his return to Australia, he became "intoxicated" by the complexity of Gainsbourg's "lyrics, meter and rhyme", and began to translate them to reach an English-speaking audience.

The knighthood is rarely given to artists outside France and acknowledges Mick's ability to introduce a French artist to 'cross-border' audiences, especially Northern America.

Mick and his wife, artist Katrina Beale, live in North Melbourne and run the One Star Lounge & Gallery on Victoria Street in West Melbourne. Harvey continues to compose, perform and tour, and we are proud to have this knight in our neck of the woods.

Josephine Daly is a regular writer for the News.

Want to find out more?
Visit www.mickharvey.com or visit One Star Lounge and Gallery, 301-303 Victoria Street, West Melbourne.

Top right: French Consul-General Paule Ignatio presents Mick Harvey with his award.
Right: Paule Ignatio, Mick Harvey and Serge Thomann, a Councillor for French expatriates in Australia



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We are all in the gutter. But some of us are looking at the International Space Station. Please be excusing this mis-quoting of Oscar Wilde. Confusing people is not a bad thing. It can cause thinking, which the world could use a lot more of.

Less than 5% of the Melbourne public are still smoking, so why am I still seeing their butts everywhere. Not sure how many of them are vaping but I am also seeing their detritus everywhere.

In our apartment we can see assorted rocks, fossils, minerals and other gemmological examples wherever we look. Such connections have an influence over keeping me sane/alert.

Unnecessary words: can we get rid of the term unleaded petrol. There's no reason for it, since leaded petrol products are now illegal to sell/manufacture the un is no longer necessary.

Walking to my nude swimming event from Dandynong Station to Doveton really does make me think (but not wish) that I should have learnt to drive.

VERY'S WORLD Very Impressive



There is constant and heavy Princess freeway traffic alongside me, on the right, both sides there are hundreds of cars for sale and rental.

I finally arrive to discover that there is no nude swimming tonight because it's next Saturday.

Plus, I've also discovered that there is now also a Saturday bus that travels this route and stops right outside our venue.

According to James Ussher, after analysis of the Bible, the earth was created at 8 pm, October 22, 4004 BCE.

David Quammen once wrote in National Geographic about Swedish biologist Carl

Linnaeus: "He treasured the diversity of nature for its own sake, not just for its theological edification, and he hungered to embrace every possible bit of it within his own mind. He believed that humankind should discover, name, count, understand and appreciate every kind of creature upon the earth."

James Hutton invented the term Deep Time and 200 years later John McPhee explained Deep Time with perhaps the best science metaphor ever written: "Consider the earth's history as the old measure of the English yard, the distance from the King's nose to the tip of his outstretched hand.

One stroke of a nail file on his middle finger completely erases human history."

The word dinosaur (DIE NO SAWR) means 'terrible lizard'. The first documented image of a natural history collection appeared in 1599 in Naples, Italy, courtesy of an apothecary named Ferrante Imperator.

In his book *Dell'istoria naturale* he published a sketch of his 'cabinet', which meant 'room', which basically meant museum. Such a cabinet was also called a *Wunderkammer*, or room of wonders.

All of which are taken from a fantastic, cancelled library book that I'm reading called *The Dinosaur Artist: Obsession, Betrayal, And the Quest for Earth's Ultimate Trophy* by Paige Williams, a wonderful storyteller. Reviewer Elizabeth Kolbert said that book is "a tale that has everything: passion, science, politics, intrigue, and, of course, dinosaurs."

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

I recently signed up to the Ballarat Marathon. I had a time goal, a plan and a training block mapped out. With the aid of my coach, spreadsheets and kilometres in the legs I expected race day would go to plan with a strong finish, a personal best and a beer with my training group.

That didn't happen. Well, the beer did. It was nothing dramatic. A few missed sessions thanks to overseas travel and a couple of runs swapped out for something that looked suspiciously like sitting down with a wine. Neither textbook nor disaster.

So I did what every runner has to do: I adjusted my goal.

Adjusting goals is harder than the training

MOSTLY UPRIGHT Phil Gijsbers

itself. Getting excited and setting targets is easy. Adjusting them feels like admitting defeat before I've even started. But over time, I've learned to respect the relationship between the training and the result, and that the goal doesn't always have to be about time or distance.

Race day in Ballarat wasn't perfect: windy, warm and a bit scrappy. I could feel the

disrupted training in my legs. I got through it with a respectable time, but no PB. During the run though, I pondered that not hitting the original goal doesn't mean the work was wasted. It just means the work is going somewhere else.

Fitness doesn't disappear. It accumulates. The kilometres stack up, the habits stick and the body adapts. Even when the plan doesn't quite land or the goal isn't reached.

From Ballarat and back to the parks and streets of North Melbourne and Royal Park, with the same training group, it's the same process, now aimed a little further ahead.

So, what's the next goal after this 42.2 km lesson? I am now signed up for a 160 km

mountain race in November.

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, [Phil Gijsbers](#) on Strava and [philgijsbers.substack.com](#) on Substack. Listen to the *Gariwerd Trail Running* podcast on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Here is a great little ride for summer but any time of year will do. It's only 45 minutes from the Moonee Ponds creek section of the Capital trail to the delights of the Sandbar beachfront café at Middle Park.

In summer, enjoy a cooling swim before sitting down to a big breakfast/brunch or a coffee and cake. There are lots of seats indoor and out, even some on the sand. You must order at the counter so don't try to attract the attention of a waiter.

If this isn't far enough for you, keep riding along the shore front for as many kilometres as you want.

The ride will reveal the revamped St Kilda pier, the Middle Brighton café, Picnic Point Hampton, Half Moon Bay and beyond.

You can do all this on a bike path rather

WHEELS ON FIRE Tim Cremean

than the rather dangerous Beaconsfield Parade or The Esplanade.

Following are the details on how to quickly negotiate the city and get to the lovely Port Melbourne bike path, which leads to the beach.

Head south to Footscray Road and up and over using the new green bike bridge that takes you, traffic free, across that busy road and lands you down in Docklands past where Costco used to be and near the school.

The path takes you straight through

Docklands, past Marvel Stadium to the Yarra.

Take Webb bridge (shaped like an eel trap) and not the Jim Stynes bridge to cross the river. On the other side go straight under the car-carrying Charles Grimes bridge. Immediately turn right and pedal 50 metres to the traffic lights that mark the entrance to DFO. Cross and continue around left beside the concrete building that will lead you into the Convention Centre carpark. A bike route is marked here.

Cross over Normanby Rd at the lights and keep heading left a few metres. Here you will find the entry point to the wonderful Port Melbourne/Beacon Cove bike path.

This path starts next to the tram line and the tram yards. You have to carefully pass

over the track that leads into the yards but then parallels the yards for 200 metres, arriving in the kilometres-long, park-lined bike trail all the way to the end of the line at Station Pier. Turn left then to ride along the beachfront.

If I didn't live in beautiful, friendly North Melbourne, I reckon Port Melbourne near this bike path would be pretty ideal.

Try this out for a warming coffee in winter while looking out over a grey bay or a swim in the blue/green pool-like bay on a warm day.

More great rides next issue.

Tim Cremean is the Distribution Coordinator for the News.

Over the past few years I've noticed a rise in the number of smart locks and surveillance systems on homes around North Melbourne, which got me thinking about the trade-offs that come with them.

Smart devices are everyday objects connected to the internet and controlled remotely, often through an app.

There is a 'smart' version of almost everything these days, but regardless of their usefulness, all smart devices introduce risks worth considering.

The first thing to keep in mind is that many of these devices are simply not as smart as they claim to be.

There are plenty of stories about faulty smart locks locking people out of their homes, surveillance systems reacting to false alarms and voice assistants offering frustratingly useless responses.

Beyond this, there are also important

SAFETY IN CYBERSPACE Nebojsa Pajkic

cybersecurity and privacy implications.

Whenever a device connects to the internet, it creates another potential entry point into your home network.

Poorly secured devices can be accessed by attackers to steal information, spy on activity or even take control of the device.

Privacy is another major concern. Many smart devices continuously collect data, which is then uploaded to cloud servers for processing and storage.

Depending on the manufacturer and where their servers are located, that data may be accessible to third parties or subject

to intrusive foreign laws.

Some overseas manufacturers have also faced criticism for sharing user data with external organisations, including law enforcement agencies, to essentially create a city-wide surveillance network.

While companies often justify this in the name of safety or service improvement, it raises uncomfortable parallels with George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

None of this means smart devices are inherently bad. They can absolutely be useful, but it's important to think carefully about how much convenience is worth trading for privacy and security.

If you do use smart devices, take the time to secure them properly.

Change default passwords, enable automatic security updates and review what permissions each device actually needs. If a smart lightbulb is asking for

access to your contacts or microphone, that raises some questions.

Remember to only grant access to people you trust and review those permissions regularly just in case circumstances change.

It's also a good idea to separate smart devices from your primary home network by using a guest network if your modem supports it. See my column in the Autumn 2026 issue about this.

Finally, always ask yourself whether a device genuinely needs to be 'smart' in the first place. Sometimes a regular toaster, toothbrush or toilet works perfectly well without an internet connection and a monthly subscription fee.

Nebojsa Pajkic is a local resident and an information security professional. He shares his cybersecurity knowledge in the News.



A century of stories, one badge at a time

Annie Nguyen

A badge can reveal humour, history or politics, but making it is a lot more complicated than you may realise.

Patrick Badges has been bringing badges to life since the early 1900s. Whether it's an order of one or a gargantuan order of a million badges, the company has delivered all shapes and sizes.

From custom designs to political, celebratory, famous musicians and monumental events; one even for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

The company was the first to design a 'one-piece' badge – a single piece of tin wrapped on top, which gave it longevity and a high-end finish.

Five brothers from the Patrick family pioneered the button and badge business. John Patrick, who runs it now, is the grandson of one of those founders.

I met up with John in his Provost Street shop where I was in awe of the various collections and archives of ABBA, Elvis and the 1956 Olympics – it was like walking into a time capsule where I was seeing a piece of history all on one A4 sheet of paper.

Together, we took a dive into his family history. John shared a heartfelt moment about

leaving high school at 16 to help his dad at the shop.

"Living and working with dad - we were always very close," expressing a great deal of fondness and love as he shares the deep archives of the badges his father and grandfather have made.

Noting that there were some lanyards and keychains, I was curious about why there was also a selection of name tags. As John explains, as a business they had to keep up with the times, "as badges slow down, people want something else".

With a passion that compares to the gregarious Willy Wonka, John demonstrated how a badge is made in his workshop.

First, he shows me the thin sheet of metal, cut into discs for the badge base. There's a manual and an industrial machine that would cut at least 12,000 disks within an hour for a bulky order.

Next was the welding; the machine would press down the pins, securing them out of sight in the middle of the disc. Each is carefully engraved with the Patrick Badges name and phone number as a reminder for the buyers who made their badge.

Finally, there are at least two people at the button-making machine, meticulously layering the materials: the welded disc,



a chosen image from an order, then the tin plastic on top, pressed all in one before popping out of a chute and into a box, ready to be packaged.

Watching the process unfold with precision and care, it was easy to see why John is the

Willy Wonka of the badge world – transforming simple pieces of metal and paper into tiny creations that carried memories and meanings.

Annie Nguyen is a regular writer for the News.



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Artists-in-residence Caleb Biffanti, Emily McRae, Wanda Gillespie and Freddy Mata Mendoza (Missing: Margot Feast)

Woodworkers host their first open-studio exhibition

Mishelle Tongco

For the first time, the Victorian Woodworkers Association (VWA) hosted an open-studio exhibition as part of Melbourne Design Week. The three-day exhibition showcased the works of its five current Artists in Residence: Caleb Biffanti, Margot Feast, Wanda Gillespie, Emily McRae and Freddy Mata Mendoza.

The VWA invited visitors to explore works in progress and finished pieces in its basement studio in Tyrone St, North Melbourne, giving the artists a chance to present their work to the public and also opening up the studio space, facilities and the wider VWA community.

“Often it feels like we’re beaver-ing away by ourselves underground, and no one knows about us,” VWA president David De La Cruz said.

“I think it’s a really good opportunity for us to throw open the doors and let the local and wider arts community within Melbourne see what we do and what we’ve accomplished.”

For more than 40 years, the VWA has been a central hub for artists and craftspeople drawn to the world of woodworking. The association has supported its members through workshops, exhibitions and events, fostering a strong community built on craftsmanship and creativity.

What started as a traditional woodworking club has evolved into a thriving and diverse collective, creating a space where people can learn, create and connect through woodworking.

“Woodworking is an endless pursuit,” David said. “There is more to know than you will ever learn, and we help facilitate all those different learning opportunities.”

This was the case for Melbourne-based architect and artist in residence Caleb Biffanti, who first became involved with the association after discovering its classes following his graduation.

After two years of classes and multiple projects at the VWA, Caleb applied for a residency when a position opened up and has since focused on developing his skills and further exploring the craft of woodworking.

“I come from architecture, and I come from a making background,” he said. “As a resident, I’ve been doing a lot of smaller and more delicate pieces because they require a stronger mind-and-hand connection.”

“My approach is about finding nuances in design, focusing more on detail rather than something larger and simpler in form.”

Following the exhibition, VWA coordinator Anne-Claire Petre said it was important for visitors to understand that woodworking is open and accessible to all skill levels. “Fine craftsmanship is more than expensive furniture,” she said.

“It’s not just creativity, it’s being able to make something with your hands – and that’s really open to everyone.”

“People are just so different, and you have people who have no idea what they’re doing, but they know they just want to make something.”

For Caleb, the aim was for visitors to leave with a deeper appreciation for handmade work. “It would be great for them [visitors] to have an appreciation for handmade things. It’s really easy to want what other people have and to want what everyone has,” he said.

“There’s also something very cathartic and special about making things with your hands, and if seeing five other artists inspires somebody to want to make something themselves, I think that’s a great outcome.”

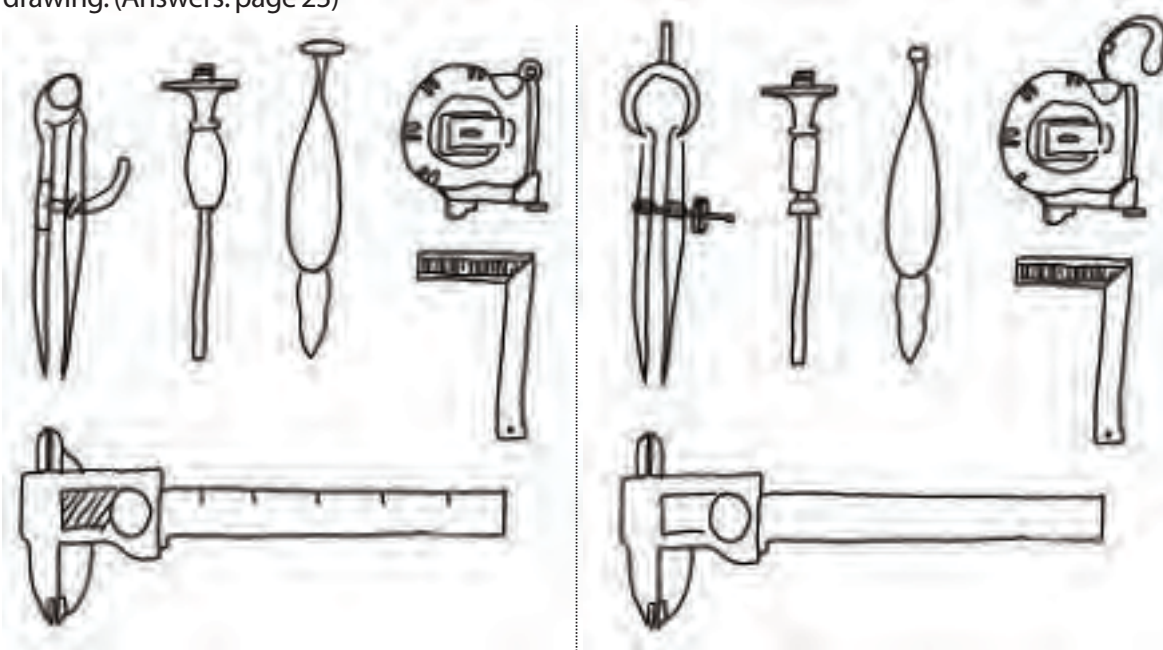
Mishelle Tongco is a regular writer for the News.

Want to know more?
Visit the VWA website vwa.org.au or email vwa@vma.org.au

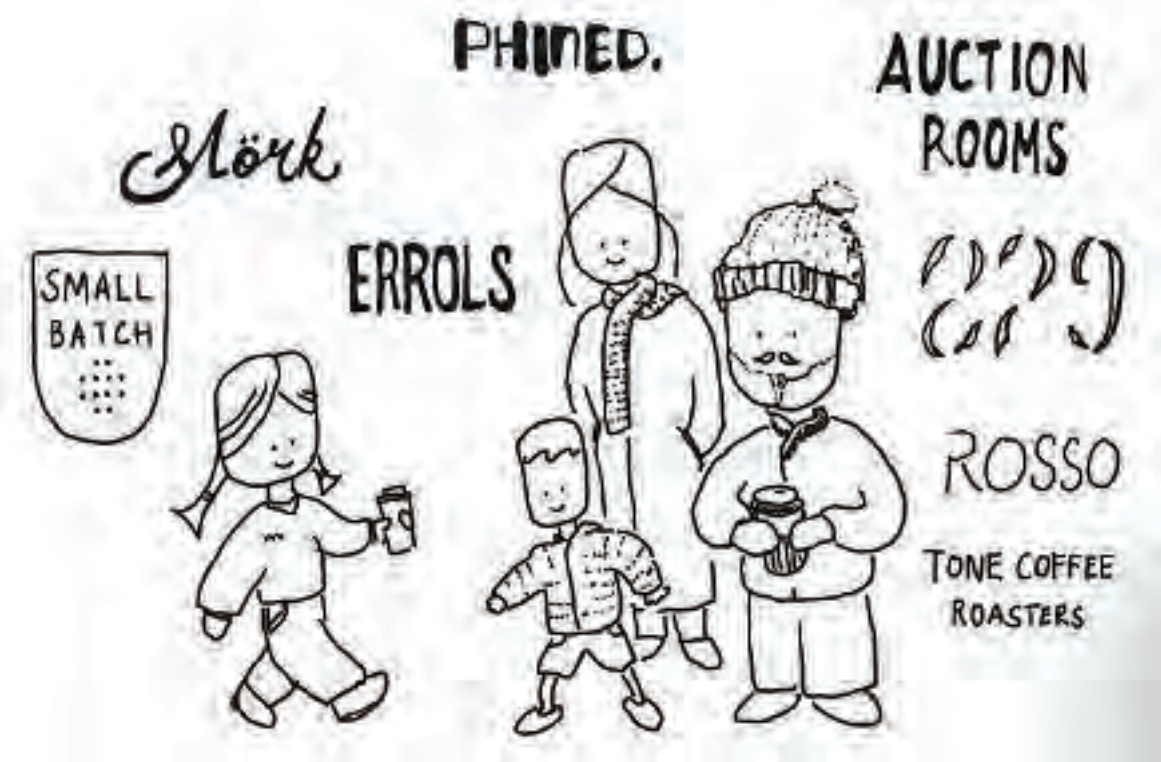


Spot the Difference

News illustrator Ed Zhao stopped by the workshop and has set readers a challenge. These illustrations may look the same, but there are 9 differences. Track them down and colour in the drawing. (Answers: page 23)



The News illustrator Ed Zhao is checked out the best hot chocolates around the neighbourhood to stay warm this winter.



Come for coffee; stay for connection

Anne Burgi

In North and West Melbourne, you'd be hard pressed to walk more than a block without finding a barista hard at work, legally peddling caffeine. Many of us return to the same place at the same time pretty much every day, often walking past two or three other cafés to reach 'our' place.

Of course we want great coffee, but that's not the only thing that influences our choice of café.

When I asked a friend about their allegiance to a particular café, she said it was her 'third place'. Hmmm. What? As usual, I'm way behind on social theory. A simple Google search fills the gap ... 'Third places' are social environments that exist outside your home ('first place') and your workplace/school ('second place'). There's more explanation in the box.

Another friend explained: a third place is like the bar in *Cheers*. Another internet search (I never watched the TV show) and there's the lyrics to the show's theme: "You wanna go where everybody knows your name".

In many Australian communities, the local pubs are a 5-star third place. Around here, cafés give them a run for their money.

WHISPERED TALES

Stories from our streets

Shout out at this point to Roasting Warehouse in Leveson St. My first coffee there was 25 years ago, just a week or so after it opened. Within a few more, many of the staff knew my name and, importantly, my coffee order. I've watched generations of young staff come and go; many as graduates of nearby tertiary institutes. What they all have had in common is a warm, welcoming smile.

This is the key to what makes a third place 'special'. It is the people at our third places that attract our allegiance.

During the COVID lockdowns, our

local coffee shops were important in keeping us sane. We took our socially distanced place in the queues on the street and relished the exchange of smiles and waves with other regulars.

We might not know the names of many regulars (though we often know their dogs' names, proudly proclaimed on their collars), but they are part of the fabric of our 'third place'.

Enjoy your coffee ... and be thankful for the 'third places' in our community.

Anne Burgi is part of the News editorial team.

A third place is:

- Open and inviting** – You don't need an invitation or appointment; you can come and go as you please.
 - Comfortable and informal** – You feel you belong there.
 - Convenient** – It's close enough to visit often.
 - Unpretentious** – Everyone is on the same level, there's nothing fancy or fragile.
 - There are regulars** – And often a host who greets people as they arrive.
 - Conversation is the main activity** – Discussion and gossip are part of the mix.
 - Laughter is frequent** – The mood is light-hearted.
- *The Great Good Place* (1989), by sociologist Ray Oldenburg



VIGIL takes audiences for a ride

Sylvia Soo

Asking the question "What lives matter?" kept audiences intrigued at Arts House recently.

VIGIL, by performing arts company, Outer Urban Projects, brought together a diverse ensemble of artists, musicians and five playwrights to pose that question.

Set on a tram moving through a city, VIGIL weaves the stories of passengers who survived war, exile and violence and continue to endure the consequences.

The audience was prompted to consider who gets to experience a sense of safety and security in Australia, and whose safety is predicated on remaining invisible or out of sight.

Several audience members commented on the powerful and provocative nature of the play, and as audience member, Steve explained, the play offered "so many lessons and views on our society".

Director and composer Irine Vela said the idea for the play was seeded in 2019 when "vigils became a norm" during a time of widespread gender-based violence, COVID pandemic, and the Black Lives Matter movement; while people gather to mourn and lament, vigils also became "an opportunity to connect and protest".

The play cleverly intersperses various stories and characters to highlight the similarities of persecution and resistance in different corners of the world and linking it to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and truth.

Using public transport as a vehicle for storytelling and empathy, the themes of the play are as recognisable



as trams are to this city.

It invites audiences to reflect on the imperceptible struggles of fellow passengers and the acts of solidarity and empathy that we can extend to one another.

Sylvia Soo is a new writer for the News.

Want to know more?

Season 1 of 2026 at Arts House will conclude with an interactive and immersive exhibition and public program, 'a bit thing' from 24 June to 17 July, www.artshouse.com.au/events/a-bit-thing. Arts House is at 521 Queensberry St North Melbourne.



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Breaking the fast under the sun

Marwa Zakzouk

About 1,600 people enjoyed a vibrant Eid al-Fitr festival at the North Melbourne Community Centre in late March. Festivities included rides, an animal farm and stalls offering food, art, face painting, henna, perfume, clothes and books. Children were especially delighted, making the most of the rides, participating enthusiastically in a Kahoot competition, and relishing the prizes and the ever-popular sausage sizzle – an impressive 80 kilograms of sausages were consumed. Adults appreciated the opportunity to connect, enjoy the sunny day, and celebrate Eid together, with many taking part in henna art and sharing joyful moments with their families and friends. The event truly reflected the spirit of togetherness and celebration within the community.

Marwa Zakzouk is a Community Outreach Worker at North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre.



Six teachers reflect on life in the classroom

Swagata Majumdar

Across North and West Melbourne classrooms, teachers with vastly different journeys are shaping the next generation, bringing with them decades of experience, global perspectives, fresh enthusiasm and deeply personal connections to the communities they serve. From veteran educators with more than two decades in schools to new teachers in their first year, their stories show a profession built on resilience, curiosity and care. Though teaching evolves, many say its core remains: building relationships, creating safe spaces, and finding joy as students discover the world. Here, six local teachers reflect on their teaching journeys, the lessons they are learning, and what continues to inspire them each day.

Experienced educators

Melissa Drew, North Melbourne Primary School

I've been teaching at NMPS for 24 years. I was employed as a graduate and just never left. That wasn't the plan, but it's worked out that way, and I'm grateful to be part of such a diverse and warm school community. Teaching and learning have changed a lot over the years, but kids don't change all that much; their enthusiasm for and delight in learning is a privilege to witness. Teaching little humans is meaningful, important work that requires enormous enthusiasm and positivity, but it is well worth the effort. Even after 24 years, I wouldn't be doing anything else.

Georgina Murphy, North Melbourne Primary School

Would you believe, I have been teaching for 24 years. I have taught in Australia, Africa and England during this time. I love being a teacher; every day is different, and I am always learning new things. The best parts of my job are the

amazing staff I work with, the fantastic kids I get to teach, and seeing students try new things and explore the world around them. This year, I am teaching science.

Jason Robert, Saints College

I have been teaching for about 24 years! So far, I have had the opportunity to teach in Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia and Australia. Though I have had several jobs, teaching is the only one I can see myself doing full-time. Despite the challenges, teaching is a wonderful vocation that fills my life with meaning, joy and fulfilment. I

ardently believe that the greatest legacy teachers can leave their students is the joy and purposefulness of lifelong learning. When we are on fire, others we inspire!

Early career teachers

Kyle Robinson, North Melbourne Primary School

I'm a new Grade 2 teacher. Term 1 was an amazing experience I will never forget; I learned so much about teaching and my own practice in

a few short months. I was a different teacher at the end of the term and entirely better for the next! Term 2 hasn't slowed down; the practices I started discovering in Term 1 are already developing, and I am extending my own learning as a teacher. I have understood, as a teacher, I must figure out what works best for my students, whether it's social, well-being or academic, and to always keep my resilience up, even when it seems like there's a mountain to climb. I'm looking forward to continuing to grow my relationships with my class and becoming the best teacher I can be.

James Chan, River Nile School

This is my first teaching job, and I feel incredibly well-supported in creating warm, inclusive classroom environments. I have loved getting to know my students and look forward to witnessing their growth as the year progresses. Term 2 has been all about maintaining momentum and developing my teaching strategies so I can support my students to thrive!

Sukie Chen, River Nile School

Although I'm new to River Nile School, my teaching adventure began with teaching English to migrants and in university bridging programs. Term 1 has been both rewarding and challenging as I adjusted to secondary teaching, but I've loved hearing their stories and working with my incredibly supportive team, who made me feel trusted from day one. I love how five different languages echo across my classroom, how students ask me to write their names in Mandarin, and how they teach me to say "I love you" in their languages. As a former international student, I can relate to their struggles with adapting to a new language, culture, and environment. In Term 2, I'm feeling more confident and excited to continue seeing my students grow and thrive.



Above (left to right): Melissa Drew, Georgina Murphy and Jason Robert. Below (left to right): Kyle Robinson; James Chan and Sukie Chen.

Swagata Majumdar is the Deputy Editor of the News.



6



7



1



2



3



5



4

GARDEN GLORIES
Marion Poynter



Backyard bounty

One of the great joys of having a garden of one's own is to share with others some of what it produces. Giving a home-grown and home-made gift brings a special joy and satisfaction to both the giver and the receiver. I have the good fortune to have a relatively large garden in North Melbourne, but even a potted balcony garden can provide the material for personal gifts such as delightful little posies. Throughout the year I always find something to bunch together into an informal arrangement as I wander through our backyard. In autumn I like to include a rose and dahlia or two when they are in flower (1), but over this time there is a constant supply of salmon and orangey-shaded alstroemerias (Peruvian Lilies), blue and red salvias, bright red geraniums and tiny feverfew daisies, while the lacy leaves of silver ragwort or culinary sage can provide the perfect edging (2). When there are fewer flowers available, I incorporate more foliage, especially whatever herbs I can find. The perfume of rose-scented geranium leaves, mint, lemon verbena and sage turns each posy into a magically scented gift, resembling a traditional 'tussie mussie' (3). These little bouquets are perfect for cheering up the rooms of residents of Aged Care homes when I go to visit (4 and 5). Through autumn our three hens are still laying eggs (before their winter break), and people are always delighted to receive a few fresh eggs, as they are to get a small pot of honey from our bee hive (before they retire into winter rest.) A regular task each autumn is cutting branches from my beloved copper beech tree, and preserving them for use over winter. This involves trimming and squashing the ends of small

branches and soaking them in two parts of hot water to one part of glycerine for a week or two for them to absorb and darken. Valuable for home and for church arrangements, a bunch of them is a useful gift to a friend that will last for years (6). A multitude of fat black olives ripened on our very large olive tree. I have had no time this year to gather and pickle them, or send them off to be turned into olive oil. I was happy to give them to a young friend whose girlfriend will pickle them. Over autumn, the particularly delicious figs on our tree also ripen in abundance (7). A delicious gift to a friend could be a platter of fresh figs alongside some goat's cheese: a great combination. I sometimes turn part of the big crop into a few jars of fig confit: a much appreciated gift. The recipe is easy and particularly luscious. **To make one jar of fig confit:**

- 200 mL of marsala wine or madeira
- 100 g sugar
- 300 g figs
- Sprig rosemary
- Piece of thinly pared lemon rind
- Juice of 1/2 lemon

Put the marsala into a saucepan with 100 mL water and the sugar, and stir to dissolve over gentle heat. Trim the stalks from the figs, quarter them lengthwise and add to the pan with the rosemary, bay and lemon rind. Simmer until the figs are tender. Remove figs with a draining spoon and put into a sterilised jar. Remove rosemary, bay and lemon rind. Add lemon juice and boil fast to reduce for five minutes. Pour the hot syrup over the figs in the jar and cover. Store in fridge, and eat soon.

ELLEN SANDELL
GREENS STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE

Hi, I'm Ellen, your local state MP. I'm here to help.
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Authorised by E. Sandell, G02/512-544 Spencer St, West Melbourne VIC 3003





The Separation Tree: the river red gum in the Royal Botanic Gardens where people celebrated the news of Victoria becoming a separate colony. The tree died after being vandalised in 2013 when it was thought to be more than 400 years old.

Victory in the fight for independence

1 July 1851 is an important day in the history of Victoria. It is the day Queen Victoria set for the secession of the District of Port Phillip from the Colony of New South Wales. The newly proclaimed Colony was to be named in her honour.

Felicity Jack

European settlement of Melbourne is usually dated back to 1835 when John Batman formed a so-called treaty with the Indigenous population. Port Phillip was incorporated as a Crown settlement in 1837 and was named after Queen Victoria's serving prime minister, Viscount Melbourne. The population referred to themselves as Phillipians. The Queen declared Melbourne a city in 1847. The settlement of Port Phillip, including the town and later the City of Melbourne, continued to come under the jurisdiction of the Colony of New South Wales. Distance and a lack of representation meant that little attention was paid to the development of its infrastructure and services and its citizens felt that they were being treated very unfairly. Although in 1842 Port Phillip settlement was designated six representatives, the cost and travel time meant that these positions were only rarely and partially filled. From 1840 onwards there was frequent agitation and petitions pressuring for Separation. Finally, after much lobbying, news arrived by ship on 11 November 1850 that Port Phillip would become the Colony of Victoria, to be proclaimed eight months later.

Charles La Trobe had arrived in Melbourne in October 1839 as the first Superintendent of Port Phillip. When news of Separation arrived in Melbourne he gave a speech at 10 am on the same day in what is now the Botanic Gardens under the Separation Tree, a river red gum. (This tree has twice been vandalised and only the trunk remains). There were great celebrations with balls and bonfires taking place throughout the Colony. A Ball was held in the newly completed Benevolent Asylum which was yet to receive any residents. It was a splendid occasion attended by Victoria's elite.

Felicity Jack is a member of Hotham History Project and a regular contributor to the News.

Want to know more?

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

Listen out for St James' bells on 1 July

The Victoria Day Council celebrates Separation Day annually. As 2026 is its 175th anniversary it is likely that it will have more elaborate celebrations than in more recent years. There will doubtless be speeches and presentations but one celebration local to North and West Melbourne will centre on St James Old Cathedral in King Street. At the time of Separation the church was still on its original site and had only one ships' bell. Six new bells were installed in 1852 and a further two in 1853. It moved to its present site on the corner of King and Batman streets with its full complement of eight bells in 1914. To celebrate this important anniversary these bells will be rung by some of the most skilled and experienced bell ringers from Australia and New Zealand with a special peal. This includes the bells being rung with 5,040 changes, taking about three hours. To minimise disturbance to local residents this will take place during the afternoon.

Want to know more?

Hear the bells for yourself 1 pm to 4 pm on July 1 at St James Old Cathedral, corner of King and Batman streets, West Melbourne.

Your community needs you!

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Passion for his craft sets a new direction for Richard Sarell

Josh Rule

Richard Sarell's lifelong love of directing has led to him working on some of Australia's most iconic television productions, including *Blue Heelers*, *A Country Practice* and *Neighbours*. Now he works with small groups and individual actors using a methodology he developed after seeing actors struggle with listening, engaging with the dialogue and storytelling. From his home in Kensington, Richard works with actors around the world – from the UK, US, Spain and Turkey. His connection with North Melbourne goes back to when he ran acting competitions upstairs at the Courthouse Hotel. Errol's Café and Auction Rooms are some favourite local spots. His latest venture – an 'Introduction to Acting' class – was organised by the North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre at Sokol in May. "It was a lot of fun offering a taste of how I direct and train actors. The attendees responded enthusiastically to understanding how to create character and how to deliver a performance," he said. Designed for everyone from complete beginners through to professionals, his approach has been described as 'revolutionary', leading him to name his book about it, *Acting Revolution*. "It's a fundamentally different



approach to acting, centred on genuine listening and real-time responsiveness rather than pre-planned, rehearsed performances." Richard says most formally trained actors know what they're going to do before they step on stage, whereas true performance comes from being present in the moment and responding spontaneously to the other actor. "It's all about understanding the nature of a relationship and the nature of the conversation," he says. Traditionally, actors are taught to 'action' their scripts by writing a verb on every line to know how to act the dialogue. Richard doesn't understand how that can work. "Surely, you're so busy trying to remember your verbs that you can't possibly listen and respond to the conversation. I narrowed it down to 13 verbs to help actors focus. And they only use one verb per scene. It is much simpler." He says an actor has two jobs: to be believable and to tell the story. "When they come out of their degree or course they're focused on being believable. But they're telling a story. That's why everybody's there in the first place – actors who understand this are better storytellers." According to Richard, storytelling is the basis of every conversation, every novel written and every play performed. "The reason we tell stories is to make a point and if the point is clear then the play is more coherent, and the audience enjoys it more." From recurrent standing ovations to greater confidence in relationships and job interviews, the results of his training speak for themselves.

"I had an actor ring me one morning, describing an argument with his girlfriend. It had gone on for such a long time that he started to get bored with it. So, he thought to himself if this was a class, how would I define my conversation goal? When he worked out his conversation goal, the argument stopped because he got clear about what he wanted to achieve."

Josh Rule is a regular writer for the News.

Want to know more?

Richard is offering a five-week Introduction to Acting course starting 25 June in North Melbourne. See page 20 for details. Visit www.rehearsalroom.com



PARLIAMENT TO POSTCODE
Sarah Witty



Shared values promote community

I recently spent time connecting with local community organisations, schools and leaders across North and West Melbourne, highlighting the importance of diversity, education and local industry in strengthening our community. It was a privilege to visit the Ukrainian Catholic Church in North Melbourne and spend time with members of our local Ukrainian community. In the face of unimaginable hardship, the strength, resilience and pride of the Ukrainian people continues to shine through. The church stands not only as a place of worship, but as a vital hub of community, culture and support, especially for those far from home. My thanks to Cardinal Bychok and Father Mykytyuk for the warm welcome and for sharing their stories. Melbourne is stronger because of the diversity and spirit of communities like this. I also visited social enterprise Assembled Threads to see how their Australian-made products are designed, made and finished. It was inspiring to meet the team and learn more about the important work they are doing to create jobs, support ethical manufacturing and invest in local skills.

Businesses like Assembled Threads demonstrate the innovation and community spirit that make Melbourne such a great place to live and work. Education continues to be one of the key priorities for our government and I was pleased to visit River Nile School and see the incredible work being done to support young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Schools like River Nile provide students with opportunities to learn, grow and thrive in a welcoming environment that celebrates diversity and inclusion. I was also delighted to welcome important funding support for Saints College in North Melbourne through the Commonwealth Capital Grants Program. Saints College will receive \$3 million for the redevelopment of spaces and the creation of three additional specialist learning spaces, along with new stairs and upgrades to HVAC, power and fire protection systems. Our government is committed to providing all schools with appropriate funding so that every student gets the best possible education. Investments like this help ensure students and teachers have access to modern, safe and



River Nile Principal Charles Hertzog and students chatting with Sarah.

supportive learning environments that meet the needs of growing school communities. Across North and West Melbourne, I continue to be inspired by the people and organisations working every day to support others, celebrate diversity and build a stronger community. Whether it is through education, faith, social enterprise or community support, these local efforts make a lasting difference and reflect the values that make our area so special.

Want to know more?
If your community organisation, business or school would like to meet with me, please reach out to my office by email: Sarah.Witty.MP@aph.gov.au



Father Andriy Mykytyuk and Cardinal Mykola Bychok with Sarah.

Celebrating 50 years in song

Rosie Greenfield
There was a whisper at the end of 2025 – there was to be a gala event to celebrate 50 years of the North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre. SingNoW! choir committed to performing but what were we to sing? The Centre started in 1976 so what better way to launch the night than with the well-loved Skyhooks song ‘Living in the ‘70s’! For some of us, that was the signature song of our early adulthood and brought back many memories. By starting with that what to follow? Given we had just a few weeks to get performance ready, we opted for songs from our current repertoire that represented each decade. We selected ‘Strangers on the Train’ to represent the 1980s, ‘Count on Me’

for 2010s and ‘Break My Heart’ for 2020s. The outlier was ‘Make Somebody Happy’, an oldie but a goodie, which we justified as Santana had a hit with it in the 1990s. Susie arranged ‘Living in the ‘70s’ for our voices and away we went. There was a new song to learn and five from our repertoire to refresh and polish. As a colleague once said, “There is much to do and we must hasten slowly”. Seems like the opposite of what we should be doing. What a night it was! We began with ‘Always Was and Always Will Be’ by way of an acknowledgement of country and then launched into ‘Living in the ‘70s’. It went down a treat as many in the audience were taken back to where they were in 1974 when that song was topping the charts. Fresh from our amazing performance

at the NWMNC 50th Anniversary Gala gig we launched straight into preparing a new song for Reconciliation Week. In just three rehearsals we learned, staged and recorded our version of ‘Beds are Burning’ from Midnight Oil’s 1987

album *Diesel and Dust*. It is the fourth year we have recorded a song for the compilation video clip that comes out during Reconciliation Week in late May. Performing is challenging and scary but the sense of achievement and camaraderie shared with your fellow singers is euphoric. Would you like to share this feeling? Come along and join us. No auditions, just a welcoming smile and encouragement to try.

Rosie Greenfield is a member of SingNoW!
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, 497 Queensberry Street.
Email: admin@centre.org.au
Online: www.nwmnc.org.au





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The cost of war extends beyond the battlefields

The North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre joined with the Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women for an Anzac Day service on 19 April. Former Melbourne City Councillor and MLA for Melbourne Jennifer Kanis spoke about the impact war had on her grandmother and the generations that followed, reflecting on sacrifice, resilience and the enduring importance of remembrance. This is an edited version of her speech.

Anzac Day asks us to remember courage, sacrifice and the cost of war. I want to speak about that cost from a perspective that is sometimes less visible in our commemorations – the experience of women and children, and the lives reshaped, sometimes beyond recognition, by conflict they did not choose.

I have a photograph of my grandmother standing with her six children. It was taken, we believe, in Marseille somewhere between the life they had left and the life they were hoping to find. Australia was their destination. She was about 30 years old. She looks exhausted. The children's clothes are worn.

My grandmother came from Calabria, in the deep south of Italy. She had been widowed during the war years, not by a bullet, but by a farming accident. She was alone with six children in one of the poorest regions in Europe.

By 1944, the Italian economy had been destroyed. The Allied invasion of 1943 had caused both the political structure and the economy to rapidly collapse.

In Calabria, rural poverty and insecurity had increased throughout the fascist years, and war had stripped away what little remained.

For a widow with six children and no extended family nearby, there was simply no path forward. She had no real choice but to go.

That photograph in Marseille is not just a family memory. It is a portrait of what war does to the people who survive it. Not

the soldiers. The women left behind.

My grandmother arrived in Australia with nothing but her children and her determination. My mother, the youngest of the six, became a qualified hairdresser. She met my father, who was also a post-war migrant. Together, they had three daughters. All three went to university. I became a lawyer.

That is two generations from a tired woman in a French port, to her granddaughters building careers in Australia. That is extraordinary. And it was made possible, in no small part, by this country's willingness to take in people who had been broken by history and give them the chance to rebuild.

Melbourne's north and west has always been the heartland of that story. These suburbs were built, in significant part, by migrants like my grandmother – Irish, Italian, Greek, Vietnamese, Somali, Sudanese – people who came here with very little and gave a great deal in return.

War and women

By the time Australian men landed at Gallipoli in 1915, Australian women had already won the right to vote. In 1902, Australia became just the second country in the world to grant women the federal vote.

When war came, it was complicated. Some women threw their energy into the war effort – nursing, fundraising, organising. Others stood firmly against it. Here in Melbourne, women like Vida Goldstein, founder of the Women's

Political Association and the Women's Peace Army, were outspoken opponents of conscription and militarism. In 1917, women led protests through the streets of Melbourne demanding food and fair treatment for working families being squeezed by war-fuelled inflation.

The war accelerated change; it always does. With men gone, women filled roles in the workforce, in public life, in civic leadership that had previously been closed to them. That dynamic – war as a disruptor of entrenched inequality – is part of the complicated legacy of World Wars I and II for women in the western world.

We must be careful not to romanticise that. For every door that opened, there were hundreds of thousands of women like my grandmother – women for whom war meant not opportunity but devastation. Widowhood. Poverty. Displacement.

We are commemorating the sacrifices of past wars. But war is not past. And the experience of women in conflict has not fundamentally changed – in some ways, it has worsened.

In 2025, the United Nations reported that 676 million women now live within 50 kilometres of deadly conflict. Civilian casualties among women and children quadrupled in just two years. Conflict-related sexual violence rose 87% in that same period.

In Ukraine, more than five million women and children are internally displaced. Women and girls fleeing conflict face heightened risks of trafficking and exploitation.

In Gaza, UN Women has estimated that more than 28,000 women and girls have been killed since October 2023 – an average of one every hour. Women there are undergoing caesarean sections without anaesthesia. At least 46,000 pregnant women face crisis-level hunger.

In Sudan, one of the worst humanitarian crises of this century is unfolding with almost no international attention. Women and children are being displaced in their millions, facing sexual violence, food insecurity, and the destruction of everything familiar.

In Iran, women who have marched for their basic rights – the Women, Life, Freedom movement – now face new dangers as regional conflict intensifies and repression deepens.

The nature of modern warfare has changed. Conflicts are increasingly fought in urban areas, which means the front line runs through homes, schools, hospitals and markets. The people who die in those places are not soldiers. They are overwhelmingly civilian. They are women and children.

Despite all this, women remain largely excluded from the peace processes that are supposed to end these conflicts. In 2024, nine out of ten peace processes had no women negotiators. Women made up just 7% of negotiators globally. The people left behind by war have the least say in ending it.

The cost of war

On Anzac Day, we honour the



courage of those who served. And I think honouring them well means also honouring the full truth of what war costs – the widows, the orphaned children, the women who crossed oceans with nothing, the women today who are navigating war zones with their children in their arms. My grandmother did not

make it into any official history. She won no medals. But she brought six children to safety, and from that, three generations of Australians have been built. That is worth remembering, too.



Swagata Majumdar

Melbourne's midweek winter ritual has returned to Queen Victoria Market, with the Winter Night Market opening its 2026 season and running every Wednesday night through to 26 August.

Across the 13-week season, the historic North Melbourne market precinct comes alive from 5 pm to 10 pm with street food, warming drinks, specialty shopping, live music, roving performers and family-friendly entertainment, all set against crackling fire pits and glowing installations.

Alicia Arthur, who lives with her young children in Peel Street, looks forward to this exciting time every year.

"The Winter Night market brings a sense of amazing warmth to this area," she said. "People travel from far to be here. It feels so festive. I look forward to bringing the children throughout this season."

The food lineup is squarely built for winter. Melted serves raclette-loaded sandwiches and toasted brie and camembert croquettes with fig jam. The Soup Factory ladles out pumpkin soup, clam chowder, lobster and king crab chowder. Spud Pappi tops loaded baked potatoes with butter chicken, mushrooms and Italian-inspired flavours, while The American Doughnut Kitchen returns with its iconic hot jam doughnuts and seasonal dipping sauces, and Mixed Bag rounds things out with toasted marshmallows, s'mores and campfire hot chocolates. Drinks span mulled wine, Campfire Cocktails and hot spiced



Specialty trader Tracy Keating of Leaf Candle Co.

mocktails, alongside hojicha lattes and matcha. There are cannolis and Turkish delights, warm cookies, and cheesecakes if a sugar rush is what you are after.

Specialty traders offer handmade jewellery, scarves and beanies at A Good Yarn, vintage and recycled fashion at Ladybird Clothing, and curated hats at The Hat Project.

Tracy Keating of Leaf Candle Co., who has traded casually at the market for four years, then traded the whole season last year and is back for a full season in 2026, said the mix of visitors keeps her returning.

"This market has such a nice vibe. The Night Market is an iconic tourist destination, which gives me a varied customer base for my product, and I think that's really amazing. That also sets this market apart from other markets."

Visitors can enjoy disco performances, fire plays, music bands and magic tricks! Throughout June, a new addition, Keys to Winter, brings intimate piano performances from 6 pm to 9 pm, inviting visitors to slow down and settle into the season.

Queen Victoria Market CEO Matt Elliott said the market continues to offer something fresh each year.

"From comforting street food and warming drinks to live music, open fires and local traders, the Winter Night Market captures the best of Melbourne in winter and offers a uniquely local night out for both visitors and locals alike," he said.

"While people will find plenty of the things they know and love, the event continues to evolve each year with new traders, fresh entertainment and new experiences to discover. If you think you've seen it all before, we'd encourage you to take another look."

Swagata Majumdar is deputy editor of the News.

Want to know more?

Winter Night Market runs every Wednesday, 3 June to 26 August, 5 pm to 10 pm, Queen Victoria Market. Free entry. Website: thenightmarket.com.au

THE LIFE OF THE PARTY
Ellen Sandell



Primary schools deserve proper funding

When the State Budget was handed down in May, I was deeply disappointed to see Kensington Primary School is still waiting for the funding we need to finish the upgrades our school was promised.

This is an election year, which means politicians are watching. It's the perfect time to make some noise for our school and the funding it deserves.

The fight for funding isn't new. Five years ago, our community campaigned hard together and, with my advocacy, secured \$7.3 million in State Government funding for much-needed building works, and an extra \$339,000 the year after for the outdoor learning area (which is being upgraded now!). It felt like a real win.

But construction cost over-runs by the Victorian School Building Authority meant that money only stretched far enough to complete roughly half the work.

Our community isn't asking for a lot – just for the State Government to finish the project that it already agreed was necessary, including installing lifts so kids with disabilities can access the upstairs classrooms, fixing leaks and rotting window frames, and heating and insulation in the old classrooms.

These problems are more than just

unpleasant; they affect whether kids can concentrate, teachers can do their best work, and parents can feel confident that their children are in a safe and healthy environment every day. That shouldn't be controversial.

In Parliament, I asked the Education Minister again when he will visit KPS and commit the funding to finish the upgrades. I was disappointed that instead of answering respectfully, he belittled our community and made it a partisan political issue.

Our schools should be funded based on need, not on what's best for the Labor political party. You can see the video of this exchange on my social media.

I will not be deterred. I'll keep pushing the State Government to properly fund Kensington Primary School's building works, and the hundreds of parents and friends who have signed our open letter are a powerful reminder to the government that this community is watching. If you haven't signed yet, I'd encourage you to do so on my website www.ellensandell.com

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

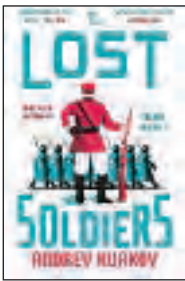


BETWEEN THE COVERS
Chris Saliba



The Lost Soldiers
Andrey Kurkov (MacLehose Press, \$34.99)
Kyiv, 1919. It's a time of great political instability. Only a year before the entire Russian royal family had been shot. The Red Army is in control, but the White Army and anarchists are lurking in the background. Everything is in flux. Against this tumultuous background, humble police investigator Samson Kolechko works to solve the mysterious case of 28 Red Army soldiers who have gone missing at the Halystka bathhouse, their clothing left behind. It's a surreal case, with many strange characters and bizarre twists. Samson must also negotiate a maze-like underworld filled with corruption and nepotism. Then there is the dreaded Cheka – secret police – who are keeping an eye on Samson's activities.

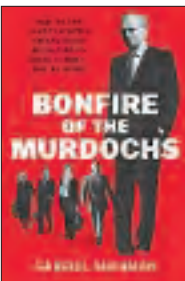
The *Lost Soldiers* is the third instalment of celebrated Ukrainian author Andrey Kurkov's Kyiv Mysteries. The novel has wonderfully earthy descriptions of people, street life and Slavic food, bringing the Kyiv of 100 years ago vibrantly to life. Kurkov mixes these gritty aspects with many humorous, almost absurdist elements, giving the story a bittersweet feel. We know Samson walks a perilous tightrope, with danger always nearby, yet the comic tone lightens this emotional burden. Deeply satisfying literary fiction.



Bonfire of the Murdochs
Gabriel Sherman (Simon & Schuster, \$36.99)
Rupert Murdoch built a global media empire with far-reaching political and cultural influence from his father Keith Murdoch's inheritance. The question of who would next inherit and lead the Murdoch family empire was one that would fester among three key siblings – Lachlan, Elisabeth and James. (Prudence, from an earlier marriage to Patricia Booker, showed no interest in the family business, and two daughters with Wendi Deng, Grace and Chloe, were kept at arm's length.)

Bonfire of the Murdochs is a riveting drama of how a powerful father pits his three children against each other. Lachlan, Elisabeth and James all try to prove their worth to a ruthlessly cold, calculating man who sees everyone as disposable. The betrayals, exploitation and emotional manipulation beggars belief. Rupert is often cowardly, creating emotional train wrecks but running away from the scene of the crime and getting others to clean up his mess. He suggested Elisabeth should tell brother James to step down from his position after the company's phone hacking scandal. The two siblings wouldn't talk for years afterwards.

Based on 150 interviews, journalist Gabriel Sherman has written a nightmare tale of wealth and the destruction it wreaks.



Annie and Maeve Are Definitely Not Friends
Olivia Muscat (Freemantle Press, \$17.99)
Eleven-year-old Annie has left her old school St Lucy's after a bout of bullying from her former friends. After a recent accident that left her blind and with a limp, fellow students inexplicably turned on her, unable to cope with the change.

On her first day at North Avenue Primary Annie is assigned a buddy, Maeve, a long-time North Avenue student. She is also blind.

The girls are immediately suspicious and contemptuous of each other. Their blindness doesn't create camaraderie. But as circumstances keep throwing them together, and challenges call for joint resolve, they find their defences lowering. When a talent contest dares Annie to step out of her shell, she finally triumphs and conquers the trauma of her accident and bullying, also finding a loyal tribe of friends.

Olivia Muscat is a writer and disability activist. *Annie and Maeve Are Definitely Not Friends* is a middle grade novel about being vulnerable and finding your place in an often difficult and uncertain world. The story alternates between Maeve's journal entries and a traditional third person narrative, deftly tracking Annie and Maeve's personal transformations.

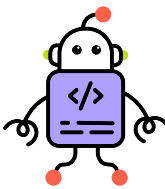
A feel-good story of courage and resilience that rings true in every word. Ages 9 to 11



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

School Holiday Programs
July 2026

For more details, see page 21



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Students say thanks to mums

Laurence Angwin

Lovehearts were a constant theme in the Mother's Day cards created by students at North Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre's three homework clubs.

Local artist Juliette Kent runs special art workshops each term. Recently, she ran pop-up card making for Mother's Day. Students illustrated their cards with meaningful messages. Some creative senior students wrote 'I Love You' in English and other languages they know or are learning.

Some tutors were inspired and made cards and posted them abroad to their mothers. I am sure the recipients were thrilled to receive a card in the post, whether it was officially Mother's Day or not.

Laurence Angwin is coordinator of the Home Away from Homework Club.

Want to know more?
The Home Away From Homework Club welcomes enquiries from adults who want to share their skill or creativity with students. The Homework Clubs welcome students from Grade 4 to Year 10.



Tracking down a good time

Ian Woodruff

At 10 am, a diverse group gathered at the North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre on Errol Street. We were a mix of Australian-born locals who had lived in the area for decades, others who had more recently called the area home, a self-described “ten pound Pom” couple and some recent arrivals from various parts of Asia.

The fortnightly Walk the Talk is designed to promote low-impact fitness, break down language barriers, ease isolation and promote connection.

NWMNC volunteer Sharnee, a passionate recreational walker, and fairly new to Melbourne, led the adventure – a walk to the Trin Warren Tam-Boore Waterhole in Parkville.

The 10-minute tram ride to our starting point quickly became a catalyst for social connection. Maria, an educator proficient in four languages, sat next to Jie, a bilingual woman who moved to Melbourne to be with family. They discovered that despite their many languages they shared only English in common!

Getting off at Royal Park on Flemington Road, we stepped off the asphalt and into a landscape of native grasses and open water.

As we began our loop around the wetlands, the physical benefits of the walk kicked in.

Wendy, who grew up in bustling Shanghai, was keeping an eye out for magpies, revealing that she'd been traumatised by an attack soon after

settling in Melbourne. Fay was able to reassure her that this would have been common nesting season behaviour and not a big issue today.

The fresh air and steady pace stimulated free-flowing conversation and laughter.

Jim, our photographer, got to work snapping pics of us and the scenery that would be later shared with the group.

Near the Royal Park Bird Hide, we watched a family of ducks navigate the reeds while listening to hidden bellbirds. Sharnee pointed out native eucalypts, while the more recent newcomers shared stories of landscapes in their home countries.

Shanghai-raised Shine said she enjoyed the country feel of the park and revealed that she dreams of living on a rural property in country Victoria – a far cry from the hustle and bustle of Shanghai.

Surrendering ourselves to the tranquillity of the wetlands, we all felt very relaxed. The sounds of traffic faded, replaced by birds chirping gently and ducks honking not so gently.

By the time we completed the loop and boarded the tram back, the social dynamics had completely transformed. Initial barriers of age, familiarity and language had faded into easy chatter and shared laughter.

A little over an hour after setting off, we returned to the Neighbourhood Centre for morning tea. Sitting around a communal table, phone numbers were exchanged and plans put in place for future walks.



Photographs: Jim Weatherill

Tony, the “ten pound Pom”, told a couple of dad jokes, which prompted an eye roll from wife Fay.

In this brief time, a tram ride and a nature walk had brought individuals from different worlds together, showing that a happier neighbourhood starts with a single shared journey.

Ian Woodruff is a regular writer and strategy co-ordinator for the News.

Want to know more?
Walk the Talk takes place fortnightly Tuesdays, departing Errol St at 10 am. Contact NWMNC www.nwmnc.org.au or (03) 9658 1126



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 the 1880s.

From pawn to prison (1882)
Mary Ann Georgeson was charged with the larceny of one quilt, a counterpane and other articles valued at 40s, belonging to Anna Maria Kelly. It appears that Kelly gave Georgeson some items to wash and, rather than return them, Georgeson took them to a pawnbroker. Upon her arrest, she made a statement that the items had been stolen from her yard, but after they were traced to the pawnshop, she pleaded guilty. The Bench sentenced her to one month's imprisonment.

Pawnbroker appeals (1883)
Michael Crawcour, a pawnbroker of Williamstown and Custom House, applied for a renewal of his licence. The application was objected to by the police and refused by the Bench. Notice of appeal was given.

Cutting comment costs (1884)
Elizabeth Reardon was charged with maliciously wounding Catherine Elcock. On Saturday night, the complainant was going home when Reardon addressed her in most offensive terms, followed by throwing a tumbler at her and cutting her severely on the forehead. Elcock was carried into a house where Reardon followed and violently assaulted her again, this time with a knife causing a two inch deep wound. The Bench imposed a fine of 20s with £2 2s costs.

She's not my wife – it's complicated (1888)
Thomas Percy Baines was summoned by an agent, Berliner Simpson, for £3 rent due. Simpson alleged that the defendant's wife took a house in his name. Baines denied this, stating that the woman who rented the house was not his wife and he knew nothing about the debt. The majority of the Bench were in favour of making an order for the amount.

Drunk and stoned (1887)
Joseph Bouschel was prosecuted for throwing stones into the bar of the Central Club Hotel. A barman stated that the prisoner asked to be served but as he was already drunk, he was refused. Bouschel then became violent and after being forcibly ejected, he threw a piece of road metal into the bar. The Bench fined him £1 or a month in gaol.



Party with purpose

Coffee, fashion, food, rap, art and drumming – the second Harmony Block Party at River Nile School packed a lot in.

The block party in March celebrated the strengths, talents, and passions of refugee and asylum-seeker youth.

“The thing I enjoyed most was seeing the pride and smiles that the students brought to the event, alongside the community spirit that emanated throughout,” River Nile teacher Hamish commented.

Other staff praised the way students supported each other in the fashion show.

“The block party was very good in promotion of diversity because students were able to showcase and participate in different cultures and education,” student Nyakor said.

“I enjoyed the joy! The vibe, the dancing. The drumming,” River Nile staff member Paula commented.

For another staff member, the highlight was seeing students express pride in their culture.

“The energy of the MC, the energy of the students, especially those joining in the song and dance, the student-led coffee and pani puri stalls and Narges’ art stall were highlights too,” staff member James said.

“The drumming was excellent – it was heartfelt – and brought about spontaneous dancing from the audience,” another block party attendee commented.

“The rap singer Elsy Wameyo was outstanding,” an attendee said of the Kenyan Australian performer.

Want to know more?
River Nile is an independent Senior Secondary School for young women from refugee backgrounds.
www.rivernileschool.vic.edu.au



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Htet Htet is an international post graduate student from Myanmar.



What are you studying?
I am currently studying a Master of Public Health at Deakin University.

What other things are you doing apart from studying?
I work casually, volunteer, practice yoga, and enjoy exploring cafés and different places around Melbourne. I also enjoy spending time with friends and trying different foods.

What has surprised you most about being in Melbourne/North Melbourne?
I was surprised by how multicultural and vibrant Melbourne is. I also did not expect the weather to change so quickly in one day.

What are your goals?
My short-term goal is to successfully complete my studies and gain more experience in public health. Long term, I hope to contribute to positive public health and nutrition development in Myanmar, especially in maternal and child health.

What has been the biggest challenge?
Balancing study and daily life while adapting to a new environment has been challenging at times. Managing assignments and deadlines has definitely taught me discipline and resilience.

Do you have any advice to others studying here?
Do not be afraid to ask questions or seek support. It is also important to maintain balance, take care of your mental wellbeing, and enjoy small moments during student life.

What has been the best thing or the most fun?
Meeting people from different backgrounds and creating unforgettable student memories has been the best part. Even stressful moments often become funny memories later.

Courses & Activities (June to September 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.



Scan the QR code for Term 3 bookings.
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 (no session 2 & 9 July)
Sokol Melbourne, 497 Queensberry St, North Melbourne
Cost: \$18 (\$11.50 Concession) per session when booking for the term. Casual enrolment \$25 (\$15 concession) 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 5 pm – 6.30 pm, fortnightly on 14 & 28 July, 11 & 25 August, 8 September
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$45 (\$35 concession) per session
\$200 (\$150 concession) for term

Craft Circle

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, weekly (No sessions 2 & 9 July)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE (bookings essential)
Morning tea included.

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 13 July for 10 weeks
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$17.50 (\$12.50 concession) per class when booking for the term. Casual enrolments \$25 per session (\$18 concession), if available.

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 4.15 pm – 5.15 pm – Basic Steps 1 (no experience necessary)
Friday 5.15 pm – 6.15 pm – Basic Steps 2 (a little knowledge)
Starting 17 July for 10 weeks
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$17.50 (\$12.50 concession) per class when booking for the term. Casual enrolments \$25 per session (\$18 concession), if available.

Introduction to Acting - NEW

Learn the fundamentals of acting for stage or screen with experienced director and teacher Richard Sarell. Whether you are interested to pursue as a hobby or even professionally, this five-week program will teach you simple techniques to win over audiences. Beginners welcome.
Thursdays 5:30pm – 7pm
25 June, 2, 9, 16 & 23 July
Sokol Melbourne
497 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$90 (\$57.50 concession)

Ordinary Heroes: Socially Inclusive Musical Theatre - NEW

Ordinary Heroes brings people together through acting, singing, dancing and storytelling. Open to all experience levels and backgrounds, the show explores how everyday people help build a more inclusive and compassionate world. Directed by Warren Wills, a multi-award-winning composer, director and facilitator with a career spanning over 35 years across London's West End, New York and Australia. Weekly rehearsals (plus an optional intensive) will culminate in a final performance in October.
Mondays from 27 July – FREE
North Melbourne (Time and local venue to be confirmed)
Just confirmed thanks to funding from City of Melbourne

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. International students are welcome to join this intergenerational activity.
Tuesday 23 June – Ararat
Tuesday 28 July – Shepperton
Tuesday 25 August – Goldfields Region
9 am – 5.30 pm. Departing from NWMNC
58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$70 (\$50 Concession), including lunch and morning tea and all entry fees (excludes drinks)

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 (No class 29 June & 6 July)
West Melbourne Baptist Community Centre
4 Miller Street, West Melbourne
Wednesdays 10.30 am – 11.30 am (No class 1 & 8 July)
Legion Hall, George Johnson Lane (behind North Melbourne Library)
Cost: \$21 (\$15.50 concession) per session when booking for the whole term. Casual enrolments \$28 per session (\$22 concession), if available.

Health & Wellbeing

Walk the Talk!

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 on 7 & 21 July, 4 & 18 August, 1 & 15 September
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.

General Pilates

A class that caters for all levels of experience. Beginner-friendly and perfect for those who prefer a more gentle session. Build up your strength and flexibility.
Wednesdays 9.15am - 10.15am
Thursdays 5.30pm - 6.30pm
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
Quaker Centre, 484 William Street, West Melbourne

Yoga for Mind and Body

Enjoy a 50-minute fun and relaxing yoga class suitable for all levels, taught by Caz Howard, a yoga teacher with 25 years experience.
Wednesdays, 12 pm – 12.50pm
Starting 5 August for 7 weeks
Estuary Yoga Studio, 754 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne

Timetable: Pilates classes operate on the school term timetable. Term 2 finishes on Thursday 25 June. Term 3 commences on Tuesday 14 July
Costs: \$21 (\$15.50 concession) per class when booking for full term or remainder of term. Casual enrolments \$28 per session (\$22 concession), if available.



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

Job Club – Expressions of Interest

A safe space for real help with job searches, written applications, and interview skills — because nobody should navigate the job market alone. All are welcome, whether you're just starting out or years into your career. Build your professional networks, apply for jobs with confidence, and be mentored by someone firmly in your corner.

Currently taking expressions of interest from both jobseekers and mentors.

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 6.45 pm – 8.45 pm for 6 weeks from 21 July
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$60 (\$45 concession)
This cost is for ACFE eligible students.

Event Management

Learn what goes into designing, developing and implementing an event, using Queensberry Cup as a template. Covers topics including event concept and design, community development, marketing & sponsorship, logistics, financial management, risk and volunteers. Students will get hands-on experience as key Queensberry Cup volunteers. With seasoned events professional Yulay Perez.

Saturdays 2 pm – 5 pm (25 July, 1, 8, 15 August)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne

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 15 July for 10 weeks)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$65 (\$50 Concession)
This cost is for ACFE eligible students.

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 matter 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 15 July for 10 weeks)
NWMNC, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
\$65 (\$50 concession)
This cost is for ACFE eligible students.

Weaving the Web

Beginner-friendly workshops for trans and gender diverse internet users. Let’s explore the indie web, follow friends and artists outside social media and build our web together.

Sundays, 2:30 pm – 4 pm
Sunday 14 June (Avatar and Identity)
Sunday 5 July (Machinima)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Presented by Snart Club.
Bookings at events.humanitix.com/host/snart-club

School Holiday Programs

What Animal is That?!

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 7 to 12.

Friday 3 July, 10.30 am – 12 noon
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$20 (\$15 concession)

Amusement Park Engineer: The Bucking Bull

In this workshop, which is part of a wider amusement park engineering series, students will design and code **The Bucking Bull**. Students will explore how gears, linkages, and motors work together to create mechanical movement. This two-day program is suitable for 8 to 12 year olds. Presented by EBK Academy.

Monday 6 & Tuesday 7 July, 9am – 1pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$150 (\$130 concession)

Make Your Own Bento Box

In this workshop, kids will prepare their own delicious and healthy Japanese bento box while learning food preparation skills and discovering creative, nutritious lunchbox ideas. All materials are provided.

Thursday 9 July, 10.30 am – 11.30 am
58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$20 (\$15 concession)

Advanced Rebellious Box: Coding & Robotics

Take on an advanced engineering challenge and build a machine with a mind of its own! Students will design, build, and code an advanced robotic box that reacts every time you flip its switch. Combining coding, electronics, sensors, and mechanical design, this hands-on workshop explores advanced engineering concepts in a fun and engaging way. Suitable for ages 12–15. Presented by EBK Academy.

Wednesday 1 & Thursday 2 July
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$150 (\$130 concession)

Also see The Beat Retreat in For Kids and Young People

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
(4 August, 1 September)
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 (25 June, 9 & 23 July, 6 & 20 August, 3 & 17 September)
2 pm – 3.30 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE

Being a Melburnian

A highly interactive program designed for international students looking for local knowledge and connections, and older Melburnians who enjoy interacting with others and giving back in meaningful ways.

A weekly program from August to October 2026.
North Melbourne locations
Express your interest to stay up to date

Dungeons & Dragons Club

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.

Thursdays 6.15 pm – 9 pm fortnightly (18 June, 2, 16 & 30 July, 13 & 27 August, 10 September)
NWMNC, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne
Cost: \$5 per session
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 (19 June, 3, 17 & 31 July, 14 & 28 August, 11 September)
2 pm – 3 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE

欢迎讲普通话的朋友参加这个轻松愉快的下午茶聊天聚会。在这里，您可以与他人交流互动，结识新朋友，建立珍贵的友谊。活动将提供茶点和简单茶饮，并由普通话讲者主持。
每两周一次（星期五）
7月3日、17日、31日
8月14日、28日
9月11日
下午 2:00 – 3:00
NWMNC
58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
免费参加

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.

Local community needs explored in new research

You spoke and we listened!
Throughout the months of March and April, NWMNC conducted a needs analysis for the communities of North and West Melbourne.

Spearheaded by our new Community Development Co-ordinator Miriam Bilander, this research is a follow-up to our previous analysis, conducted in 2021. While influenced by COVID, that study nevertheless helped NWMNC choose where to focus our energy.

Since that time, we have quadrupled our volunteer engagement and increased our community value by approximately 50%. Hopefully you've been the beneficiary of this increased activity, or at least you noticed it.

Now we are looking ahead to the next four years. A neighbourhood house can be many things, but it can't be everything. So, to help us guide our strategic direction, we asked the people that matter the most – people who live, work, study and play in North and West Melbourne.

A total of 332 community members were engaged in the research including 197 responses to our survey (12 in Arabic), seven focus groups and 27 in-depth interviews. Further, 13 other reports were integrated into the findings.

What did we learn? Seven

FROM THE CENTRE DIRECTOR Ariel Valent



interconnected themes have emerged in our draft findings.

Housing

Access to safe and affordable housing has several dimensions. People sleeping rough in our neighbourhoods is unfortunately a persistent state of affairs. There are 66,000 people across Victoria on the social housing waiting list, and with rents and property prices outstripping income growth, it is not surprising that housing was identified as a key issue by 30% of survey respondents. One issue we could not have predicted five years ago is the public housing redevelopment. Forced departures from North Melbourne towers has led

to fracturing of community networks with myriad resulting challenges.

Cost of living and food insecurity

The challenges of providing for groceries, rent, utilities and transport is challenging for many households, particularly those on Centrelink incomes. Access to food relief for those struggling to afford food was identified as a critical issue.

Employment

Meaningful pathways to employment was of particular concern for youth, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, First Nation people and individuals living with disability. Specific issues include

discriminatory hiring practices, unrecognised overseas qualifications and lack of meaningful support for jobseekers.

Mental health and social isolation

COVID cut our social connections and some people have not recovered. Loneliness and mental health challenges have been compounded by public housing community dislocation and cost of living pressures. Challenges varied across cohorts. For example, loneliness, depression and emotional fatigue was prominent among older men while international students struggled with social skills deficits.

Safety

This issue is multi-faceted including personal, cultural and environmental dimensions. Unsafe public areas, particularly around social housing, and anti-social behaviour was noted. Some people remarked on racism, discrimination and the challenges of living between two cultures.

Information and service navigation gaps

Many people, community members and service providers alike, simply do not know what services, programs,

and supports exist. A lot of promotion of services and programs miss the mark, particularly for those with no or limited English. Help with life administration and filling in forms were consistently raised as a gap.

Programs for specific demographic groups

We were particularly interested in the needs of young people, seniors, CALD communities, people on low incomes, those new to the neighbourhood, people living with disability, First Nation people and the LGBTQIA+ community. The research identified opportunities for programs that will assist each cohort to meet some challenges specific to their needs and aspirations.



This brief synopsis of the findings shows that there are challenges in our neighbourhoods, but also that there is optimism and opportunity. We are currently sharing our findings with others in the service sector. If you think we've missed something important, please get in touch ASAP as we are rapidly formulating NWMNC's strategic plan in response.

A final report will soon be published on the NWMNC website.



Large space for hire in Arden Gardens

A flexible and well-equipped space is now available for hire at the North Melbourne Language and Learning (NMLL) centre, located within the Arden Gardens residential and shopping complex on Macaulay Road.

The available space is a large, light-filled classroom of approximately 110 square metres, currently set up with desks, chairs and IT equipment. Most furnishings and equipment are movable, allowing the room to be adapted for workshops, classes, meetings, community activities and training sessions.

The space also includes:

Lift and wheelchair access;
Two adjoining office/storage spaces;
Kitchenette access, plus a larger

shared kitchen nearby;

Accessible bathroom facilities, including shower;
Free undercover parking for up to two hours;
Secure programmable lift access available for hirers.

The venue is available after 3:30 pm on weekdays and all weekend.

Short-term hire rates are available, with longer-term arrangements negotiable for ongoing tenants. Please contact the venue directly for availability, suitability and pricing information.

Floor plans and photos are available on request.

Email: enquiries@nml.org.au
Call: 9326 7447.

SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE MUSICAL THEATRE ORDINARY HEROES

Join award-winning composer and director Warren Wills and your neighbours in this unique opportunity.

The community of North & West Melbourne are putting on a big show. Be part of the process of devising the world premiere of *Ordinary Heroes*.

Now calling for locals of all experience levels and backgrounds who would like to act, sing, dance and/or tell a story.

Weekly rehearsals start 27 July in North Melbourne. Final performance in October.

Participation is FREE! More details at nwmnc.org.au





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

News distribution
The *News* is distributed free throughout North and West Melbourne. Get in touch if you know of anyone not receiving their copy. 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, digital news, podcasting, video, social media or design and layout, please consider joining the team.

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MEMBER 2026

VICTORIA'S CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME

cdsvic.org.au

CDS VIC

Volunteers Wanted!

We are looking for volunteers for our Container Deposit Scheme

Contact NWMNC 0393281126/ admin@centre.org.au

Bring your containers to NWMNC for 10c refund!

Bring your eligible recyclables and receive cash refunds while helping the environment. Eligible containers include drink bottles, cans, cartons and containers with the deposit symbol. Our volunteers will guide you through the process. Call us on 9328 1126 to arrange a time for drop off.

Opening hours:
Mondays: 10am – 6pm
Tuesdays: 10am – 4pm
Wednesdays - Fridays: 10am – 3pm
Saturday: 10am – 2pm

North and West Melbourne Association AGM in June

Thursday 18 June 2026 at 7 pm
The Huddle, North Melbourne Recreation Centre,
204–206 Arden Street, North Melbourne
New members welcome
Email: info@nwma.org.au

RECYCLE, RECYCLE, RECYCLE

Did you know North Melbourne Library now offers a recycle bin for you to drop off your old mobile phones, batteries, cables, chargers, game controllers, tablets, laptops, flash drives and hard drives?

WHAT A GREAT SERVICE!

North Melbourne Library
66 Errol Street

Form filling help

We are pleased to announce that North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre will be offering drop-in sessions for help with completing forms, including for housing, benefits, and health. The service is provided free of cost to our local community.

This service is available **fortnightly on Wednesdays from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm at 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne.**

If you need help completing forms or require guidance with paperwork, our volunteers are here to support you. No appointment is necessary.

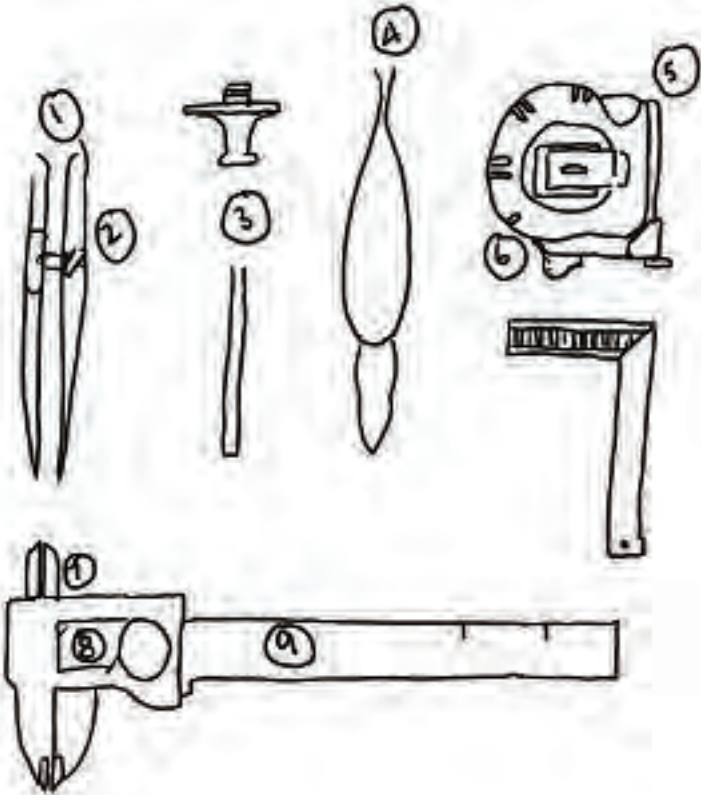
Send contributions, letters and feedback to:

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

Spring
Copy deadline: Thursday 13 August
Publication date: Friday 11 September

Summer
Copy deadline: Thursday 12 November
Publication date: Friday 11 December

Spot the Difference (page 10) answers





SPILL THE TAI CHI ON THE GREEN

MONDAY MORNINGS 8.30- 9.30
ALL WELCOME.
COMPLIMENTARY. REFRESHMENT SUPPLIED



Mondays On the Green
Slow moves
Big smiles
Great company

No experience needed — just turn up and have a go. Stay on for Chatty Cafe... because the chatting is just as important as the Tai Chi. Come move. Come mingle. Come spill the tea.

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



Behold, beautiful bark

Nancy Lane

Earlier this year I entered the art exhibition *If Trees Could Talk* in the Philippines. In my collage made from bark shed on the ground, I thought the trees would have said, 'Behold our beautiful bark'. Keep your eyes on the tree trunks, so you too can behold the beautiful bark of eucalypts, melaleucas and other species in North and West Melbourne.

Want to know more?
Check out the *If Trees Could Talk*

