

Dutch ABBA superfan on the hunt for missing Patrick Badges



Swagata Majumdar

A story in *North & West Melbourne News* about a little piece of Melbourne's pop-culture history has found an enthusiastic reader almost 17,000 kilometres away. 'One Small Badge, A Century of Stories' by Annie Nguyen took readers inside Patrick Badges on Provost Street, exploring their history, family legacy and the process behind the tiny badges that have marked everything from famous musicians to monumental events. Among the treasures featured were ABBA badges, produced around the time the Swedish supergroup visited Australia in 1977.

In the Netherlands, Lex Corbach, an ABBA fan and collector of almost 45 years, spotted the story after someone shared it on the Badge and Pin Collectors Australia Facebook page. For Lex, it was quite a discovery. He has an entire room dedicated to his ABBA collection and has spent decades searching for Australian merchandise from the band's 1977 visit.

Most importantly, he has six of Patrick's eight ABBA badges. He is still looking for the other two.

Lex was particularly delighted to see the photograph of the complete set in our story, as well as the photograph of John Patrick with a box of ABBA badges. In fact, that box is part of Lex's collection.

The story prompted Lex to contact us to get a physical copy of the *News*. Now, he hopes our readers might help him complete his set.

Swagata Majumdar is deputy editor of the *News*.

Want to know more?

Email Lex at abbacollexion@gmail.com if you have a lead!



Can you help Lex find these 1977 ABBA pins?

Council promises to listen to concerns about Royal Park

Louise Yaxley

Melbourne City Council has unanimously approved a 20-year masterplan for the 'lungs of the city' – Royal Park and its 12 million visitors a year.

The plan sets out 252 actions, including ideas to expand the park by reducing car parks and roads that run through it, but those changes will be worked on over the next two decades.

The Council has promised that all significant and controversial plans would come back to the Council for debate.

"You will be listened to," Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece told concerned park users.

The plan – known as Murrup Biik, in recognition of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung

people – aims to improve rather than increase lighting and use technology to customise and adjust levels and colours of lights.

Automation and sensors would mean lights are only on when needed and ideally off by 10.30 pm as a way of balancing safety with ecology.

The masterplan acknowledges that artificial light at night can be a critical stressor affecting biodiversity. It says, "a darkness strategy may ensure light pollution is minimised for environmental, ecological and experiential benefits without compromising safety".

"This is a gem of our community, a prized asset – a valued and loved place. It is that wildness and naturalness is

what distinguishes it from our other very grand and cherished public gardens," Greens councillor Olivia Ball said.

The plan's goals include protecting the park's biodiversity and "uniting the fragments" which means making it easier to get around the park and connecting the various areas of it.

It acknowledges that a growing city puts pressure on the park and says the aim is to build the capacity of existing sporting and recreation facilities, not add more.

Friends of Royal Park Secretary, Kaye Oddie, says the crucial decision that needs to be made is whether new facilities should be built in the park at all.

"Justify the need for the new facilities to be in Royal Park and why they cannot be outside the park," she said, arguing green space and parks should be incorporated into growing Arden and Kensington precincts rather than seeing Royal Park as the only sporting and recreation answer for those residents.

As a passionate supporter of the park, she highlights its status as an iconic, highly valued bushland park in the inner city.

Louise Yaxley is editor of the *News*.

Want to know more?

melbourne.vic.gov.au/royal-park-master-plan and royalpark.org.au

From the Editor's desk

Louise Yaxley

This issue, Swagata Majumdar's visit to the St James Old Cathedral bellringers is full of insights into a fascinating tradition.

We also bring you tips on where to find art in tucked-away places. We introduce you to Netherlands, a gallery in a shed, and give readers a heads up on the River Studios Christmas market in West Melbourne. You can also check out the photo exhibition at the Victorian Archives Centre Gallery.

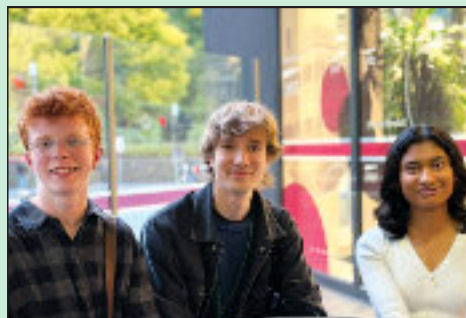
And renowned photographer Ponch Hawkes has branched out – we have the news of her first painting exhibition.

Read on to find out what's in the vault of the old National Australia Bank these days and meet long-term North Melbourne identity, Bill Liddy.

As editor of a newspaper covering inner suburban Melbourne, I was stunned to find that last issue's story on Patrick Badges had attracted the attention of a reader in the Netherlands, check out his request in the story above.

Finally, while you are strolling the streets as we head into Spring, I am sure you will be inspired by Frank Jiang's depiction of his daily discoveries while making his way through North Melbourne to Uni in Carlton.

Louise Yaxley is Editor of the *News*.



An afternoon down memory lane with Bill Liddy

Phoebe Nguyen

Meet Bill Liddy, 2013 Victorian Senior of the Year. In his nine decades, he has been a board member of North & Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre, life member of North Melbourne Football Club, president of the League of Victorian Wheelmen, history guide for Hotham Historical Project, and dedicated supporter of a gamut of community groups.

Over a cuppa, he described North Melbourne's past social scene.

There used to be two cinemas. The Loco Theatre in Victoria Street was named after the locomotive on its roof.

There were 30 to 40 hotels in North Melbourne, four on Abbotsford Street alone. Until 1966, bars and hotels shut at 6 pm.

Bill recalled a pocket of shops near Haines Street called Happy Valley. Though never officially recognised, this area was almost a suburb on its own with more than 20 shops, a hotel and even its own football team, which played in Royal Park (where the Royal Children's Hospital now stands).

A jazz enthusiast, Bill is a regular at the Australian Jazz Convention – the longest-running continuous jazz event in the world. It was at these annual conventions that he witnessed the changing of Melbourne's social rules.

"In 1946, people could sit in the



Bill Liddy with his Victorian Senior of the Year certificate and a photograph of North Melbourne's 1967 VFL premiership team

Temperance Hall and smoke their heads off, but if people wanted a beer, they had to head outside. When the jazz people had a reunion there in 1994, they could drink inside, but had to head outside again for a smoke." Bill is excited that dixie jazz is

enjoying a resurgence, thanks to New Orleans musicians like Marla Dixon and the Shotgun Jazz Band.

Bill said he was never good at sports, but he devoted his life to supporting the football and cycling communities of Victoria.

He joined the North Melbourne football club in 1946 and became the secretary for under-17 team when he turned 18, starting a life-long career as a club administrator. Between 1966 and 1971, Bill was the assistant secretary to Ron Joseph. He coordinated recruitment, travelling from North Melbourne to Dandenong and Ballarat to Wangaratta.

"Out of that recruiting program, we got 14 footballers who played in the 1975 Grand Final, which North Melbourne won. That was the first time we'd won a grand final in 50 years. We all cried."

In 1971, Bill became manager of the newly established social club at Fogarty Street. Whenever North Melbourne played against Carlton or Collingwood, crowds of supporters would congregate for lunch at the social club.

"We would go through 35 to 40 beer barrels in about six hours. We had policemen in plain clothes at the door to make sure there would be no trouble," Bill said.

Bill twice accompanied the Australian national team to the Cycling World Championships, first in 1986 at Colorado, US, and again in 1987 at Vienna, Austria. After holding several key administrative roles between 1985 and 1994, Bill is now with Cycling Victoria's Heritage and History Committee, helping to digitalise and catalogue donations of cycling memorabilia, medals, winning

sashes and magazines. Bill will be honoured for his contributions in Cycling Victoria's Hall of Fame next year.

He still regularly has lunch with old friends from footy, cricket and jazz. He also participates in the Neighbourhood Centre's Being a Melburnian program. He and other residents meet with international students from Melbourne Uni and chat about topics including Australian slang, places to visit and local restaurants, then enjoy a few hot pies together.

The experience echoes his memories of the centre's early days.

"We used to take 10 or 12 of us on the bus to Daylesford, Geelong or the MCG. We'd have a picnic in the park, and someone would make big lunches. One month it might be Italian, the next month it might be Czech, then German, then Chinese."

Early this year, Bill celebrated his 90th birthday with a week-long celebration alongside friends and family. He wants to go back to university, studying American history and geography.

"How do you find energy to do so many things at once?" I asked.

"If you think I'm good now, I was a lot better 30 years ago. Now that I'm 90, I'm easing out of things," Bill chuckled, as he strode off for an afternoon shopping with his favourite driver.

Phoebe Nguyen is a regular writer for the News.



The mural was created in November 2023 on the Queensberry Street wall of what was until recently the 7-Eleven store

Mural's loss a sad whitewash

Nathan Brown

As a newcomer to Melbourne, I had heard plenty about the colourful mural at the corner of Errol and Queensberry streets; it had become a recognisable part of the neighbourhood's character.

The North Melbourne Town Hall clock, the cobblestone laneways, comedy clubs, and even a lasting remnant from the TV series *Fisk* contribute to the area's distinctive character. As did the mural. So, where is it now?

First some history – in 2022 the mural was the result of a placemaking project between the North & West Melbourne Precinct Association (NWMPA) and the City of Melbourne and was designed and painted by the local Blender Studios.

However, a year later the mural had been covered in graffiti. In 2023 the NWMPA and the City of Melbourne jointly funded a replacement. Blender Studios again created the artwork, this time with a more robust anti-graffiti coating to help protect it.

Australian travel writer Tim Richards' attention said the mural "lights up a North Melbourne street – and brings a smile to the faces of people waiting at (the) tram stop".

NWMPA described it as "a colourful landmark that was widely appreciated by residents,

businesses and visitors alike" and "it became a recognisable part of the area's identity, particularly for people arriving by tram or passing through the precinct".

It has been replaced by a blank white wall – graffiti tags and all. It disappeared in the depths of a cold winter Sunday without prior notice to either the NWMPA or the City of Melbourne and to the disappointment of many members of the community.

"I swear they only just made that mural, that's so disappointing," regular visitor to the area, Reuben, told the News.

The NWMPA understands no planning application had been submitted for a replacement mural. As the wall is on private property, it is acknowledged that the owner is entitled to repaint it.

While the future of the wall remains uncertain, many residents are asking whether new artwork might eventually take its place, whether the mural could be restored, or whether the site will remain a blank canvas. For now, North Melbourne waits and watches.

Nathan Brown is a new writer for the News.



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The people behind the peal

Swagata Majumdar

The sound of bells has long been part of West Melbourne’s soundtrack. But I’d never stopped to wonder who was behind that sound. One evening, I followed the ringing to St James Old Cathedral, on the corner of King and Batman streets, climbed the narrow staircase to an even narrower tower and emerged to a world most people never see.

Bill Cook, the tower captain, introduced me to a group of bellringers standing at their ropes. Neil McFarlane, Cathy Sosoli, Leon Altoff, Andrew Cole and Audrey Falconer, along with Bill, were each responsible for one of the cathedral’s eight bells. What I’d heard from the street as a succession of church bells is, in fact, remarkably intricate! St James’ bellringers practise the historic English style of ‘change ringing’, in which bells are swung through a full circle, and their order continually changes according to mathematical patterns. The eight bells were made in England, fitted in 1852 and first rung in 1853. “It is more of a craft than an art,”



Many hands make for joyful harmony in the St James Old Cathedral belfry

prominent bellringing teacher Dr Laura Goodin says. The goal is to achieve “machine-like precision”. The mathematics involved is formidable. With eight bells, there are more than 40,000 possible combinations. The ringers memorise accepted patterns or ‘methods’. In each sequence of the method, every bell must ring once, with strict rules governing its movement between positions. A conductor monitors the performance and helps a ringer who loses their place with brief instructions like *lead now* or *dodge with five*. Laura says it can take a couple of months to learn to handle the bells safely before moving on to more complicated techniques. The first lessons involve controlling the bell and

managing its energy, as well as learning to ring slightly faster or slower so a ringer can change position with neighbouring bells. For newcomers, St James also has the Roslyn McKenzie Mini Ring: eight smaller bells donated in 2018, the heaviest of which weighs about 9 kgs. Children can begin at around age 9, provided they can concentrate and understand the safety involved. Laura says they often take to it more easily than adults. The mini ring also offers kids who may not feel comfortable with team sports a different kind of place to belong. Although bellringing often takes place in church towers, Laura says the practice itself is not religious. People of different faiths, ages and backgrounds

ring side by side. Some come for community or the challenge of mastering a skill; for many it has “nothing to do with religion”. Laura began ringing in her fifties, after trying it while visiting relatives in the UK. Others began young as a family tradition, ringing with their grandfathers; some now ring with their children, some take it up as a retirement activity or simply love the sound of bells. The appeal also lies in the challenge. Bellringing combines mathematics, physics, engineering, music, history, physical fitness, teamwork and, for some, spirituality. Peals can continue for three hours without interruption, while shorter quarter peals can last 45 minutes, marking anniversaries and

major public occasions. It is largely a passion rather than a paid pursuit. The bellringing community extends well beyond Melbourne. Laura says it is not uncommon for visiting British ringers to turn up at a St James practice and take part. The same style of ringing is practised around the world, so ringers can travel between towers and ring together. Laura herself has travelled to the US and UK to ring. In June, a festival brought ringers to Melbourne from across Australia, New Zealand, Scotland and England. At supper after practice, every bellringer told me the same thing: few people are taking up bellringing. They need more people to come, climb the stairs, grasp a rope and join them to keep alive the centuries-old tradition. “This is a friendly, inclusive community, and all are welcome to come along and see what bellringing is all about,” Bill said. Back on King Street, the bells seemed different. I had heard them before; now I realised people were working together above me, listening and attending to the cues while managing the weight and movement of a bell. What stayed with me the most was their passion for the craft.

Swagata Majumdar is deputy editor of the News.

Want to know more?
Contact Bill Cook: cookwilh@gmail.com or Laura Goodin: lauragoodin@gmail.com

Apeksha Zhao

For years, Monday nights at Estuary Yoga Studio followed a familiar ritual for many regulars: drop the bag, head to the sofa and give Aria a pat and a cuddle, a moment of comfort at the end of a long day, before unrolling the mat. These days, that sofa feels different. Aria, the studio’s unofficial Customer Engagement Manager, passed away peacefully a few weeks ago at the age of 13, leaving her humans, Andrew and Lucy, and a large community of yogis feeling her absence. Andrew describes Aria as the one constant through years of change. Andrew and Lucy adopted Aria in 2015, when she was 18 months old. They met several dogs before her, but when they saw the timid young

Fly high, four-legged legend

pup, it was love at first sight. Lucy instantly saw something familiar in Aria. She had been painfully shy as a child and felt Aria was her “spirit animal”. Over the years, that young dog became a comforting presence at the studio. Gentle, quiet and accepting of everyone, she happily welcomed pats without judgement. Many regulars have dogs of their own, but Aria was theirs too. Yogis often brought treats for the lucky girl, who had an uncanny ability to sniff them out. For some, especially those living away from their dogs, Aria was their dog away from home.

Since her passing, people who might not otherwise have spoken are now sharing memories and discovering a connection through her – perhaps Aria’s final gift to her community. The love shown by the community since her passing has touched Andrew and Lucy deeply. They hope people remember Aria for the way she was always present, carefree and accepting – and perhaps take a little of that for themselves. If Aria could leave one final message Lucy suspects it would be: “Bring me snacks.” Andrew thinks she would say thank you for the love and kindness she received from everyone.

Apeksha Zhao is a regular writer for the News.



Aria with Estuary yogis, Lucy and Andrew

Community Comment

We asked participants of the Being a Melburnian program about Australian slang that amuses and confuses them



Lorraine

I’m amazed at how much of the old slang has disappeared. Young people have such a different kind of slang now. When I was a teacher, we’d say “pull your socks up”, which I never hear these days. And there was calling redheads “Bluey”.



Riya

I’ve gotten used to all the shortened terms. “Do you wanna get brekkie in the arvo?” Arvo and servo totally confused me at first, but the more I hear them, the more they start to stick.



Paul

I had an Indonesian friend settling into Melbourne, and when I asked her how she was going, she told me she was planning to travel by train. It’s not slang, per se, but it’s another way we have of talking.



Win

“Hard yakka.” I like the sound of it – it sounds attractive. To me, “yakka” almost sounds Japanese. If I didn’t know what it meant, I wouldn’t guess it was Australian slang. It sounds like it comes from a completely different language, rather than English.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Theo Tuck is a 19-year-old student from Ballarat studying at Saints College.



You are known as an LGBTQIA+ advocate – what prompted that?

I came from Ballarat. It was unsafe there for queer kids like me. There were gay bashings and people used to shout stuff out their car windows; it was quite a violent environment. As a neurodivergent trans young person, I had a tough time in public schools until I moved to Melbourne and came to Saints College. I had never felt safe and supported before. I'd always focused on surviving and never had the chance to thrive, and this makes me want to encourage other people like me.

What is the biggest challenge you face with your advocacy work?

I run a queer youth group, called YESGAY, with support organisation, Uniting. We meet monthly and play board games and talk about life. Everyone has AOD (alcohol and other drugs) histories. I'm also in the Young Leaders Committee at Saints, and I'm trying to advocate for our school to reinstate the Rainbow Alliance – a social group for queer students. There are lots of us here, and I want to connect everyone, share resources and re-build people's trust for support services. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for all those supports. The main challenge for me is navigating housing, my year 12 and my income, there's a lot on my plate. Money is a challenge. I would love to take my group on excursions to the Affirmation Station or the Pride Centre, but we can't afford it.

What is your goal?

I want to be a social worker in the AOD or youth work sector. It's fascinating to me and I have lived experience in it. Also, I'm obsessed with music and I'm planning to start a music program at Uniting – I want to empower younger queer kids who don't have many people backing them to make them feel as loved as everyone else.

What else should people know about you?

I play bass, piano, drums and have skills in music production. I also was selected by Saints to attend the Edmund Rice Leadership Conference in Adelaide in January.

What makes you happy?

Music, spending time with my community, and student leadership makes me happy.

Who is your favourite Drag Queen?

Trixie Mattel!!!

Is there anything you think people should know about this area of North and West Melbourne?

I love the North, it's super gay and I feel like there's a big focus on community, like on the fence in my street there's a chalkboard and people can draw a self-portrait and write their name down, it's really cool.

Netherlands Gallery for up and comers

Biddy Mahy

Netherlands is a West Melbourne art gallery that is also a shed in a share house garden. Monash Uni honours students Luke Jones and Aletta Mira transformed the shed in Alletta's share house on the corner of Silk Place and Lothian Street and run it as a gallery. "We had the idea of opening a gallery in the back of our heads for a while, but always thought, 'no, the shed is too derelict,'"Aletta said. "It was horrible before," Luke agrees, "It was falling apart. The walls were just corrugated iron and they would shake." In June 2025, a listing on Facebook Marketplace advertised free walls, and they took this as a sign to go ahead. Luke and Aletta went to pick up the walls at 7 am the next day, marking the beginning of a six-month construction project.

The build involved lots of planning, reinforcing the existing beams, cutting the walls to size, installing, painting them and panelling the strip ceiling lights. At the time they were in their third year of a fine arts degree at RMIT, which kept them busy. "We were under the pump," Luke said. By December 2025 the space was finished, ready to host their first show titled 'Only Tonight and Tomorrow'. Netherlands shows early career artists, most of whom are not signed to commercial galleries. Their most recent show '# ' was curated by Lily Skipper and displayed abstract work by artists Marlee McMahon, Masato Takahasa, Andrew Nille, Tia Ansell and Lachlan Stonehouse. The show centred on the theme of digits, intersections and overlaps, much of the work employing circular forms and lines, which call to mind targets, multiplication techniques and diagrammatic zones.

Though the space is small, openings are well-attended with people milling in the bluestone alley alongside. Luke and Aletta are pleasantly surprised by the interest the gallery has received. "I didn't think we'd get so many proposals but we've been getting them every week," Luke said. They were also pleased to note that North and West Melbourne's local 57 tram enthusiast, @roaming_david, featured Netherlands on his Instagram account. "The smallest art gallery in West Melbourne does not have Pam the bird \ It celebrates young artists," he posted.

Biddy Mahy is a new writer for the News.

Want to know more: Netherlands exhibitions are promoted on their Instagram account @netherlands.wm and documented on their website: netherlands-wm.com

Ace banks on the appeal of antiques

Josh Rule



One of North Melbourne's oldest buildings has opened a new chapter, with Ace Antiques & Collectables moving into the former National Australia Bank building on the corner of Errol and Queensberry streets. After 23 years at its home across the road, owner Dave Hauswirth has expanded into the heritage building. His partner Shane now oversees the original shop. "When the bank became available, I thought it was the perfect chance to get all my stock on show," Dave said. "At the moment we've opened the ground floor, but I'll be opening upstairs as well so there'll be even more for people to explore." The original vault at the back of the building is now home to some of Dave's thousands of records. "Vinyl is one of my big sellers, I've got thousands of singles and albums, now all in this shop. "It's not just vinyl, '70s stuff is popular, as are good t-shirts like rock ones, milk bar items and nice advertising pieces." He says people come in looking for all sorts of things. "Some people collect toys out of cereal packets. People collect oil and petrol stuff. I do a lot of lights and lamps over in the other shop. "The Peter's ice cream cone is probably the only original one in Australia for sale at the moment. "The younger generation are buying a lot more secondhand. They love op shops but you'll go to 100 op shops before you find half of the good

stuff I've got because I've been collecting all my life." His father, uncle and grandmother all traded in secondhand goods in Perth, where Dave grew up. "I was always around secondhand bits and pieces. As early as 10 years old my uncle would say, 'come on, let's go, we've got to go clean out a house' and off we'd go." It took a couple of visits for Dave to realise Melbourne had a stronger antiques and collectables scene. He sold his first shop and started a new chapter in North Melbourne. "I always liked North Melbourne because of the main street," he said. "It's got the nice wide streets, the big verandas. It just looks good." More than 20 years later, he still lives above the shop where it all began and has had a front-row seat to the suburb's transformation. "Queensberry Street used to be this quiet little strip, then Bread Club came and they brought a truckload of people with them," he said. Despite the changes, he believes the suburb has held on to its sense of community, pointing to favourites such as the Three Crowns, the Royal Standard and Manze, alongside neighbours like North Melbourne Books, Ray Walters Furniture and Brown Dog Furniture.

Josh Rule is a regular writer for the News.

Want to know more? 536 Queensberry St: Open Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am to 5 pm; 555 Queensberry St: Open Thursday, Friday & Saturday, 11 to 5 pm.

Spot the Difference

News illustrator Ed Zhao stopped by ACE Antiques and has set readers a challenge. These illustrations may look the same, but there are 11 differences. Track them down and colour in the drawing. (Answers: page 27)

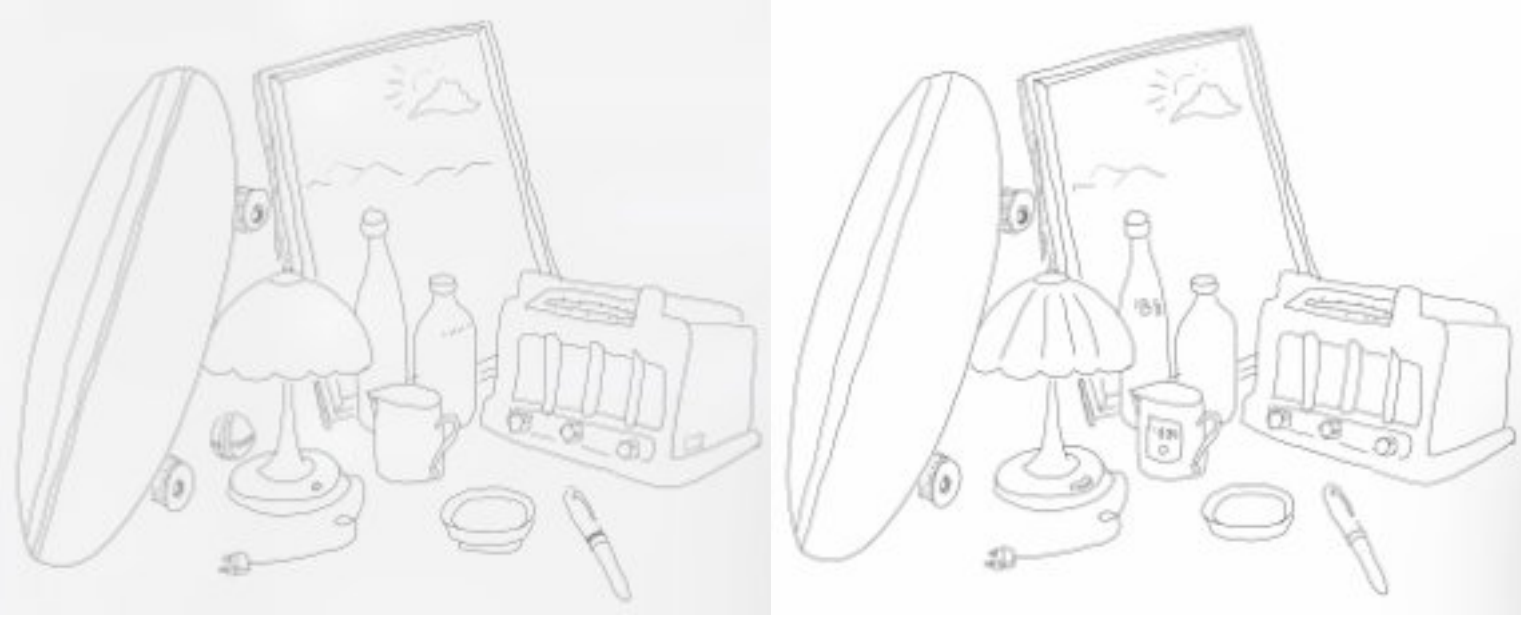


Photo archives bring echoes of the past to life

Jemima Hughes

Ponch Hawkes is a Melbourne-based photographer and artist. For more than 50 years, she has focused her lens on cultural, social and political debates, often providing visibility to marginalised groups in Australia and beyond. Her work has been exhibited at the National Gallery of Australia and the State Library, as well as internationally. For the past 18 years, her practice has been based in a studio just off Errol Street in North Melbourne.

Ponch's career began in the 1970s as a journalist; however, after picking up a camera to support the pen, it quickly became her primary tool for documenting the world. "I was terribly excited ... I can see this is going to work. It was going to be my thing."

She shot Melbourne's counterculture in the '70s from a feminist perspective. *Two women embracing*. 'Glad to be Gay', 1973, shone light on and celebrated lesbian culture. She also documented the women's liberation movement and protests for equal pay, as well as daily life in a culturally vibrant Melbourne.

With her 80th birthday approaching, the breadth of Ponch Hawkes's career is profound. Shuffling through the archive, we bounce from Circus Oz to Brunswick Street to Africa, but a sense of duty to raise awareness remains a constant. "I've got two ears and eyes in the room ... It's my life... who I am as a citizen."

Ponch comments that age has instilled a self-assuredness in her practice. The 2018 project *500 Strong* reframes ageing through images of 500 women over 50 photographed in the nude. It highlights a boldness that comes with age and platforms the underrepresented older female body.

"I have to be confident about what we're doing to make sure they feel confident," she said.

This proved to be the most impactful project of her career: "It actually changed the way women thought about themselves. It was so heart-warming."

Ponch is currently working on The Rose Project, commissioned by Melbourne University. It is a photographic and interview project about older women and unwanted sexual experiences. "They're hard to make work about, but if I don't do it, who's gonna do it?"

Ponch notes that photojournalism has changed over her career. Commissions are few and far between, with cheaper, easier stock images favoured instead.

Looking back through her archive, rooted in critical thought and compassion, it is hard not to feel that the photographer's value is being overlooked.

In the corner of the studio, a series of oil paintings stands out among the photography equipment. "So, my first painting show. That's pretty big." Breaking away from her typical subject matter, the series addresses a scientific theory that if humans could hibernate like bears, we could send astronauts to space for longer. Astronauts and bears share the canvas, speaking to broader themes of colonisation, the tension between humans, the planet and its other inhabitants that we have often failed to treat properly.

Jemima Hughes is a regular writer for the News.

Want to know more?
Ponch's painting exhibition will be held at 45 Flinders Lane, 8 to 19 September.



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Nineteen years around the table

The Loco Hall in Victoria Street was full of chatter and laughter when 150 locals gathered for the 19th North Melbourne Women’s Dinner on 20 August. The event certainly fulfilled its aim: ‘Connecting women who live, work and play across Docklands, North and West Melbourne and Parkville’. This year’s guest speakers, Savannah Smith and Sybil Gibb, highlighted the work of Viva Gibb, whose photographs of North Melbourne in the late 20th century sparked memories for many at the dinner. Marwa Zazouk accepted a donation to the Home Away from Homework Club from the dinner’s proceeds. The event was supported by a City of Melbourne Connecting Communities grant and local businesses who donated vouchers for the night’s raffle.



FROM THE ARCHIVES Michelle Brett

The North Melbourne Advertiser was distributed 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.

Plan for payment (1882)

Peter Phillips was sued by Henry Cranston over work and labour. Phillips had employed Cranston to draw some specifications for a house he intended to build and though no agreement of payment was made at the time, Phillips agreed to pay a reasonable amount when the plans were finished. Later he refused and Cranston sued him for £5. The Bench gave a verdict for the amount with 2s costs.

Caught with a coat (1883)

Henry Mitchell was charged with stealing a coat valued at 14s. Edward Collins, an employee at the store, said Mitchell stole the coat from outside the shop in Victoria Street and ran away. He was chased and caught, then given into custody. It appears that Mitchell is an old offender, having served a long sentence for burglary and was quickly sent back to his familiar gaol.

Runaway apprentice (1883)

William Condon was charged with absconding from his four year apprenticeship to Mr McLean. The Bench sentenced him to a month’s imprisonment, after which he would have to complete his time.

Bad language unheard (1884)

Mrs Callanan took Mary Bindon to court for abusive language. Bindon had recently been frequently in court for using bad language and creating disturbances around her neighbours. During the proceedings, Callanan took the witness box and for half an hour gave her evidence in a fluent manner; however, upon being pressed by the defence, admitted that she had not heard the alleged language being used though she was sure it had been. The defence submitted that the cause could not be carried on further, claiming that the summons was vexatious and had been taken out for a vindictive purpose as Callanan was owed a few shillings by Bindon. The Chairman agreed and the case was dismissed with £2 2s costs.

A weighty dispute (1884)

Burgess and White were in court after a dispute arose regarding the weighing of some of the sheep carcasses that Burgess had supplied, and whether there was more or less than 100 lbs. A verdict was given for the amount claimed, 12s, and 7s 6d costs.

Michelle Brett writes regularly for the News.

The poetry behind Lalla Rookh pub

It is difficult to imagine from its austere appearance that this property on Queensberry Street was built as a pub – a place of entertainment and good cheer. But the building on 509-511 Queensberry was one of the first pubs to open in the area and had the unusual name of the Lalla Rookh. John Kennedy obtained a licence on 1 July 1853; other early licensees were Mrs O’Keefe and John Ryan. The pub remained in the Ryan family for 60 years. It was deprived of its licence in 1925 and has since been used for a variety of businesses. The hotel also stood out because it was not on a corner as was the case for most early hotels. The stone building had a bar, cellar and 10 rooms. There were also stone stables. It had two doors (one now bricked in) – one for the residents and one for the general public. According to an early historian, Charles Daley, dances were regularly

conducted here in the 1860s. A forerunner of the pub, also called the Lalla Rookh, was first opened at 470-478 Queensberry st. That unusual name – Lalla Rookh – comes from a popular romantic poem in the 19th century written by the Irish poet Thomas Moore in 1817.



The old Lalla Rookh still standing at 509-511 Queensberry Street a century after last drinks.

It tells of Delhi Princess Lalla Rookh’s journey to an arranged marriage. While travelling, she fell in love with Feramorz, a poet posing as a humble singer. When Lalla Rookh enters the palace of her bridegroom, she swoons, expecting to do her duty in marrying a man she has never met. She awakens to find that the poet she loves is there: the king had disguised himself to test whether his bride-to-be loved him for whom he truly was.

Felicity Jack is a member of the Hotham History Project and a regular writer for 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



Culture comes to light in Fed Square

Reshma Manandhar

More than 20 students recently spent time crafting and painting paper lanterns for the luminous lantern parade in the city on 28 August. AMES ran lantern-making workshops at North Melbourne Language & Learning centres at North Melbourne and Djerring Flemington Community Hub. Each lantern was unique and reflected a small piece of each individual’s story and personality. The Luminous Lantern Parade, hosted by AMES Australia, celebrated the many different cultures that make Melbourne Melbourne. It started at Birrung Marr and finished at Federation Square.

Reshma Manandhar is Coordinator Community Engagement for AMES Australia.

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The loss of a great dog is a bloody terrible thing. Now I've gone and done it again. Agent Orange, the friendliest chihuahua you have ever met was hit and killed by a car in May while crossing Chetwynd Street. He was almost three years old and had been with me from 12 weeks. He was hugely loved by many people and dogs. I tried many times to get another chihuahua, but for some stupid reason I kept getting scammed. Twice lost my money due to hopeful thoughts and grief.

⚙ ⚙ ⚙

Can we put not wanting to be served single-use plastic in the same 'protected' category as vegetarianism or not eating specific foods for religious reasons? Make 'I don't do unnecessary plastic' a thing people need to consider when planning their catering, in the same way they wouldn't serve pork to Muslims or Jews, or cheese to vegans. Yes please.

VERY'S WORLD Very Impressive



And ... can people in supermarkets be fined for asking if you want a bag, instead of 'did you bring a bag?'. So many people still insist on thinking that they should get them for FREE. And we know Australians won't say no to something they think is free. It is actually factored into the price of everything you buy. I haven't taken a bag from a supermarket since 1994 – even when I have actually needed one because I've over-shopped my ability to carry the goods. So many of my neighbours are still using the

seriously useless excuse of "but I do use them twice" or "I use them for garbage bags" to justify forever plastics. Rant. Rant. Rant. Here's me ranting on again about the unnecessary use of plastic. But we do not live on a forever planet. We live on a planet that we are suffocating in plastic. ⚙ ⚙ ⚙ The Nargun is a great story. It comes from the Gunaikurnai, the Traditional Owners of

Gippsland, and is connected to the Den of Nargun in Mitchell River National Park. The den sits near Woolshed Creek and is culturally significant, especially as a women's place. The Nargun is described as a huge creature who lived in a cave behind a waterfall. Some tellings describe it as half-human, half-stone, or made mostly of stone except for parts of its body. It would drag travellers, especially children, into its den. The best part is its defence mechanism. Weapons didn't work. Throw a spear at the Nargun and it would turn back on you. Try to attack it and you would only hurt yourself. Thousands of years before video games, Gippsland had a cave monster with damage reflection. That's not just "spooky creature in the bush". That is elite boss-level folklore.

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

Bike paths are made for riding bikes, libraries are made for reading books and the post office on Errol Street is where I pick up my packages because I'm never home. But none of these places exist for just one reason. You can walk or run on a bike path, study on a laptop in the library without touching a book, and the post office sells a whole lot more than stamps. On this theme, hiking trails are not solely for hiking. The Grampians Peaks Trail (GPT) in western Victoria runs for more than 160 kilometres and is one of Australia's great hiking trails. But a growing number of people are deciding to run it instead. There's even an ultramarathon where competitors run the entire trail in one push from north to south, Mt Zero to Dunkeld over steep, technical, beautiful, brutal terrain.

MOSTLY UPRIGHT Phil Gijsbers

I'm a road marathon runner. I spend my time running the mostly flat streets of North Melbourne trying to get a little faster over 42 kilometres. But lately I've taken to the longer distances, the hills and the trails. The mud, rocks and views draw me back and add another layer to a sport that already occupies much of my time. I have now signed up to race the GPT this November. The problem is that I am training for the mountains while living in North Melbourne. So

I've engaged my coach, sought advice from previous participants and have learned that if I can't train in the mountains, I'll have to improvise. I repeatedly run the hills next to the zoo, I've started some basic strength work with a couple of old car batteries in the alleyway behind my place, and I'm making a friend of the stair stepper at the local YMCA. The event is still a while off, but I'm getting creative in my pursuit.

There's a wider lesson here about creativity and mixing things up a little bit. In life, sometimes we can flatten the mountains we encounter with good advice from others and creative solutions. After all, even the post office sells all sorts of interesting things.

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.

This issue's ride reminds me why it is so good to have a bike and connect with nature, even here in the inner city. The Merri Creek trail is fantastic. There are heaps of parks and trees: lush green spaces to relax your mind. I often ride from my home in North Melbourne along the Capital Trail to the Merri Creek trail and follow that all the way up to the revitalised Pentridge precinct. You can enjoy a coffee or lunch at the old prisoner Boot Factory and return home via the Upfield line trail under the Skyrail back to Royal Park. This full ride takes about two hours and includes Coburg lake with its black swans, Joe's market garden, a suspension bridge, the golden onion domes of the Russian Orthodox church, the Brunswick velodrome and, of course, lots of relaxing green space. There's also a shorter ride, perhaps one hour return from North Melbourne to CERES.

WHEELS ON FIRE Tim Cremean

CERES is a not-for-profit cooperative specialising in all things sustainable. The name comes from the Roman god of agriculture, grain and fertility. There are acres of community market gardens, a nursery, and education facilities teaching everything from renewable energy to bicycle repairs and composting. There are also two cafes and a health food shop. Chooks cluck behind a fence and often little children dart about or there may be a band competing with the earnest conversation of the coffee drinkers in this small village yard.

To get there, join the Capital Trail, perhaps at Flemington Bridge station and head east past the zoo and golf course. Follow the trail through North Carlton and North Fitzroy to St Georges Road. There are two or three ways to link up with the Merri Creek trail. I use Bennett Street and a back lane. You can follow signage a little further on which will take you across the creek on a new bicycle bridge but then you have to swing back to St Georges Road, cross back on the car bridge and descend down to the trail, which is on the western side of the creek heading north.

Once you are on the Merri Creek trail you can enjoy the creek and the green spaces. It's only 5 or 10 minutes to CERES. When you reach the bike path entry to CERES (there is a sign and a bench) go past the bicycle repair sheds and follow the gravel paths uphill and to the right. Here, just below the nursery, is the health food shop and café. Now that you have found your way to connect to Merri Creek trail, you might pedal on to see all the wonders of the trail up to Coburg lake. The only trick is at Moreland/ Normanby road where you must swap sides of the creek from the western to the eastern side. Enjoy relaxing in nature until next time.

Tim Cremean is the Distribution Coordinator for the News.

I recently had a chance to look through some old photos of North Melbourne. It was refreshing to see how few advertisements there were and how the ones that were there posed no advertising surveillance risks. That's not the case these days, especially online. Ads are everywhere, and so are the mechanisms used to track how we interact with them. Promotional emails, for example, often contain an invisible image called a tracking pixel that can send information about you and your device back to the sender when the image is loaded. Marketers use this information to optimise their advertising, but malicious threat actors can also use similar techniques to build profiles of their targets and launch convincing, tailor-made cyberattacks. This is referred to as spear phishing. When an email containing a tracking pixel arrives in your inbox and an image is loaded, your computer first needs to request that

SAFETY IN CYBERSPACE Nebojsa Pajkic

image from the server where it's stored. During this process, certain information can be shared with the server. A threat actor can use this information to establish that your email address is active and thus worth pursuing further because someone requested the image. They may also be able to determine other details such as your device or operating system. In their next email, they might write something like: "I noticed you're using an iPhone but haven't downloaded the latest version of iOS. Click this link to update it". The link, of course, could actually point to malware. This is just one example of broader risks associated with the collection of our information.

With so many internet-connected devices and services such as streaming providers, it's easy to imagine just how much information is being shared, with or without our knowledge or consent. Information is extremely valuable and it's part of our identity, so it makes sense to protect it. Start by checking the privacy or 'personalisation' settings of smart devices and services you use. Anything that isn't required for the product or service to work should be disabled, particularly 'personalised advertising'. Review your existing app and website permissions and make sure you're comfortable with their level of permissions. If there's an app you haven't used in the past year, consider

deleting it. Same goes for website accounts. In terms of emails, check your email provider's settings and disable automatic downloading of images. Consider using a privacy-focused browser with tracking protection enabled and periodically clear your browser's cookies. This may require you to log in to some websites again, which is a minor inconvenience compared to the benefits gained. Install an ad blocker on your browser, phone or laptop, or better yet, consider protecting your entire home network with something like a Raspberry Pi-hole. You'll be flabbergasted at the staggering number of information requests blocked and surprised at how much faster your internet connection might become.

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



Urban greening dresses up our streetscapes

We are becoming increasingly aware of the threats to our lives from the advance of global warming. Climate change is demanding we adapt the way we live.

The liveability and appearance of the streets of the closely settled inner-city suburbs of North and West Melbourne have been, over recent times, enhanced by the efforts of both individual householders and the Melbourne City Council.

As I take my daily walk through the streets of Hotham Hill with my little Jack Russell, Billy, I have noticed that more residents have planted little plots of garden around the base of Council-planted trees.

GARDEN GLORIES Marion Poynter



Along Dryburgh Street there's a row of matching plantings of hardy colourful daisies (Pic. 1). Elsewhere I see plots of easy-care flowering succulents in varying colours (Pic. 2) Near to the entrance to Wood Street, a long streetside bed with two palms is surrounded at their base by groups of robust bright yellow flowers and a low mass of prostrate rosemary (Pic. 3). Near the corner of Canning Street, on

the edge of the park, a big eye-catching plot of land has been filled with a colourful collection of showy succulents in varying shapes and sizes. Beautifully tended, it bears a sign that tells us that this patch has been dedicated to the memory of a former resident of the street (Pic. 4). All these roadside plantings have been chosen for their resilience and easy care. They serve to make our area

'greener' and more lovely. In nearby West Melbourne, the closely built-up area of tiny houses and apartments, surrounded by lots of concrete roads and paths, has long been exposed to heat and dust. In 2025, the Melbourne City Council completed the transformation of Roden Street between King and Spencer streets, into a park-like green oasis. Half of the now one-way street has been planted with lawn dotted with plots containing trees and decorative native plants (Pic. 5). Chosen for easy maintenance and hardiness in times of drought they include eucalypts, banksias, grasses, flowering hakeas, grevilleas and low-

growing, ever-flowering mini yellow button daisies (Pics. 6, 7). They are mulched with bark and water-retaining surrounds. The biodiversity of these plantings attracts lots of birds and insects. Houses now look out onto a cool relaxing country-like scene perfect for strolling through, walking the dog, or relaxing on one of the garden benches (Pic. 8). On the opposite side of the road from this area, a large block of apartments contributes to the greening effect with panels of lush hanging gardens (Pic. 9) that help control high summer temperatures.

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



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Roos hop to the top of AFLW

Toby Snyder

In the heart of North Melbourne, Arden Street Oval is steeped in the Kangaroos' history and is now home to the back-to-back Australian Football League Women's (AFLW) premiers. There is something distinctly local about heading down to Arden Street on a weekend, where families, couples and groups of teenagers proudly don the royal blue and white. Lifelong supporters and first-year fans alike engage in an experience that shares the same excitement as a men's game, but carries a

character of its own. The atmosphere is close-knit and familiar, perhaps appealing for fans who like a quieter environment. Off the back of the first undefeated full season in AFLW history, some local residents are reflecting on their growing connection to the women's side. One fan, who has followed the men's team for years, noted "lots of younger supporters [seem] to be getting involved"; another, who became a fan during the 2024 season, considered the women's fixture to be a highlight of her week. The North Melbourne men's team has played in

SPORTS REPORT Playing the field

the VFL/AFL since 1925. The AFLW provides another avenue for locals to connect with the Kangaroos tradition. For those who would like a recap of the 2025 season: the Kangaroos went 12-0 with a percentage of 321.5%, finishing three games clear on top of the ladder. They completed the season sweep with a perfect finals series, winning their three games by an average 29.7 points,

including a 40-point victory against Brisbane in the Grand Final. North Melbourne also took home the AFLW Best and Fairest Award, the AFLPA MVP award, and the Grand Final Best on Ground medal, going to Ash Riddell, Jasmine Garner and Eilish Sheerin respectively. With the club chasing an unprecedented third premiership, it's a good time to be a Roos fan.

Toby Snyder is a new writer for the News.

Want to know more?
The North Melbourne women's team plays home games at 204-206 Arden St, North Melbourne.



Christmas comes early for the artists at River Studios.

Handmade for the holidays

Nancy Lane

Most people don't start thinking about Christmas until December, but that's way too late for the artists and craftspeople who create one-of-a-kind gifts and cards for the holiday season. Many of the artists at River Studios in West Melbourne have already geared up in anticipation of their Christmas market, scheduled for late November. Pauline Delaney, one of the original artists at River Studios, creates unique lampwork glass beads by melting and shaping glass rods over a high-heat torch. Each bead has vibrant colours and a unique pattern. Although she normally sells her work through galleries, she will be offering jewellery, including necklaces, pendants and brooches, free-form flowers, and Christmas baubles at the market. Earthly Beads and Objects ceramicist Vincenza was also one of the original artists at River Studios. She has taken part in numerous Craft Cubed and Williamstown markets, and along with Pauline, was previously involved in a long-term pop-up shop at the Pavilion

in Fitzroy Gardens. At Christmas, her most popular items are ceramic Christmas tree ornaments, cute bird brooches and raku pottery. Previously an independent theatre producer, Kate Hunter is now involved in creating sound-driven audio-visual installations in galleries. Although at River Studios for less than a year, she is already working on small landscapes, abstracts and still lifes with fruit in gouache, acrylic and water colour paints for the Christmas market. She is also creating packets of handmade Christmas cards. Roze Elizabeth is a screen printer who came from an industrial background. She has screen-printed restaurant windows and wall murals for private clients, and sells her products at several markets and shops. For the Christmas market, she is creating designs from floral to funny, and screen printing on everything from charcuterie boards to tea-towels, carry bags and hankies. Creating immersive experiences is Jade Armstrong's main focus in her art, and she also loves experimenting with different materials – from blowing

sugar to creating iridescent light sculptures. At the market, she will offer original paintings, as well as prints of these on items such as mugs, coasters, pillows, backpacks and aprons. This is just a small sample of the wide range of artists involved in the market. There will also be carved wooden spoons, embroidery, art magnets, a wide range of jewellery, ceramic mugs and wall sculptures – and all are one-of-a-kind. River Studios is normally not open to the public. The Christmas market offers a rare chance to talk directly to the artists – and perhaps to peek through the keyholes to see what's behind some of the studio doors.

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

Want to know more?
Saturday 28 November, 10 am – 2 pm
River Studios Christmas Market 41-59 Sims Street, West Melbourne. Look for the River Studios Creative Spaces sign behind the Gather and Tailor function centre and the Life Church.

Sally steps up for Rotary

Emily Ta

North Melbourne Rotary Club's 2025-2026 president Thanu Kothalawala has passed the baton to Sally Mpaluko. Sally came to Australia from Malawi aged 17 to study at university. Her history of volunteer work and inciting change traces back to helping out at a Lions Club in her teens. "When I was young, at the age of 15, my dad was the president," she says. "He would run these club meetings [...] and he would take me along

with him. So that's how I got to learn about community service." Sally initially joined as a Rotary club volunteer, encouraged by a friend from Malawi, but eventually became a full member to continue her father's legacy through community service. "Everyone was so warm, and kind, and inviting, and being by myself in Melbourne, I felt very welcomed." As the new president, Sally wants to bring a more technological aspect to the club, something she says is her personal passion. With many concurrent projects, she says it is important to have a way to take ownership of them, allowing for more timely updates. Rotary members span across countries and cultures, and Thanu says the club "represents North Melbourne in every way". This also involves the projects that the club is committed to – whether locally or internationally. Passionate about wanting children "well fed and

educated", Thanu notes the Rotary Club's work with Simmonds College. It funds a breakfast program for students and has been extended into a lunch program in the second half of 2026. An awards program to recognise community service and hard work has also been established for Simmonds College students who volunteer to prepare food for the school's canteen or other activities. Rotary support is also provided overseas, such as providing sanitary products for students in Kenya. Emily Ta is a new writer for the News.

Want to know more
The North Melbourne Rotary Club meets every second and fourth Thursday of each month. To find out more about the local Rotary Club, contact Neville Page on 0414 673611 or nevillepage7@gmail.com



Previous president Thanu Kothalawala (left) with the new president Sally Mpaluko (right).



Two generations of care: Dr Lisa Smycz with son Sasha, the newest chiropractor in the family practice.

Family's all in the right place

Apeksha Zhao

If the walls of Errol Street Chiropractic could talk, Dr Lisa Smycz says they would tell every person who walks through the door: “You are in the right place.”

For the past 21 years, the chiropractic practice has welcomed patients from across Melbourne with the warmth that has become its hallmark.

Lisa’s journey began much earlier. She has spent 37 years as a chiropractor, including seven years practising in England.

Her father’s experience after injuring his back while hunting set Lisa on her path. After he saw a chiropractor and experienced remarkable improvement, Lisa was inspired to pursue the profession and has never considered doing anything else.

Today, the practice is very much a family affair. Husband Andrew, also a chiropractor, now works mostly behind the scenes, while son Sasha joined the practice last year after completing his chiropractic studies.

Working alongside his mum has become an education in more than clinical skills. Lisa says

she’s proud to see him developing the qualities she believes matter most – empathy, listening and building genuine trust with patients.

One piece of advice that has stayed with Lisa throughout her career is simple: “Do the right thing”. Those words from her Nonno guide the way she approaches her work and the care she provides to every patient.

Many patients first arrive through word of mouth, and some have been coming to Errol Street Chiropractic for more than 20 years. One of Lisa’s greatest joys is now caring for three generations of the same family – watching children she first met years ago return with children of their own.

“The most rewarding part is seeing people get their lives back,” she says. “Whether that’s returning to work or study, starting a business or simply being able to move comfortably again.”

Apeksha Zhao is a regular writer for the News.

Want to know more?
Errol Street Chiropractic, 222 Errol Street North Melbourne 3051; website: errolstchiro.com.au

Take a walk with a purpose

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

If you are interested, please email admin@centre.org.au or call in at NWMNC at 58 Errol Street.

A midwinter night’s street party

The Courthouse Hotel took over Errol Street for a midwinter solstice celebration of live music, local food and drink, ghost stories, games and good company. Kids got into the spirit with face painting, while rare tours of the Arts House clock tower booked out in a flash, suggesting locals are keen for a peek inside the neighbourhood’s historic buildings. One bartender told the *News* they hope to do it all again next winter, and even floated the idea of a summer solstice party.



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Melanie Cobham Bodybuilding



Chris Bekos END

Scenes from our city

Rehearsing the City is an exhibition of historical and contemporary photography that explores how protest, creativity and everyday activities transform public spaces.

Archival images from Victoria's State and National Archives are on show alongside works by contemporary photographers.

Lead curator Natasha Cantwell says the photographs capture "the many ways people have observed Melbourne across different periods and for different purposes."

"These photographs show not the city that was imagined, but the city as it was actually lived in," she said.

"They reveal how people have adapted, occupied and transformed urban space over time."

From the 1975 women's rights march to the 2025 Amyl and the Sniffers performance that never happened, the exhibition presents public space as a stage where meanings are contested, reinterpreted and redefined.

"Cities are constantly being reshaped by the people who move through them. Architects, planners and builders may create the stage, but there is no script," Natasha said.

"Across the exhibition we see overcrowding and emptiness, spontaneous encounters and carefully orchestrated events, celebration and decline."

"Together, the photographs invite us to ask not only how our public spaces work, but who they work for."

"If the exhibition encourages people to pause, observe more closely and reflect on how we're using these spaces that conversation can continue long after they leave the gallery."

Want to know more?

Rehearsing the City runs until 12 April 2027 at the Victorian Archives Centre Gallery, 99 Shiel St, North Melbourne. For more information, visit the Public Record Office Victoria website prov.vic.gov.au/whats/public-exhibitions/rehearsing-city



Impromptu peace celebrations, 1945

Source: Public Record Office Victoria

PARLIAMENT TO POSTCODE Sarah Witty



Building a stronger North and West Melbourne

One of the things I love most about representing Melbourne is getting out into our community, meeting the people who make our neighbourhoods such welcoming and vibrant places to live.

Recently, I visited the North Melbourne Community Centre and saw first-hand the incredible role it plays in bringing people together. Thank you to Carolyn and Nadine from Y Victoria and Centre Manager Allysha for showing me around.

From children and carers enjoying Play Gym to women making the most of the women-only gym hour, and outdoor spaces buzzing with soccer, basketball, netball and futsal, the centre is about more than recreation. It is a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can stay active, build friendships and feel a genuine sense of belonging.

I also visited the Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre, where I watched wonderful performances from the Chinese Arts Association of Melbourne. From traditional dance to the artistry and storytelling of Chinese opera, it was a beautiful celebration of the cultural diversity.

Supporting people through all stages of life is also at the heart of so much great local work. At

Canteen Australia in West Melbourne, I heard about the support they provide to young people affected by cancer and their families. At North Melbourne Language and Learning, I met students building their English skills, confidence and connections. And at River Nile School, I heard how VET in Schools is helping young people develop practical skills and discover exciting career pathways.

There are inspiring local organisations creating opportunities every day. Since 2013, North Melbourne social enterprise Good Cycles has supported more than 800 young people facing barriers to employment to build skills, confidence and careers.

It was also great to meet Father Stuart Soley at Saint Mary's Anglican Church and learn more about the parish's role in supporting and bringing people together.

We're investing in the infrastructure our growing community needs. The Albanese Government has provided \$750,000 through Roads to Recovery for upgrades to Wreckyn, Queensberry and Shiel streets in North Melbourne, helping deliver safer, more reliable local roads.

From community centres and schools to small businesses, social enterprises and local



Sarah with Father Stuart Soley at Saint Mary's Anglican Church

infrastructure, these are the things that help make our neighbourhoods stronger.

I'm proud to keep working with our community to build a better future for North and West Melbourne.

Want to know more?

If your community organisation, business or school would like to meet with me, please email my office: Sarah.Witty.MP@aph.gov.au

How to push your CV past AI barriers

Dr Helena Steel

Have you been getting lots of knockbacks on job applications, with no interviews at all? That might be because most employers today are using AI scanning software as the first eye on resumes and CVs.

It's become rare for a human to do the initial scan of job applications.

As a professional member of the Career Development Association Australia (CDAA), I recently spent a day volunteering at the Melbourne Careers and Employment Expo in July.

Every year, we offer free career and CV checks over three days. Once again, the queues for career advice were long. Many job seekers brought along their CVs for us to check and review against the jobs they were seeking or applying for.

One of the biggest issues with the CVs I reviewed was the format and layout. Most were two pages and used graphical templates downloaded from the internet. These templates organise your data into lots of columns and sections, often by using heavy borders, colour, tables, sections and subsections, indents and thick lines to separate information.

Most of the CVs I saw looked great visually and would work well if you were to hand them to a real person. However, there are drawbacks when you use them to apply for a job online.

AI software typically works by scanning back and forth across your CV, from the left margin to the right, and back again to collect your data. Excessively designed CVs with different columns and sections run the risk of confusing scanners. Scanners may miss data in columns or pick up data from a line in one table, and collate it with data from another table in the same line, thinking it's the same table. As a result, the information in

CAREERS CLUB Helena Steel



your CV may not correlate correctly, or may not be picked up at all.

If you want to improve your CV to break through scanning software, my main suggestion is to revisit your format. Ask yourself: does this CV format look scan-friendly? Does it have a simple layout, with few or little tables and sections, reads easily from left to right? Start with a simple Word document for your CV. Create uniform headings that are consistent in font size and format. Align paragraphs to the left margin and don't use indents for the beginning of sentences. Just keep your CV writing in one easy-to-read and uniform column.

This doesn't mean you should get rid of your visual CV format and template! They are great to use as an additional copy to upload or use in person when networking. However, if you do add a visual CV to job applications, never upload it as the first file for scanning. Always upload the basic CV first, followed by the cover letter and any other job criteria. Upload the visual CV last, and clearly label it - 'Visual CV Format for John Smith', for example - as an additional option to view. Companies and recruiters might just look at both versions. I would!

Here's to better luck with your job applications.

Dr Helena Steel is a local resident, a career development practitioner, researcher, HRM executive and mentor. She provides volunteer support to the NWMNC in career development and is a new writer for the News. You can listen to her Career Series podcast by scanning this QR code.



Young debaters, Harry, Jack and Vaishnavi

Teens wage war of words

Louise Flowers

What would motivate numerous teenagers from a variety of schools to turn out on a cold, dark Monday night and go back to school? Let's hear from three of them.

Vaishnavi: My father made me do it to improve my spoken language skills and after a while I found I enjoyed it.

Jack: Three generations of my family were debaters, so I guess didn't really have a choice.

Harry: I like the intellectual challenge and thinking about current issues, I'm also a very competitive person.

What do they do? Competitive debating! Sounds a bit dull and nerdy to most of us, but those who take part find it hones their skills in clear thinking, aural presentation and the structure of an argument.

Five schools take part, each with up to five teams competing in four divisions. Families and colleagues are encouraged to come along and support their school's team.

North and West Melbourne is represented by teams from University High School and Haileybury College.

Sometimes the topic is provided beforehand so teams have time to prepare, but as they gain experience, a 'secret topic' is provided one hour before the start time.

Competitive debating has a very tight structure.

Each speaker has 5 to 8 minutes to speak, depending on the division, and the adjudicator gives a score out of 100 for manner, matter and method. Speakers are given two warnings before time is up, anything said after full time is not counted.

The first speaker for the affirmative side starts the debate by introducing the topic, defining terms and providing support for the topic.

First speaker for the negative team rebuts arguments made by affirmative speaker one and provides the first arguments against the proposition.

Speakers two and three for each side follow in turns, using the same format, except third speakers only rebut.

Some debaters like to be first speaker on the positive as they can just present their share of the argument and don't have to think on their feet with rebuttals. Others prefer to be the last speaker of all so that they can really get stuck into the opposition and cover their side in glory!

On the night in question the topic for C Grade teams (Year 10) was: 'Should sugary drinks be banned for under-18-year olds?', the debate resulting in a tight one-point win for University High School. Well done team!

Louise Flowers is a new writer for the News. Her grandson Harry Bond checked she had the debating details correct.



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UNDER 7S BILLYCART TRACK

Why should big kids have all the fun? Hop on and keep between the haybales.

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4pm - Forget Melbourne Cup fashion. Dress to impress North (& West) Melbourne-style. Register in advance to secure your place.

XYZ YOUTH ZONE

Beat making, giant games, express yourself on our mega-wall. Music and dance from heavy metal Chinese to Afro-hip-hop.

Lord Mayor message

North and West Melbourne, are you ready to roll?

*Nick Reece
Lord Mayor*

The City of Melbourne is proud to support you for the fifth annual Queensberry Cup and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre.

More than a billy cart race, this event unites the neighbourhood along Queensberry and Errol streets. Thanks to the organisers, stallholders and contestants.



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For more info
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- ✓ Medicare Urgent Care Clinics are now **permanent**
- ✓ Public hospitals have received **another \$25 billion**
- ✓ The **National Environmental Protection Agency** is now open

Sarah Witty Member for Melbourne

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Out of the margins and into the community

Keely Naylor

Osman Osman asks the waitress for the strongest coffee she has. He's only half joking. He's a busy man, but undoubtedly a kind one. His career began as an educator in Africa, where he witnessed repeatedly what giving someone the tools to succeed could do to change a life.

Osman is a coordinator of the Men out of the Margins program that ran from early 2025 until June this year enabling 106 men to gain valuable skills, including self-care, communication, and digital and financial literacy.

"The aim was to get men more empowered, capable and confident," Osman said.

It was for men who have been affected by homelessness, incarceration and social isolation as well as men who struggled with their mental health, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Men out of the Margins has worked with several temporary residency organisations such as Ozanam House supported by St Vincent de Paul, Open Door and Flagstaff supported by The Salvation Army, and Elizabeth Street Common Ground supported by Launch Housing.

Osman noted there are groups for women, children and youth, but not many targeting men. "Nothing is really trying to build up and look at those



Meet the men of the Elizabeth Street Common Ground Warriors: Back row left to right: Chris, Karl, Leyton; Front row left to right: Shane and Jose

men as human beings and what kind of difficulties they have."

Osman believes it has been a success, particularly the Elizabeth Street Common Ground (ESCG) Warriors, a group of men who graduated from the program and created their own group.

Hieu, an ESCG staff member is a supervisor for the Warriors, but the group itself is run entirely by the graduates of Men out of the Margins. "Every Sunday the guys from the Warriors come together, do some activities, have some speeches, and share ideas," Hieu said. "I feel so, so proud of them."

"We figured out that between us we've got a whole bunch of individual talents; we have all the knowledge and know-how that we need," Warriors committee member Shane said.

"In places like this, there could be countless negative influences and not everybody wants to be like that. Somebody has to sort of represent the non-destructive side of people who haven't given up on life and still want to get somewhere and still want to achieve something and kind of be a beacon for them."

Currently, the men are preparing for a musical performance in October with musical director Warren. "We're all

really enjoying that," another committee member, Chris, said.

The Warriors took part in the Queensberry Cup last year with self-made billycarts rumbling down Errol Street.

"That was a great team building exercise, it was a really fun day, and that isn't just the race. It goes back to the building of the cart, getting to know everyone at the men's shed, it was just a positive experience all around," Chris said, one of the designers of the cart.

"That race we lost," Warrior Jose said. "But, for us? We are champions."

Jose, Chris, and Shane are quick to praise one another, to remind each other of their successes and their strengths.

Yet, like many programs, they don't have much funding.

Hieu said the men had already approached Bunnings to fund raise with a sausage sizzle to help cover costs. Ultimately, all of the men just want to be able to help others.

"I personally would get a lot out of that, in general, being inclusive and promoting men's mental health," Chris said.

"The idea of the Warriors is that people can see that life continues, not feel by themselves, for whatever kind of circumstance they have in the past, or they have in the present and give motivation to them," Jose said.

Most importantly, the Warriors are

open for other men to join, though they encourage women to create groups of their own. "That's the idea of us," Jose said. "We're completely open."

"They have a very bright and positive perspective for the future," Hieu said.

Osman tells a story of a man who had attended the Men Out of the Margins course reluctantly, at first. But he continued because of the way he felt when the education coordinator used his name. "She knows my name," Osman heard him say.

"I think these people just need to be recognised, they need to be seen, not more than that."

Keely Naylor is a regular writer for the News.



Osman Osman, coordinator of the Men out of the Margins program.

Walking to the beat of local life

WHISPERED TALES Stories from our streets

Frank Jiang

I moved to Melbourne six months ago and rented a small room in North Melbourne. It had one thing I loved immediately: a large window looking onto enormous plane trees. Summer wasn't quite over and afternoon sunlight filtered through the leaves, casting moving shadows across the white walls.

Soon I discovered I could walk to the University of Melbourne in half an hour.

Shiel Street is lined with plane trees whose summer canopy nearly covers the road. They reminded me unexpectedly of Shanghai, where similar trees are known as 'French plane trees' because of their association with the former French Concession.

Between Haines and Courtney streets, eucalypts divide the road. I prefer them to the planes. They feel more Australian and, having grown up with bare winter landscapes, I found comfort in their evergreen leaves. I caught myself scanning the branches for koalas.

Walking the same route never became repetitive. It became the rhythm that opened my day. I had come to Melbourne to study creative writing, starting over in my thirties.

As a non-native English speaker, I found writing workshops challenging, and walking became a quiet way of settling my nerves. As Rebecca Solnit writes in *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, walking "articulates both physical and mental freedom". By the time I reached campus, I often felt ready to begin.

I also began noticing the small rhythms of the neighbourhood.

A young father once pushed a double stroller towards me. As we passed, the younger girl suddenly called out, "G'day, mate."

Another day, in heavy rain, an elderly man stopped, picked up a plastic frisbee from the road

and quietly tossed it back over a kindergarten fence. The next day, some child would discover it had returned.

Then there was an elderly Asian man pushing a wheelchair to Woolworths. On the way home, a bag of frozen dumplings sat quietly in the shallow basket, slowly thawing.

Autumn came, then winter. The plane trees shed their leaves, which made me a little sad. But

as the canopy disappeared, something else emerged. Lorikeets, magpies and gang-gang cockatoos became visible among the branches.

Beyond them, I could finally see Melbourne's skyline and the Ferris wheel glowing at night. All summer, the leaves had been hiding this view.

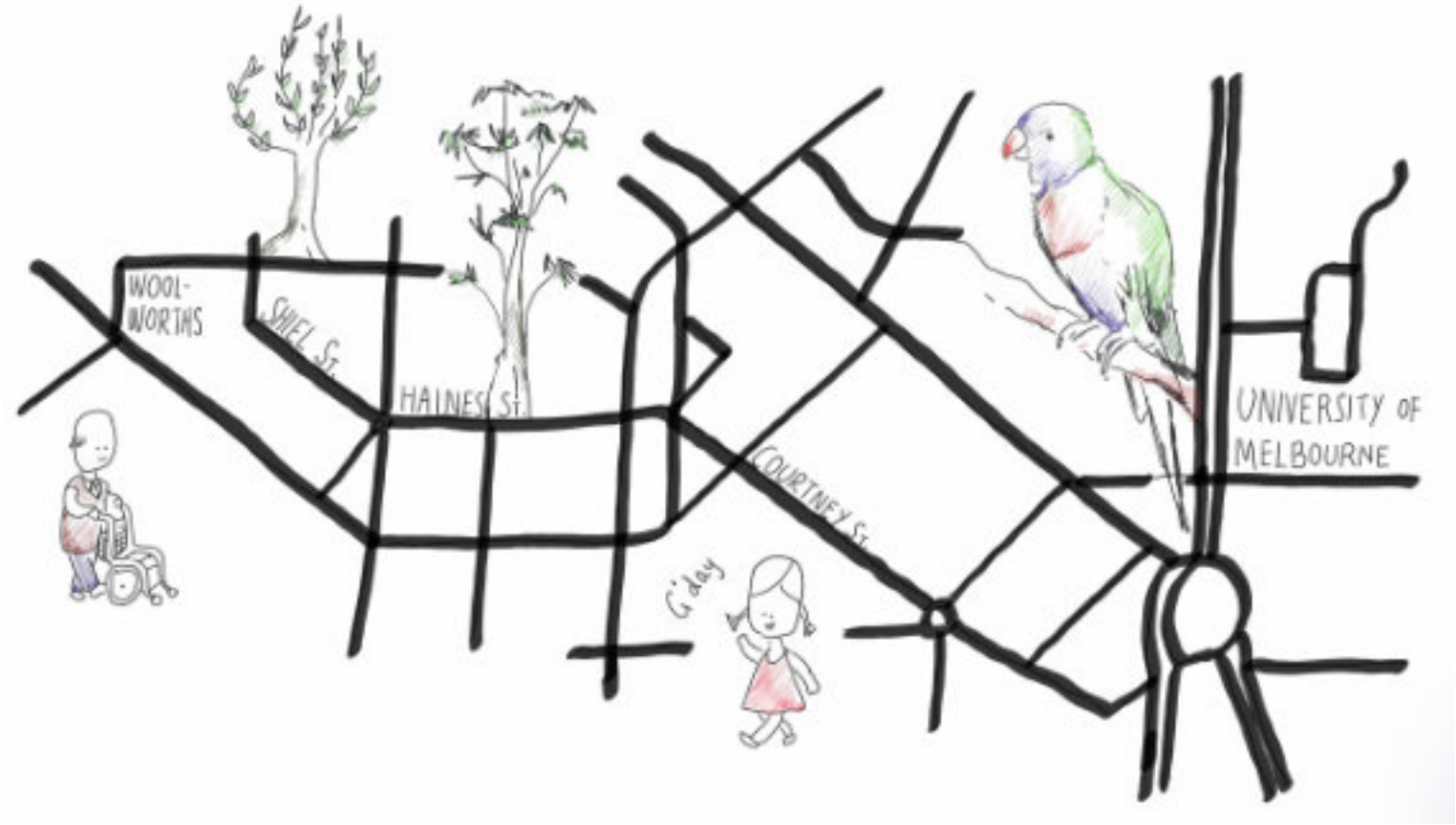
I've come to love this hour of walking each day. Unlike travelling, it isn't about encountering new scenery, but knowing the same place a little

differently each time. Walking hasn't got me to university any faster, but it has taught me to know this city more slowly.

Somewhere along the way, it also gave me the quiet confidence that I had come to the right place to begin again.

Frank Jiang is a new writer for the News.

The News illustrator Ed Zhao takes us along Frank's daily walk through North Melbourne to Uni Melb.



THE LIFE OF THE PARTY
Ellen Sandell



Over the past few weeks a number of local families have contacted me with the same worry: Arden street isn't safe to cross. Locals tell me they've had multiple near misses in a single week, walking their kids to school and kindergarten. Others tell me the trucks that are

turning onto Arden Street don't watch out for pedestrians at all. It's the same story, again and again, from people who use this street every day: parents pushing prams, kids walking to school, older residents just trying to cross the road safely. People tell me they've started timing their

school run around gaps in traffic, or holding their breath every time they step off the curb with young kids. That's not how a safe, liveable neighbourhood should work. I recently raised this in parliament directly with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety on behalf of everyone who has contacted me. I asked plainly: what is the State Government doing to make this road safe for pedestrians? It's not a complicated ask. Proper planning for the intersections on Arden Street is the bare minimum

North Melbourne residents deserve. I'm talking about basic pedestrian safety measures that should already be in place given how much foot traffic this area sees, especially around school drop-off and pick up times. I'll keep pushing for this in Parliament. But just as importantly, I want to make sure there's real, genuine consultation with the people who use this street every day. It's important that decisions around traffic safety are being made with families, schools, and residents about where the danger points are and what would actually fix them.

If you've had a near miss on Arden Street, or you have views on where crossings and safety improvements are most needed, I want to hear from you.

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

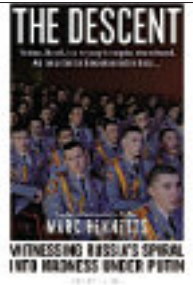


You Are the
Führer's
Unrequited
Love
Jean-Noel
Orengo
(Penguin.
\$28.99)



Jean-Noel Orengo's fifth novel, *You Are the Führer's Unrequited Love*, published in France in 2024, has just been published in an English translation by David Watson as part of the Penguin International Writers series. It deals with the relationship between Adolf Hitler and his Minister of Armaments and War Production, Albert Speer. Stylistically, *You Are the Führer's Unrequited Love* doesn't fit into a box or genre. It hardly reads like a novel and essentially has no imagined dialogue between characters, who are all historical figures. The book mainly works as a moral inquisition into Speer's guilt and trustworthiness as a witness to history. Orengo argues that Speer's memoirs, *Inside the Third Reich* and *Spandau Diaries* are essentially works of auto-fiction, where Speer tries to paint himself as a victim, innocently swept along by events. Does *You Are the Führer's Unrequited Love* work as fiction? Reading it, one does imagine them as literary characters. Perhaps the book is better regarded as narrative non-fiction. It's certainly a powerful *j'accuse*, full of moral outrage at Speer's self-pity and duplicitous, unreliable character. Either way, this is a bold, well-imagined and smartly organised book that journeys to the heart of darkness.

The Descent
Marc Bennetts
(Continuum.
\$42.99)



English journalist Marc Bennetts describes Russia's transformation – or descent – from a generally appealing destination to a country gone mad with the invasion of Ukraine. Bennetts lived in Russia for 25 years (1997–2022) and chronicles this change in national mood in real time. In large part, Russians felt under siege by the west. The country also has a history of totalitarian rule and disastrous economic management in the post-Soviet era. He quotes Russians glibly telling their Ukrainian relatives not to worry, to just hang in there and it will be all over soon, with the Ukrainian relatives writing back that they were being bombed. Perhaps the most jaw-dropping aspect of Russia's war is the wholehearted support from the Russian Orthodox Church, even going so far as to physically bless war heads. If you thought the war in Ukraine was bad, *The Descent* shows that it's ten times worse. This is a story of senseless death, wasted young lives, torture, brutal killings and state-manufactured hatred. The horrible truth is that a majority of Russians, around 70%, support Vladimir Putin and the war. A dark psychological portrait of a whole country in the grip of a nihilistic war mania.

Red Snake
Blue Snake
Olivier Tallec
(Gecko Press.
\$29.99)



Two snakes – Red Snake and Blue Snake – have been friends since they were small. They start their day with some yoga, then lay back and look at the clouds, interpreting their shapes. Blue Snake sees a huge pirate hat, but Red Snake disagrees. "It looks like you when you've eaten too much." Such disagreements are a staple of their friendship. When they come across a cactus in their slithering travels, Blue Snake thinks it looks like a mitten, but Red Snake insists it resembles a ghost waving. In other adventures the snakes climb a power pole, encounter a snake charmer (Red Snake insists on dancing while Blue Snake cautions danger) and come across a puddle. They are both thirsty by this stage, and Red Snake complains that the puddle is half dried up, while Blue Snake cheerfully says it's half full. French writer and illustrator Olivier Tallec has published more than 60 books for children. *Red Snake Blue Snake* features plenty of whimsical visual gags – Blue Snake wears a sombrero throughout and that cactus does look like a mitten. The story provides a warm portrait of a querulous but enduring friendship. A witty and affectionate children's picture book. For ages 4-to 8-years old



Sing NoW! celebrates World Beatles Day on the steps of the State Library
Photograph: Philip Louey of Game On Sports Images

All you need is love

Kate Ritchie
Melbourne CBD, 5 degrees, 7:15 am, 25 June 2026. A Thursday morning on the steps of the State Library in Swanston Street. Early-bird commuters, trams, joggers – a few familiar faces come into focus. What's going on? What are the microphones for? And who is that bloke talking into one of the microphones up the back? Looks a bit familiar. More people wander over expectantly. The clock ticks over to 7.50. A kids' brass band starts up "Da da dum dum dum da de da...". It's 774 Melbourne Radio's Bob Murphy belting out a familiar refrain: "Love, Love, Love". Thought I recognised him. We emerge from behind statues and greenery and take our place on the steps. 'Love, love, love.' It's World Beatles Day and love is definitely in the air (even if that is a different tune). Three part harmony, singers from local

choirs, conductor, brass band, guitarist and Bob Murphy on lead vocals. Bringing a bit of joy to Melburnians on a cold winter's day. Then, just as suddenly, it is all over. The ABC News is on and we are heading in all directions – to work, school or coffee. Two million views later, our clip has been liked across the world. Even Sir Paul McCartney retweeted it. Not bad for our local choir Sing NoW! in North Melbourne. It turns out that All you Need is a Voice!

Kate Ritchie is a member of SingNoW!
Want to know more?
We need more voices. If you want to be part of something heartwarming like this, check out our growing troupe at Sokol, 497 Queensberry Street. We rehearse Thursday nights from 7 pm to 8.30 pm during school terms. You can join in any time. Another flashmob might be just around the corner.

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

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Report to the community 2025/26



*“The only constant in life is change”
–Heraclitus*

For North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre (NWMNC), change means informed, responsive action directed to people experiencing poverty, distress, isolation and disadvantage.
Under Director Ariel Valent’s leadership, NWMNC continues to evolve as a public, community-based institution focused on benevolent relief. Our recent Community Needs Analysis, led by Community Development Co-ordinator Miriam Bilander, identified the cohorts in greatest need and directly informed the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

Continuity through changing times

CHAIR’S REPORT
Alan Cooke



Staff stalwarts Craig Barry, Laurence Angwin, Dhanya Nair, our newspaper team, tutors, event staff and squadron of volunteers continued to deliver high-quality support that advances

NWMNC’s charitable purpose.
Special thanks to Osman Osman for Men Out of the Margins, which supported men affected by homelessness, incarceration and isolation, and to

Kevin Shi, Arnav Goyal and the Being a Melburnian team for reducing isolation among international students and seniors.
Sachin Singhal, Greg Ferrington and Lorna Hannan (also a Life member!) completed their Board terms, and we welcomed Ian Woodruff, Wendy Cook and Michael Taylor, whose skills will support continuous improvement.
Our 50th anniversary Gala Dinner celebrated five decades of public service. It was my honour to present Kay Oke with Life Membership of NWMNC. Kay epitomises all that is good about volunteering: a caring individual who sees a need in her community and looks for ways to address it. We can all learn from her example.

The past year was an important one in the history of North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre (NWMNC). Our 50th year was a great opportunity to look back and celebrate the organisation’s many achievements, but we also took the opportunity to take stock and look to the future.

Our comprehensive Community Needs Analysis confirmed that poverty, housing instability, homelessness, food insecurity, social isolation and poor mental health are causing real distress. These needs, particularly among people affected by public housing redevelopment and other barriers, now guide our programs and priorities.
Our 2026-2030 Strategic Plan commits NWMNC to benevolent relief through four goals:
1. Empower and provide positive pathways for priority cohorts.
2. Improve wellbeing by bringing people together and addressing loneliness and social isolation.
3. Be a comprehensive source of local information.

Half a century young and just getting started

DIRECTOR’S REPORT
Ariel Valent



4. Strengthen NWMNC to optimise impact and embrace future opportunities.
In 2025/26, Men Out of the Margins provided targeted relief to men experiencing homelessness, isolation and complex disadvantage, with transformational outcomes in life skills, confidence, autonomy and social inclusion.
We also responded to food insecurity among

international students through a weekly food relief program delivering fresh food and staples.
Being a Melburnian brought seniors and international students together to reduce loneliness, improve wellbeing and build belonging through intercultural and intergenerational connection.
The North & West Melbourne News continued to connect residents with local information and

community voices, winning equal Best Newspaper at the CNAV Awards.
While these programs deserve special mention, it is the daily work of our humble Neighbourhood Centre that epitomises our mission: a volunteer helping a disadvantaged child with their homework; a rough sleeper who comes in for a cup of tea, a rest and a supportive chat; an elderly couple exchanging their containers for cash to put food on the table; a refugee grasping the fundamentals of the English language to function in her new world.
Major events – the 50th anniversary gala, Queensberry Cup and Public Housing Multicultural Eid Festival – created inclusive community connection while supporting people affected by hardship and dislocation.
Thank you to our dedicated Board, staff, volunteers and community members. This report shows what we achieved together in a historic year of public benefit and benevolent relief.



Racers at the 2025 Queensberry Cup, which drew more than 13,000 people; Incoming Chair Alan Cooke presents outgoing Chair Kay Oke with Honorary Life Membership in recognition of her longstanding contribution to NWMNC



Impact Report

In the 2025 calendar year, NWMNC provided:

- in excess of \$1,953,963 of community value (excluding events), which is more than double our income and more than \$300,000 above the previous year.
- \$19.15 of value for every dollar of state government NHCP funding
- \$906 of value for every hour that NWMNC is in use
- 225 participants in programmed activities per week
- 288 volunteer hours per week, an increase of more than 50% compared to the previous year.

NWMNC staff, key contractors and volunteers

Director: Ariel Valent
CFO / CIO: Craig Barry
Community Development Co-ordinator: Miriam Bilander
Community Events Co-ordinator: Yulay Perez
Community Outreach Co-ordinator: Dhanya Nair
Men’s Program and Volunteer Co-ordinator: Osman Osman
Community Outreach Workers: Luping Chen, Marwa Zakzouk, Arnav Goyal
Team Leader – Homework Club: Laurence Angwin
Session Supervisors – Homework Club: Ayla Dempsey, Marwa Zakzouk
ACFE Administration: Arnav Goyal
Queensberry Cup Sponsorship: Reecha Kumari
Tutors: Fernanda Cury, Bethany Rayner, Susie Kelly, Frances McMillan, Shyamasree Bose, Adongwat Manyoul, Anna Trigos, Lisa Nicolas, Osman Osman, Anastasia Beasley, Caz Howard, Louise Yaxley, Sayed Maqsoodi, Yulay Perez, Jarod Tang, Jane Saleeba, Helena Steel, Richard Sarell, Mark McPherson,

Daniel Portelli, Mamiko Ellen, Juliette Kent, Miriam Bilander, Craig Barry
N&WN News Volunteer Leaders: Liam Heitmann-Ryce-LeMercier, Louise Yaxley (editors); Tom Linkins, Anne Burgi (production); Swagata Majumdar (deputy editor); Janet Graham (advertising); Tim Cremean (distribution)
Front Desk & Admin Volunteers: Alan Cooke, Mamiko Ellen, Cheryl House, Amina Hassan, Greta Kennedy, Matt Hirst, Ian Woodruff, Shine Ma, Callista Nguyen, Iris Har, Madhurya Namana, Joel Becker, Shabnam Afaghisaray, Jiaqi Zu, Andrea Derungs, Asher Jaucian, Rafika Ramli, Riley Chen
Events Volunteer Leaders: David Moorhouse, Kevin Shi, Philip Pavlidis, Darren Scandolera, Yibing Liu, Awatif Taha, Abdella Umar, Barry Berih
CDS Volunteers: Michael Taylor, Wendy Cook, Peter Roberts, Cynthia Huang
Cleaner: Mitsalal (Zafu) Gebrekidan, Kidan Woldu
Student Placements: Yake Wang, Yimiao Zhang, Katie Ngan, Morgan Reddick, Kevin Shi, Haoran Zhang

Centre Board members

Alan Cooke (Chair from October), Kay Oke (Chair until September), Barry Berih (Deputy Chair), Kate Ritchie (Secretary), Leah Huynh (Treasurer), Kevin Shi, Greg Ferrington (until September), Lorna Hannan (until September), Ian Woodruff (from October), Michael Taylor (from October), Wendy Cook (from October)

Report contributors

Alan Cooke, Ariel Valent, Leah Huynh, Miriam Bilander, Dhanya Nair, Osman Osman, Craig Barry, Luping Chen, Louise Yaxley, Laurence Angwin, Yulay Perez, Kevin Shi

Report to the community 2025/26

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Community Needs Analysis

In early 2026, NWMNC completed its most comprehensive Community Needs Analysis: 332 residents and stakeholders contributed through surveys, interviews, focus groups and meetings, supported by two multilingual Community Outreach Workers who ensured Arabic and Mandarin-speaking residents could have their say.

The findings showed severe cost-of-living pressure, food insecurity, housing instability, homelessness, trauma, discrimination and disconnection from services, especially among people affected by public housing redevelopment.

The analysis also confirmed community resilience and NWMNC’s trusted role, reflected in 707 unique program participants and 220 dedicated volunteers.

Its findings shaped the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, ensuring future programs are directed to people experiencing the greatest poverty, hardship and exclusion and are grounded in evidenced community need.

Men Out of the Margins

Men Out of the Margins targeted local men affected by homelessness, incarceration and social isolation, providing direct benevolent relief from poverty, distress and exclusion.

In the 18 months to June 2026, 106 men participated. The core 11-week life skills program run in transitional housing involved 54 men, with 28 completing all sessions, covering job readiness, identity, self-care, digital literacy, money management, belonging and volunteering.

A further 36 socially isolated men attended 34 fortnightly Men’s Afternoon Teas, while 18 men joined specialised digital and financial literacy courses.

The program also launched Chat Man Friday, with 30 podcast episodes sharing local men’s experiences of both poverty and resilience, and expert insights on isolation, homelessness, alcohol and drug addiction.

Reported positive outcomes were 92% for social inclusion, 83% for life skills, 81% for self-appreciation and 73% for autonomy.

NWMNC thanks the Federal Department of Social Services and partners including Ozanam House and Elizabeth Street Common Ground.

International Student Food Relief Program

A 2025 survey of more than 100 international students found more than 90% had run out of food at least once in the previous six months. Students reported ongoing financial strain and limited access to fresh, affordable food. In response, NWMNC and Wholefoods Unwrapped Collective created a weekly food relief program from March 2026.

The program has provided fresh food and staples to more than 50 young people, offering choice from more than 400 items. Packaging-free delivery supports reuse and a circular economy. Victorian Government community food security funding supports the program until at least October.

Open Access, Support and Referrals

NWMNC welcomes anyone seeking help, while prioritising people experiencing homelessness, poverty, distress and isolation. We provide material aid, referrals, advocacy, a supportive environment and practical pathways toward safety, connection and independence.



NWMNC’s Food Relief Program provides international students with fresh food and everyday essentials



International students and older locals connect through NWMNC’s Being a Melburnian program

Being a Melburnian

Being a Melburnian connects international students and older locals through conversation, cultural sharing and community activity, helping students practise English and build belonging while giving seniors meaningful social connection.

The 2025 pilot, funded by a University of Melbourne Student Services and Amenities Fee grant, involved 42 international students and 28 seniors across six sessions and community activities. A City of Melbourne Social Investment Partnerships grant now supports the program from July 2026 to June 2028. The program attracted coverage in The Age and on Channel 7.

Volunteering at NWMNC

NWMNC’s 200-odd volunteers amplify our benevolent purpose and extend practical support to disadvantaged community members.

The volunteer coordinator strengthened the induction process, covering NWMNC’s history, key activities, opportunities and policies. Volunteers sign agreements with role descriptions.

More than 80 volunteers attended our National Volunteers Week event at Sokol Melbourne, in May. This event was full of energy, smiles and discussions, cementing a long-lasting positivity between NWMNC and its volunteers. The event was a small gesture of gratitude to those volunteers who had given their skills, care and time to the North and West Melbourne community.

For many, volunteering is also a pathway to employment, confidence and career development. We are constantly delighted to hear the stories of our successful former (and current) volunteers.

ESCG Warriors

At Elizabeth Street Common Ground (ESCG), NWMNC delivered three 11-week life skills programs for 19 men. Ten completed the program and reported major gains in life skills, social inclusion, self-appreciation and autonomy.

Graduates developed high self-esteem, a can-do attitude, and a deep sense of community. With support from the ESCG wellbeing officer, graduates continued meeting, organising events and excursions, linking with services, holding a Christmas ceremony and karaoke nights.

The group, now called ESCG Warriors, is discussing incorporation.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES



The Home Away From Homework Club provides tailored learning support for students from Grade 3 to Year 9

Home Away From Homework Club

NWMNC ran three weekly 90-minute homework clubs during school terms, providing relaxed, tailored learning support for Grade 3 to Year 9 students needing assistance to reach literacy, numeracy and social benchmarks.

Public housing redevelopment affected the clubs. The North Melbourne Language & Learning club at the largely vacant Alfred Street tower relocated, with Australian Muslim Social Services Agency hosting it for most of the year.

Student attendance also fell as families were relocated across Melbourne; 28 students remained in regular attendance at the end of term two.

Three paid tutors are supported by 14 trained volunteer tutors. Child Safety and Wellbeing was a key focus this year. We are grateful for our skilled and passionate volunteers, who can offer French, German and Mandarin assistance.

Highlights included visits from Fire Rescue Victoria’s West Melbourne branch and the Victoria Police Liaison unit.

The clubs recognised Lunar New Year, Eid,

Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day and Christmas through guest artist activities.

NWMNC thanks Australian Communities Foundation, CMY, Colliers Charitable Trust, Melbourne Airport Fund and North Melbourne Language & Learning for supporting the clubs.

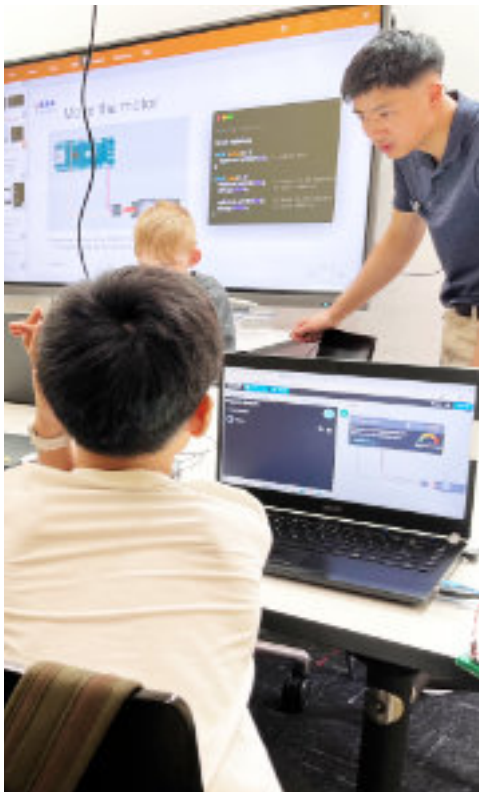
Other Kids Programs

Children’s programs provided affordable learning, creativity and participation opportunities for families facing financial or other barriers.

Low-cost coding, robotics and book illustration programs built digital, STEM, problem-solving and creative skills, while free movie and popcorn and origami activities supported low-income families.

An affordable Podcasting Course helped children use equipment and work together on a podcast pilot.

Rainbow Art recorded 68 enrolments, giving local children space to explore art and develop their creativity.



NWMNC’s robotics classes give kids an affordable way to build STEM and problem-solving skills

Report to the community 2025/26

EDUCATION, SKILLS AND PATHWAYS

Adult community and further education

NWMNC provides courses for disadvantaged adult learners taking next steps in employment and education.

The long-standing Workout program, originally designed to get prisoners returning to society ready for work, became a key part of Men Out of the Margins, helping men in transitional housing recognise their worth to themselves, the community and potential employers.

Our River Nile Learning Centre partnership flourished. Digital tutor Anastasia Beasley supported migrant, refugee and asylum seeker women with essential digital skills, then expanded tuition to English as an additional language and financial literacy.

Digital literacy programs in Errol Street continued supporting seniors, returning prisoners and others with computer and phone skills. A new Artificial Intelligence course helped residents navigate the emerging field.

Other successful courses included digital and communication skills for volunteers, event management, introduction to journalism with former ABC journalist and News editor Louise Yaxley, and podcasting with Afghani media personality and Chat Man Friday presenter/producer Sayed Maqsoodi.

More learning opportunities

Language, cultural and wellbeing programs supported inclusion, connection and belonging through accessible local

participation. French and Spanish classes maintained steady enrolments, offering conversation-based language learning. Career Clarity workshops gave practical support to people experiencing job loss or entering or re-entering the workforce, helping identify skills, interests and employment pathways. The long-standing pilates program had a strong year, with Brazilian-trained physiotherapist Fernanda Cury supporting people of varied abilities to improve physical and mental wellbeing. New free and low-cost activities – including Sea Shanty Sing-Alongs, Craft Circle, Dungeons & Dragons and Painting on Canvas – created shared learning and social connection. Mandarin Afternoon Tea maintained cultural connection and reduced social isolation for Mandarin speakers.

Container Deposit Scheme

The Container Deposit Scheme doubled bin capacity and, with VISY, collected more than 100,000 plastic, aluminium, glass and paperboard containers into clean recycling streams. The 10-cent refunds provide practical poverty relief for members of our community, while handling fees support NWMNC's charitable activities.



Osman Osman and Ian Woodruff record an episode of Chat Man Friday



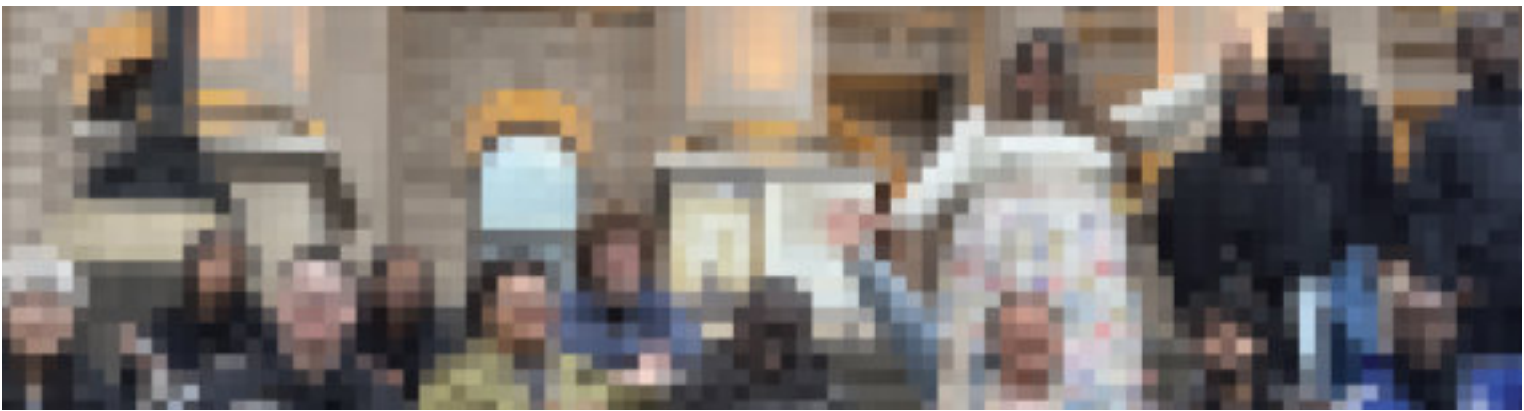
Weekly yoga classes support physical wellbeing and intergenerational connections



Viva La Senior gets a taste of the good life on a truffle farm excursion



News Editor Louise Yaxley accepts the Best Newspaper award



Young leaders from The Drum and The Huddle visit Parliament House as part of the Civic Partnership Project

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Connection, culture and civic voice

This year created new ways for community members to connect, learn and be heard. The fortnightly Walk the Talk group, established in November 2025, builds fitness and friendship.

With Yarn Strong Sista, four Aboriginal Cultural Connection workshops welcomed 56 community members, including international students, and NWMNC staff and volunteers, to learn through truth-telling, storytelling, song and art, building genuine respect for Aboriginal culture and history.

Wellness Across Ages involved 109 seniors and international students through weekly free yoga, Chinese tea tastings and four regional bus trips, reducing isolation, easing cost-of-living barriers and strengthening cross-cultural understanding.

Neighbourhood House Week 2026 attracted new interest through free program trials, including a popular Introduction to Acting workshop.

Thirteen young leaders from The Drum's Youth Engage Committee and The Huddle's Somali Youth Group joined the Civic Partnership Project, gaining a genuine seat at the table in Victoria's democracy. This included touring Parliament House, watching Question Time and delivering Member Statements to

Greens MP Anasina Gray-Barberio - for many, it was the first time they felt truly heard.

Viva La Seniors

Viva La Seniors provides affordable activities that reduce distressing isolation. Twice-weekly Older Adults Exercise classes support physical activity, wellbeing and local connection.

Centre Adventures offers low-cost day trips. Highlights included a truffle farm visit, Werribee Open Range Zoo, Cape Schanck Lighthouse, Phillip Island, Ararat and Wonthaggi, with a larger bus enabling more participation.

Monthly Seniors Morning Tea provides regular friendship, connection and belonging over refreshments, helping reduce social isolation.

North & West Melbourne News

The quarterly North & West Melbourne News connects and informs this diverse community.

The paper was joint winner of both Best Newspaper and Best Editorial Comment and a finalist for Best Design and Layout at the Community Newspaper Association of Victoria Awards.

A growing team of writers from varied backgrounds and ages helps reflect the community, remove barriers to storytelling

and amplify voices often unheard. Mentoring and training is offered to new writers. Graduates of NWMNC's introduction to journalism course have also become enthusiastic writers.

The inclusive approach has drawn strong positive feedback from people who rely on the paper for accurate local information.

We farewelled editor Liam Heitmann-Ryce-Le Mercier and welcomed Louise Yaxley, with Swagata Majumdar as deputy editor. Thanks to Tom Linkins for production with Anne Burgi, Tim Cremean for distribution and Janet Graham for advertising.

SingNoW! community choir

NWMNC's long-standing intergenerational community choir flourished under the leadership of Susie Kelly, performing at Queensberry Cup and the 50th anniversary gala dinner.

During National Reconciliation Week, Sing NoW! performed Beds Are Burning, leading to an ABC Radio Melbourne performance. The year ended spectacularly with a Global Beatles Day flashmob of 'All You Need is Love' outside the State Library with Bob Murphy, attracting millions of social media views.

Report to the community 2025/26

COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

NWMNC’s community celebrations provide tangible benefit to people experiencing isolation and distress, creating purpose, cultural affirmation and connection for participants, whilst also providing joy and connection for the broader community.

Queensberry Cup

Queensberry Cup is a free bilycart race and community festival that helps residents, families and community groups meet, participate and feel more connected to their neighbourhood.

The fourth Queensberry Cup, held on 18 October 2025, attracted more than 13,000 people, up from 10,000 in 2024. Forty entrants raced unpowered bilycars of all shapes and sizes down Errol Street, with participants raising funds for NWMNC charitable programs, including food relief.

The event intentionally involved different community groups: men who had experienced homelessness built and raced a bilycart, international students volunteered and ran activities, and Chinese locals shared their culture through a Giant Mahjong game and traditional calligraphy.

More than 50 volunteers, local businesses and community organisations contributed skills and energy, while music, dance, the dog show and activities created a lively, inclusive atmosphere.

A key strength is participation: people from different backgrounds and circumstances contribute and connect, fostering belonging.

Eid Festival

Eid al-Fitr celebrates the end of Ramadan for Muslims around the world. NWMNC worked with YMCA and dedicated volunteers from six ethno-specific community groups to present the Public Housing Multicultural Eid Festival at Buncle Street Reserve and North Melbourne Community Centre on 29 March 2026.

The event supported Islamic community connection during distressing dislocation

caused by the public housing redevelopment.

About 1,600 people attended cultural and sporting activities hosted by local community services. NWMNC’s Homework Club ran Eid craft and a Kahoot! quiz, while an animal petting zoo, free BBQ and rides provided joy and relief from poverty.

50th Anniversary Gala

NWMNC marked its 50th anniversary with a Gala Dinner on Thursday 12 March, bringing together more than 180 community members to recognise five decades of service to North and West Melbourne.

The evening reflected the NWMNC’s broad community impact, with presentations on street festivals, the North & West Melbourne News and the Homework Club.

Performances by Sing NoW! Community Choir and pianist Warren Wills, with Richard Piper as MC, created a strong celebration of the NWMNC’s history and community connections.

A highlight was the presentation of Honorary Life Membership to Kay Oke, recognising her longstanding contribution. Kay joins Lorna Hannon and Bill Liddy as Life Members of the NWMNC.

A 16-page anniversary booklet was also produced, documenting NWMNC’s history over the past 50 years. It is available from the Errol Street Neighbourhood Centre and on our website.

Anzac Day

With the Australian Legion of Returned Servicemen and Women, NWMNC presented a local Anzac Day ceremony at the West Melbourne Cenotaph. Jennifer Kanis spoke on women affected by war, tracing her family’s journey from Italy to Australia. The new flagpole operated smoothly.



Life Members Bill Liddy, Lorna Hannan and Kay Oke celebrate 50 years of NWMNC at the March gala



Around 1,600 people came together to celebrate Eid al-Fitr at Buncle Street Reserve

TREASURER’S REPORT

The year ending 30 June 2026 was another milestone for NWMNC, highlighted by 24% growth as the organisation celebrates its 50th anniversary. Total income increased by just over \$191,000, to more than \$996,500, following 2.5% growth last year.

- Several key factors drove this growth:
- Core funding: Rose by \$9,300 via inflation adjustments from the City of Melbourne and the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (DFFH).
 - Men Out of the Margins: Secured a \$19,336 increase for the program’s final year, backed by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.
 - New programs and grants: DFFH further funded \$34,800 for an international student food program and we secured \$40,000 across two grants for Homework Clubs.
 - Community events: Raised an extra \$7,800 through course fees and the 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner.

Delivering these expanded services required extra resources. NWMNC’s direct program expenditure grew by about \$108,000 to \$423,525. Staffing costs also grew by \$72,717 to ensure enough team members were on hand to run the new activities. Administration, occupancy and other expenses increased by just under \$10,000, to match our busier activity.

NWMNC reported a modest surplus of \$1,047, broadly consistent with recent

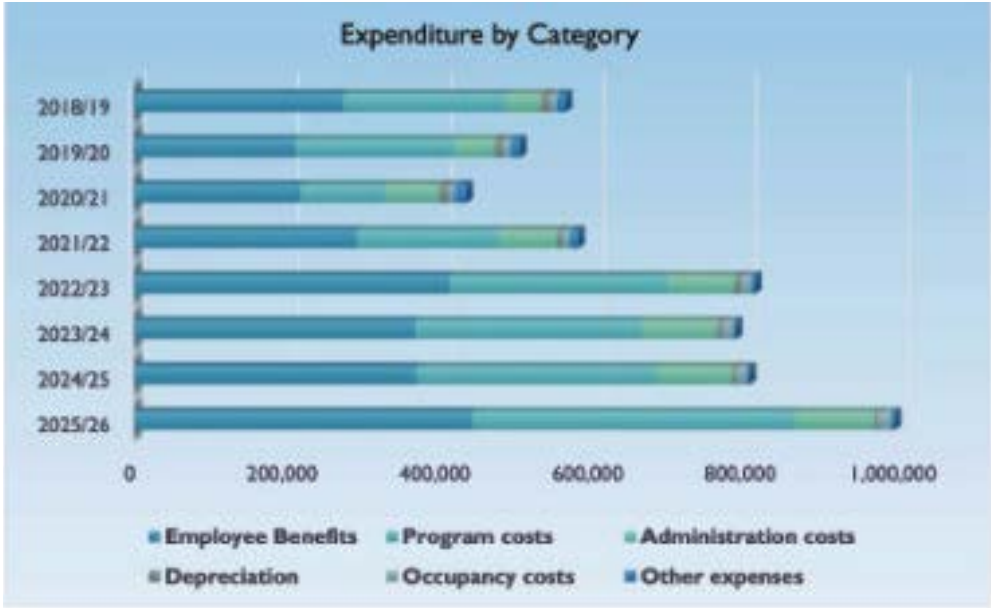
surpluses of \$81 in 2024/25 and \$788 in 2023/24. This was a good result given inflationary pressure and significantly increased activity.

NWMNC remains financially sound, with net assets of \$102,096. With cash and liquid assets above \$311,000, and liabilities of \$233,950, (including \$149,500 in grants and income received in advance), the organisation has no solvency issues and continues as a going concern. Audited financial statements will be available on the website after presentation at the Annual General Meeting.

My thanks to the Chair and the Board for their diligent financial oversight, and to CFO Craig Barry and Director Ariel Valent for their exemplary financial management throughout the year.

– Leah Huynh. Treasurer

Summary Financial Data								
	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income	996,511	805,426	788,362	725,766	602,475	486,359	556,079	518,988
Expenditure	995,464	805,345	787,574	812,742	581,274	434,165	504,317	564,688
Surplus /(Deficit)	1,047	81	788	(86,976)	21,201	52,194	51,762	(45,700)
Assets	336,047	218,291	219,162	254,984	331,647	309,350	205,938	157,640
Liabilities	233,951	117,243	118,195	154,804	144,491	143,395	92,177	95,641
Net Assets / Equity	102,096	101,048	100,967	100,180	187,156	165,955	113,761	61,999



Courses & Activities (September to December 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.



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 22 September, 6 & 20 October, 17 November, 1 & 15 December
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 9.15 am – 10.15 am
(No sessions 23 & 30 September)
Thursdays 5.30 pm – 6.30 pm
(No sessions 24 September, 1 October)
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 – 12.50 pm
21 October – 9 December
Estuary Yoga Studio, 754 Queensberry Street, North 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
(No sessions 3 November)
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

Timetable: Pilates and Yoga classes operate on the school term timetable. Term 3 finishes on Thursday 17 September. Term 4 commences on Tuesday 6 October
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.

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 sessions 24 September, 1 October)
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.

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. Craft Circle will also feature Stitching Stories sessions with crochet artist Haoran Zhang to create a community tapestry for our Neighbourhood Centre.

Thursdays 10.30 am – 12 noon, weekly
(No sessions 24 September, 1 October)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE (bookings essential)
Morning tea included.

Beginners' Mandarin - NEW

Discover Mandarin Chinese in a relaxed and supportive environment. Class A focuses on speaking and listening, while Class B focuses on reading and writing. Over ten weeks, you will be introduced to some useful everyday words and expressions, practise basic pronunciation and/or Chinese characters, and enjoy learning about Chinese culture along the way.

Mondays
Starting 5 October for 10 weeks
3 pm – 4 pm: Speaking & Listening
4 pm – 5 pm: Reading & Writing
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$17.50 (\$12.50 concession) per class when booking for the term. Casual enrolments \$25 per session (\$18 concession) if available. Do both classes and get 50% off the second class.

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.

Mondays 5.15 pm – 6.15 pm starting 5 October for 11 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 9 October 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.

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 27 October – Daylesford (Convent Gallery)
Tuesday 24 November – Mt Macedon (Forest Glade Gardens)
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 sessions 21 & 28 September)
West Melbourne Baptist Community Centre
4 Miller Street, West Melbourne
Wednesdays 10.30 am – 11.30 am
(No sessions 23 & 30 September)
Quaker Centre, 484 William Street, West Melbourne
Cost: \$21 (\$15.50 concession) per session when booking for the whole term. Casual enrolments \$28 per session (\$22 concession), if available.

Also see Seniors Morning Tea in Community Gatherings



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 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.

Commences February 2027

Introduction to Journalism

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

Tuesdays 6.15 pm – 9 pm
24 & 31 October 7 & 14 November (4 weeks)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street North Melbourne
Cost: \$60 (\$45 concession)

Demystifying AI

Do you hear everyone talking about AI but don't really understand it? Artificial Intelligence is purported to be the most important technological advancement since the internet. But what does this mean in our everyday lives? How can we use it productively and responsibly? And should we be worried? With Anastasia Beasley.

Tuesday 13 October
6 pm – 8 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE – donations welcome

For Kids and Young People

Rainbow Art Class

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

Tuesdays 4 pm to 5 pm
(No session 3 November)
\$12 (\$10 concession) when booking for term
(\$15 casual if available)

Home Away from Homework Club

Friendly and inclusive, students come to complete their homework (or our extra material) with the assistance of tutors. There are also games, and a nutritious snack and drink provided. For children in Years 4 to Year 9.

Wednesdays 3.30 pm – 5 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol St, North Melbourne (Grades 4 to 6)
Hotham Room, North Melbourne Library, 66 Errol Street, North Melbourne (Years 7 to 9)
Wednesdays 4 pm – 5.30 pm
North Melbourne Language and Learning, 178 Macauley Road, North Melbourne (Years 4 to 8)
FREE (Bookings essential)



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



School Holiday Programs

Mahjong for Beginners

Come along and learn how to play Mahjong in a relaxed and friendly setting. No previous experience is needed, and you can join us for one or both sessions. For ages 10+

Mondays 21 & 28 September, 10.30 am – 12 noon
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
\$5 per session

Mystic 8-Ball: Coding Workshop

A modern spin on the classic Magic 8-Ball. Students build their own interactive fortune teller using an Arduino and OLED screen, then customise the responses to make it their own. Along the way, students will also learn basic coding skills. Presented by EBK Academy. Suitable for ages 11+

Tuesday & Wednesday, 29 & 30 September, 10 am to 2.30 pm
(with 30-minute lunch break)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$150 (\$130 concession)

Tote Bag Painting

Come along for a relaxed tote bag painting session where kids and adults can paint their own tote bag. Suitable for children of any age. All materials are provided. Children under 7 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Wednesday 23 September, 11.00 am – 12.30 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$12 (\$10 concession) per participant. Parents/guardians accompanying children under 7 attend free.

Robotic Arm: Robotics Workshop

Students build their own hydraulic robotic arm while learning how robotics and simple engineering works. This hands-on session is a great way to try something new and have fun creating. Presented by EBK Academy. Suitable for ages 11+

Thursday, 24 September, 10 am – 1.15 pm (with a 15-minute snack break)
58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$100 (\$80 Concession)

The Beading Lab

Join Miriam to learn the art of beading and create your own necklaces and bracelets. Express yourself through wearable art and even create gifts for those special to you. Includes morning tea. Suits age 8 – 15.

Tuesday 22 September, 10.30 am – 12 noon (with 15-minute snack break)
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Cost: \$5 per participant

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
(6 October, 1 December)
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 (17 September, 8 & 22 October, 5 & 19 November, 3 & 17 December)
(No sessions 24 September, 1 October)
2 pm – 3.30 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE



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 (9 & 23 October, 6 & 20 November, 4 December)
2 pm – 3 pm
NWMNC, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne
FREE



欢迎加入普通话交流小组，一边享用下午茶，一边结识新朋友。我们将提供茶和简单茶点。活动由普通话工作人员带领。

每两周一次，星期五
10月9日、23日
11月6日、20日
12月4日
下午2点至3点

58 Errol Street, North Melbourne

免费参加，需提前预约。

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.

What’s around the corner for Queensberry and Errol

You can tell a lot about a neighbourhood from its prominent intersections. The way a corner changes over time reveals a great deal about a community’s changing priorities.

“I’m just going up to the corner” was a familiar refrain in my house growing up. It took about five minutes to walk to the small strip of shops wedged in next to the milk bar that sat proudly on the corner. After 15 or 20 minutes, they’d be back with bread, milk and other essentials.

The intersection I now frequent more than any other is the corner of Queensberry Street and Errol Street.

In recent months, there has been quite a lot of change. And more is around the corner (so to speak).

The most historic corner is the south-east, home to North Melbourne Town Hall, now known as Arts House. It was built in 1876 and 150 years later, its clock tower can still be seen from miles around. Recently, a few lucky souls got to climb up inside the clock

FROM THE CENTRE DIRECTOR

Ariel Valent



tower at the Winter Solstice event (see page 11).

The post office is still well used and is the only hope for anyone wanting to do any banking in person. There are now no banks in North Melbourne; the last – the Commonwealth – closed its doors in 2024. (The next closest bank, at the Peter MacCallum hospital, also closed in the past few months.)

Anyone frequenting the post office portico overnight would know that this is also a residential address. The

accommodation is accessed by just laying down a mattress or a few sheets of cardboard. These residents hope that it doesn’t get too cold, too wet and that no-one takes their valuable possessions while they sleep.

Cross the tram tracks and you come to an empty shopfront that was a 7-Eleven until earlier this year. It seemed to me that such a shop would always thrive, so I was shocked to learn that it would be closing. There’s no indication what kind of business will appear

there next, with the property still for lease at the time of writing.

The side wall facing Queensberry Street has been controversial of late, due to the unannounced removal of a much loved artwork (see page 2).

Cross Queensberry Street and you’re in front of an imposing building that was the local National Australia Bank branch, and then stood empty for several years. A site of such prominence was under-utilised as storage, but now new life has been breathed into the building with ACE Antiques opening a second store. The newest of our local businesses sells goods that come from an era when “pay with your phone” was simply nonsensical. Read more on page 4.

Walk across Errol Street again and The Courthouse Hotel is doing a brisk trade both inside and on the footpath. This is a brilliant example of how a local business can succeed and in doing so give the whole precinct a boost. This building has a bit of a boom and bust history; it’s telling to

remember that the building sat shuttered for years before its 2023 rejuvenation.

City of Melbourne has given the go-ahead for the road closure and greening of the Errol Street block north of Queensberry St. There’s no timeline yet about when this transformation will occur, but detailed design is in process.

At this time of year, I can sometimes be seen dodging cars and measuring out lines on the ground in preparation for Queensberry Cup. It’s the one day of the year where (most of) the intersection is closed to traffic and the community comes out to celebrate everything that is good about North and West Melbourne.

You might not be able to get bread or milk on our iconic North Melbourne corner any more, but I hope you can join us on Saturday 17 October for a sausage in bread from the Rotary grill or a refreshing drop from one of the festival bars.



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See page 24
for details





Scan this QR code to book your tickets to Ordinary Heroes.



Practice makes Ordinary Heroes perfect

Miriam Bilander

North Melbourne is putting on a big show! Led by world renowned Director, Warren Wills, ‘Ordinary Heroes’ is a socially inclusive musical theatre production bringing together Melburnians from all walks of life – including people living with vision loss, members of the Chinese community, kindergarten children, alongside individuals who have experienced homelessness and mental health challenges. Devised entirely by participants, the show celebrates connection, courage and community.

Catch the 2 pm or 4 pm performance on Sunday 25 October at the Lithuanian Club on Errol Street. Scan the QR code on the left to book your tickets and support local community theatre. Thanks to Melbourne City Council for their support.

Miriam Bilander is Community Development Coordinator at NWMNC.



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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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Publisher: Ariel Valent
Circulation: 8,000
Printed by Express Print
5 Jones Road, Morwell 3844



Spot the Difference (page 4) answers



The Home Away From Homework Club

The three homework clubs run by the North Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre have vacancies for term 4. Parents and students are encouraged to join now and be prepared for the 2027 academic year.
The clubs are free and have qualified teachers and tutors who can give bespoke tutoring. Homework Club coordinator Laurence Angwin says the clubs cater for students from year 4 to 9 and all are welcome.
“The clubs are friendly, safe and creative and there is always plenty of food for students to enjoy,” Laurence said.
Want to know more?
Contact us on 93281126 or admin@centre.org.au

River Nile seeks new location

River Nile Learning Centre (RNLC), a not-for-profit supporting women from refugee, asylum seeker, and migrant backgrounds, has been given notice to vacate their current premises in Capel Street, North Melbourne, by the end of 2026. Many of the women supported by RNLC are on visas that don't give them the right to work or study elsewhere. For them, RNLC is often the only place they can go to learn English, connect with others, and access support. Without a physical space, many of these women will have nowhere else to turn and will be left isolated.
As a small charity running entirely on grants and donations, securing a space RNLC can genuinely afford is a real challenge. General Manager Yi Fan hopes to find a property partner, whether that's a donated space, a below-market lease, or ongoing sponsorship support, to help us keep the doors open.
River Nile Learning Centre is looking for 200–250m² in Melbourne's inner city (or inner north/west as a second preference), with at least two classrooms, office space, and room for the Foodbank pantry. If you can help or know someone who can, please contact Yi Fan on 0493 363 052 or yi@rnlc.org.au

Share your story of Abbotsford Street

Anyone with memories, old photos or stories of Abbotsford Street is encouraged to share them for a community history book aimed at capturing the untold stories of one of North and West Melbourne's most unique streets.
All voices from Abbotsford St matter – preserve the stories for each other, and for future generations. Everyone with a story is welcome.
Submissions close soon and there will be a free local history book launch early next year.
Contact: Stephen Hatcher, email stephenahatcher@hotmail.com

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

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

Sunday night laughs at Club Voltaire

Come along to Sunday Night Comedy where, each week, Club Voltaire showcases a fresh lineup of some of Melbourne's best stand-up comedians. Enjoy jokes from comics of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Australia Raw Comedy Finals alongside interstate acts, local legends and future stars of comedy.
Every Sunday night for only \$10
7 pm to 9 pm
14 Raglan Street, North Melbourne



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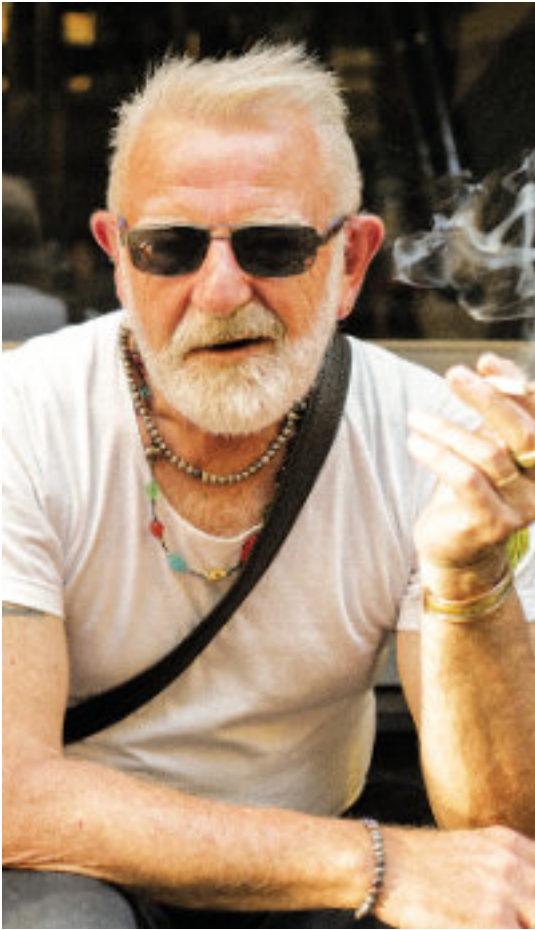
Did you know North Melbourne Library now offers a recycle bin for you to drop off your old mobile phones, batteries, cables, chargers, game controllers, tablets, laptops, flash drives and hard drives?

WHAT A GREAT SERVICE!
North Melbourne Library
66 Errol Street

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



Around the hood in 80 ways

Patrick Derecho

Whether it's by tram, train, bike or something with a few more years on the odometer, getting from A to B looks different for everyone in North and West Melbourne. This spring, I captured locals on the move along with their favoured modes of transport. For some locals, however, four legs and a leash do just fine.

Want to know more?
You can see more of Pat's photography on Instagram [@patderch](#)

