

## The gift of a very Australian Christmas

Mural artist George Rose has brought a touch of Christmas cheer to North Melbourne.

The mural of giant Christmas Beetles covers the Queensberry Street wall of the 7/11 at the corner of Errol Street.

The City of Melbourne commissioned the work as part of the precinct's Christmas decorations.

George was asked to relate Christmas to Australia – so don't go looking for sleighs dashing through the snow. She was also asked to design a mural that is inclusive of all Australians, regardless of cultural or religious traditions.



## News stars at community newspaper awards

The work of the volunteers who produce the *North & West Melbourne News* has been recognised with five awards in the Community Newspapers Association (CNAV) recent statewide awards.

**Best newspaper:** Finalist.

**Best design and layout:** Winner.

**Best community content:** Finalist.

**Best history article:** Special Mention for 'Pandemic brings back memories of polio' by Laura Misale.

**Best feature article:** Special Mention for 'A journey into the past for adoptee' by Tilly Gwinner.

# Passengers on track with Kaylee on the No. 57 tram

Laura Misale

Locals all know the squeal of the number 57 tram as it turns from Victoria Street into Errol Street.

Kaylee Fisher pilots the Z3 class trams that ply the 11.6 km route from the city to West Maribyrnong. She has been based at the Essendon depot for a year and a half, after a long stint working from Preston depot.

With a degree in civil engineering Kaylee – a self-confessed Melbourne tragic – has an obvious passion for her job. "I love that I'm part of this big machine that keeps the city going," she says.

Kaylee is "a professional people watcher" and happily shares her stories.

"Yesterday I heard a little girl singing *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*. So full of beans but right off key and she only knew half the words, and her mum was tearing her hair out. I was giggling and everyone loved it," she laughs.

A few weeks ago, she stopped the tram at Melbourne Showgrounds where Essendon fans piled on after the club's community day. "They were all in red-and-black, cheerfully singing the Bombers' club song, and one person had it playing on their phone," she says.

She keeps a close lookout for her regulars.

"There's this one lady who always waves down the tram when she sees people with shopping bags. She doesn't want the tram but she'll wave it down for them. She's very community minded."

Kaylee has seen it all, from people moving house with their office chairs in tow, to young guide dogs on their daily training. "I've also heard of pet rats sitting on shoulders, but I'm yet to see them," she says.

Kaylee also drives the number 58 tram to West Coburg and she says lucky passengers can get a glimpse of the elephants at the zoo.

"As we head north, they need to look out the right-hand window. If



Local route 57 tram driver Kaylee Fisher. Photograph: Ginny Hollands

the elephants are about, we might see them – or at least smell them," she laughs.

Other views from Kaylee's cabin make her day memorable.

"One highlight on route 57, as we come into the city and turn the corner into Elizabeth Street, is that

on a clear day we can see all the way down to Flinders Street station."

This city vista was even more dramatic with the lack of traffic during the long lockdown. However, Kaylee is glad to see passengers back on the network.

"I'm relieved to see people doing

things again. The city was a ghost town and it was a bit sad."

For someone who spends her day trundling down our local streets, Kaylee's imagination ranges widely. She dreams of participating in the annual Tram-Driver Olympics in Europe. This unlikely competition includes the likes of tram bowling with huge foam balls and precision stopping.

"There is an event where you drive a tram to the next stop, nail the landing to the centimetre, get out of that tram, get in the next, and then do it again, like a relay race. Actually, that's what we do every day, while also providing a smooth ride. It's an art," she says.

Next time you're catching the 57 tram, be sure to wave it down on approach. Or, if it's night-time, use your phone to flag the driver down, then give a wave as you leave.

"A wave, a thank you, it makes our day," Kaylee smiles.

Laura Misale writes regularly for the News.





Hospital volunteer Macca joins young patients at a birthday party.

## Long-time local 'Macca' loved his footy and races

Laura Misale

Passers-by recently noticed an intriguing 'Vale Macca' notice in the front window of Tom Shearer's home at the corner of Arden and Errol streets.

Who was the mysterious Macca? And why did Tom, who admits he knew him only in passing, feel the urge to recognise his life in this novel way?

Tom reveals that he had written it simply to recognise the passing of Graham McKenzie, a local identity always known simply as 'Macca'. "He lived just across the road from me, in the

Limerick Castle hotel," Tom says.

It is clear that Macca's life revolved around the Limerick Castle, and the pub's owner, Bernie Sheehy, helps join some of the dots. "Macca lived here for 15 years with about a dozen other single blokes. Some worked, others were on the pension."

Tom, not a drinker himself, says Macca would spend quiet afternoons sipping a beer in the bar. "For the last five years, I'd run into him along Errol Street. We worked out that we were pretty much neighbours and we'd always stop for a chat about footy or the races," he says.

"I think that was pretty much Macca's life. He'd head up to Errol Street four or six times each day, visiting the shops or going to lay a bet at the TAB down on the Victoria Street corner."

Macca was a Kangaroos fanatic and had been a trainer when North played home games at Arden Street. "He must have finished about 1980, just a couple of years before I started as a trainer at the club," local Jim Knight says.

Bernie Sheehy fills in the gaps on Macca's interest in football. "He was keen on local footy and he also had a close friendship with triple Brownlow medallist Bob Skilton. Macca volunteered at the Royal Children's where Bob had an ambassador role," he explains.

Bernie recalls how Macca had surprisingly different allegiances. "He had a lot of union mates from the old CFMEU, and they often came into the pub. And he was also a keen Catholic who often told me, 'I've been into St Francis today,'" he says.

One of Macca's endearing habits was to refer to himself in the third person. Tom says their chats would end when he was told, "Macca has to go now". In fact, Tom only learnt his full name when Macca referred to himself as Graham McKenzie.

It is fitting that Tom, who thought enough of his casual mate to put the 'Vale' notice in his own window, has the last word. "Macca was a very humble man, genial and affable. He'll be remembered."

Laura Misale writes regularly for the News.



The 'Vale Macca' notice posted in Tom Shearer's front window.

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# Rotary steps up to end polio

Neville Page

North Melbourne Rotary made good use of the long lockdown period. While we couldn't hold our regular weekly meetings at the Mercure Hotel, we managed to keep up our normal schedule by Zoom.

We were lucky to have a dozen impressive speakers, who covered many absorbing topics ranging from black lives in custody and charities in Vanuatu to the use of drones in private investigations. We even heard about that most mystifying of topics – how the US electoral college works.

Local legend Lorna Hannan gave a fascinating talk on the origin of the names of many local streets and buildings. Lorna brought the history of North Melbourne to life by touching on the unique individuals behind the names as she outlined what they had done to be named on local streets and landmarks.

Another speaker was Kitty O'Conner who explained how COVID-19 had forced the cancellation of the Rotary District's annual October walk around Albert Park Lake. The event, which raises funds to end polio, had to be replaced by a month-long competition where individuals and teams could register their distance



Local Rotarian Ted Dziadkiewicz and daughter Nicola raising money to end polio.

walked and call for sponsors. The result was that the \$15,000 usually raised on the day was exceeded by the \$100,000 raised in the month of sponsored walking. The North Melbourne Rotary Club alone raised more than \$3,600. All amounts raised were matched by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Our club's biggest fund-raiser for the event was stalwart member Ted Dziadkiewicz who received great support from his friends and clients at Contours Travel.

During lockdown, North Melbourne Rotary took on the task of running, via Zoom, this year's Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA) on behalf of Rotary District 9800. MUNA is an international Rotary youth program in which senior secondary

students represent countries of the United Nations at a simulated UN Assembly.

MUNA has been held in Rotary districts around Australia since 1980. It provides a forum for students to develop and practise public speaking skills while debating topical world issues. The first-placed team in our district is invited to compete at the Australian National MUNA at Canberra's Old Parliament House.

Neville Page is president of North Melbourne Rotary.

**Want to know more?**  
If you're keen to hear any of the Rotary speakers, log on to [rotarynorthmelbourne.org.au](http://rotarynorthmelbourne.org.au) and click on the calendar link. Contact Neville Page on 0414673611 or [page@ghp.biz](mailto:page@ghp.biz) for the Zoom link.

# It's pens down for Mary, Hotham History scribe

Felicity Jack

Mary Kehoe is well known to many residents and friends of North Melbourne. She has been active in the community for more than 40 years and was at one time a committee member of what is now The Centre.



In 1995, Mary was one of the founding members of the Hotham History Project, whose aim is to research and promote the history of North and West Melbourne. She has been secretary since 2001 and has recently decided that now is the time to stand down.

In 2015, Mary was presented with an award of merit by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. She has always been eager to share her knowledge and willing to answer questions about the area's history and the families who have lived here.

Mary has helped develop and lead walks around local neighbourhoods and to promote aspects of their history. She organised the project's annual general meetings and its stall at the annual Spring Fling.

In all her ventures, she was supported by husband Graham McCallum, and he assumed responsibility for some of the fetching and carrying involved in setting up trestle tables and chairs and other equipment.

One of Mary's most significant contributions was her 1998 history of the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum. The asylum opened in



Mary Kehoe with her husband, Graham McCallum.

1851 to provide accommodation for Melbourne's poor and indigent. In fact, Mary lives on the asylum estate, bounded by Miller, Curzon, Elm and Abbotsford streets.

The building was demolished in 1911 and the site developed into housing. Many people researching their family history have traced their descendants back to a time when they had been residents in the asylum. Mary's book has been reprinted to meet the great demand.

She has been committed to preserving the local area's heritage of the area and has contributed to policy development at both Council and State Government level. She appeared at VCAT hearings and lobbied the Council to preserve buildings of significance.

Mary's commitment and energy as secretary will be missed. Fortunately, she will not be relinquishing her ties with the project and will remain an active committee member.

Felicity Jack is a member of Hotham History Project.

## Community Comment

Harriet Lancaster asked four of her best friends what they are secretly hoping Santa will bring



Shae (22), zoology student, North Melbourne

I really want a soda stream. I hate buying plastic bottles and I know they damage the environment. I want to do my part to save the world's resources.



Tucker (25), politics student, West Melbourne

I want Santa to give me a ticket home to California. I really miss my family as Christmas approaches. I guess I'll just spend the day at the beach.



Banjo (1), Staffie cross, North Melbourne

I'm hoping to get a new fluffy koala toy. I've shredded the last one and chewed its head off. I'd also like to get a cat I can chase down the street.



Malkah (22), data analyst, North Melbourne

I'm keen to get back to Queensland to see my family. I also want to try all the tempting ice cream flavours I see, even though I always go for boring vanilla.



# It's a dog's life for these house guests

Harriet Lancaster

My dream of having a dog came true this year – with not just one, but four! Out of the chaos of COVID-19 sprang a opportunity for my Molesworth Street housemates and me to foster a dog.

Our first two fosters were via Greyhound Safety Net. Tayla, our six-year-old retired racer with a fine winning record, was initially very shy. It took her days to feel comfortable as she'd never lived in a domestic setting. She loved roaching (that's greyhounds lying on their backs) but for some reason hated walking down Errol Street.

The other greyhound, Penny, won the heart of my housemate Shae but never mastered our two flights of stairs. It was hard work carrying a 25 kg dog up and down the stairs three times a day but it was worth it to see her comfy on the couch.

Two Staffordshire crosses were our next guests, both from dog foster group Forever Friends. Our neighbours probably thought our dogs kept changing colour as they were similar breeds but one was black and one brindle.



Tayla relaxes in her favourite roaching pose.

Shadow was a stray from the streets, rescued by Forever Friends. She had never experienced puppy life and we had to teach her how to play. Of all our dogs she was the biggest puller on the lead and she just loved her walkies where her sociable nature made her best friends with every dog she met. We couldn't take her to Royal Park because she got way too excited.

Our last dog is Banjo, who landed on our doorstep a mere 30 minutes after Shadow was adopted out. Another Forever Friends miracle, he would have been put down in the pound had we not taken him in. There were many mysteries about big Banjo. We initially thought he was a three-year-old, only to be told by the vet that he is actually only one. One big puppy!

Banjo took a while to warm to us, as he'd had a difficult time with other humans, but now he is our big baby boy. He loves his walkies and speeds right up as we get closer to Clayton Reserve. Some dogowners are wary of his giant Bullmastiff head, so we reassure them: "Don't worry, he is just excited." He'll soon be heading to Adelaide to his forever home with housemate Shae's parents.

Sending our dogs off to their new forever homes is always bittersweet. We interview applicant families carefully to make sure the dogs are matched with the right household, but we are always so sad to see them go.

All our foster dogs are now happily housed and receiving all



A happy trio – Harriet (left), Staffie cross Banjo and Shae.

the love, care and attention they deserve.

It is so satisfying to know that we have helped our doggie community during COVID-19. Actually, I suspect that they have

helped us even more. But one thing I do know. I can't wait to see Banjo at Christmas wearing his reindeer costume.

Harriet Lancaster is a new contributor to the News.

# Online carol service to share the joy on Christmas Eve



Sound engineer Tim Pilbrow editing the audio tracks.

Richard Hayward

The choir of St Mary's Anglican Church, North Melbourne, led by music director Beverley Phillips, will perform an online carol service this year. Traditional Christmas music will accompany readings from the St Mary's congregation.

The recorded service will be available on Christmas Eve via the St Mary's YouTube channel and Facebook page.

St Mary's also welcomes worshippers to attend services at church each Sunday during Advent at 9.00 am and 11.00 am under the St Mary's COVID Safety Plan published on the church's website ([www.stmarys.org.au](http://www.stmarys.org.au)). The website will give details of Christmas services as they are announced.

During the lockdown, the choir at St Mary's prepared and recorded numerous hymns and anthems.



Members of St Mary's Lockdown Choir.

Each singer recorded their part using a variety of devices, such as smartphones, computers, tablets and digital voice recorders, with the aid of a backing track.

A team of editors compiled each individual voice recording into a combined group

performance, which was then uploaded to YouTube at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCiZQMHTIPmmkRUG7iEPz86w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiZQMHTIPmmkRUG7iEPz86w)

Richard Hayward is the parish administrator at St Mary's Anglican Church, North Melbourne.



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## Get involved through The Centre

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

## Take a walk with a purpose

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

If you are interested, please email [admin@centre.org.au](mailto:admin@centre.org.au)



# Gifting food that feeds both body and the soul

Joey Rebakis

Hotham Mission provides community outreach and support to some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups in North Melbourne and neighbouring suburbs. Our faith-based, non-profit organisation has recently been active in providing food relief to those in need. We have been giving food hampers to vulnerable people in our area, including students, refugees, asylum seekers, the elderly and the homeless. At the Mission, we realise that food relief is not merely about giving people sustenance to keep body and soul together. It is also a mark of respect, and that's why we focus on providing culturally appropriate food. We know that many families we help have parents who were born overseas. We are

sensitive to the fact that giving them Vegemite or Weet-Bix for breakfast might not be what they want or need. The people we assist need more than calories to survive. We seek to tap into their cultural needs and to provide them with appropriate food such as beans and lentils. By listening to what they tell us, we feel we respect their dignity and enhance their self-worth. What we get through food banks does not always meet the pressing need for culturally appropriate food. However, a Feed Appeal grant we received has meant we are more able to source the food that our various cultural groups prefer. Prior to COVID-19, the Mission was distributing 70 food hampers weekly. Under lockdown, this figure doubled as we began to cater for teenagers, many of African background. They often



Above: Hotham Mission's Neysa Charlton prepares food bags for distribution. Right: Neysa fires up the food delivery van as Joey Rebakis looks on.

lacked basic daily sustenance and struggled to stay in touch with their education. Hotham Mission aims to ensure equal access to education for all. We hope that many young people who would otherwise have fallen through the cracks will be able to complete their schooling. The long-term dream is that these young people will eventually

fully engage with society. Not an impossible dream at all.

Joey Rebakis is community development coordinator at Hotham Mission.

**Want to know more?**  
More information on Hotham Mission's work can be found at the website: [hothammission.org.au](http://hothammission.org.au)



# Lorna goes online to perform at Darwin Festival

Annette McQuarrie

Sex and death are two things that everyone thinks about during their lifetime. North Melbourne's local legend Lorna Hannan OAM – teacher, author, researcher, former councillor, great-grandmother – has explored these themes while appearing in an intriguing art piece called *Sex and Death* for the 2020 Darwin Festival. *Sex and Death* was first staged at the 2016 Victorian Seniors Festival when Lorna, then 82, helped launch the show with five fellow octogenarians. The Darwin Festival, an eclectic and diverse line-up of artistic and musical talent, arose like a phoenix after Cyclone Tracy destroyed the town on Christmas Eve 1974.

By the 1990s, it had evolved into a community arts festival with a strong cultural influence. *Sex and Death* features six people, in their 70s and 80s, who provide a photo of themselves from at least a decade earlier, then meet another participant who provides a similar photo. Set questions are asked and people can choose to answer or to pass. The questions are intriguing, even confronting. They include: "Are there things you feel too old to accomplish?", "What would you say to your younger self today?" and "From 1–10, how do you feel about sex?" Samar Hersch, *Sex and Death* director, succinctly explains the art piece. "It invites you to reflect on life, death and what happens in between, to ask the big questions to someone a little older and wiser,



Local community legend Lorna Hannan OAM.

and to consider the experience of yourself changing through time." Lorna and her fellow contributors were looking forward to taking the show to the Darwin Festival

in August. However, as COVID-19 swept Victoria, it was decided to present the performance remotely and to give it a new title: *Sex, Death and the Internet*. Lorna explains how the online performance differs from direct participant interaction. "When you start to think about the way you relate to people on the internet, your thinking starts to shift, so the questions we asked took on a new meaning," she says. It's only when two people meet as equals that she sees the experience as deeply meaningful. The exchange works by each bringing a photo of their younger selves – Lorna chose one of her 1954 graduation – then taking the opportunity to discuss what they believe in and to ask each other questions.

"That exchange is as close as you can get to equality for two people. And on this is built a special moment. It's amazingly intimate and for me, it was like carving open my chest and letting somebody else in," Lorna reveals with disarming candour. Participants left each encounter with three pieces of written advice for their younger self. Lorna is adamant that she would participate in *Sex and Death* again if it came to Melbourne. "Absolutely. Real theatre can't survive without real people and their stories." She smiles, and the smile that lights up her face is as beautiful and engaging as she is.

Annette McQuarrie writes regularly for the News.



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# Anna's world in a spin in a time of upheaval

Anna Huynh

I'm a COVID-19 casualty. No, I didn't catch the virus, but it sure turned my life around and tore it apart.

A few short months ago, everything was good. I had a unit in Chetwynd Street in North Melbourne and I was in my second year of media and communications at Swinburne Uni.

I joined the *News* in July and wrote my first story for the spring issue and I was so honoured to see it on page one. But at the same time, my world was falling apart. Because of COVID-19 I lost my part-time job at McDonald's and, without Australian citizenship, I did not have any financial support and could not cover my tuition and living expenses.

I felt I was a crushing burden to my parents back in Vietnam where their small furniture shop in Ho Chi Minh City was rapidly going downhill. When I heard their weary voices on the phone after they had finished work, my heart broke. Often they were too busy even to pick up my calls.

When I did get through, rather than talking of her own problems, my mother's concern was always for me. She never explicitly said it but I could sense she wanted me to come home.

"You should eat more. We will try to send you more money for groceries. Have a good night and Mum and Dad will talk more tomorrow," she would say before we hung up.

I'm fluent in English but I could feel my speaking skills deteriorating and I was too anxious to speak up in online classes. For days I spoke to no-one and I forgot what my voice sounded like. I was totally isolated, with all my friends on the other side of Melbourne. I was barely eating two meals a day and was waking up at night and desperately missing my family.

My body ached constantly and I stopped exercising. Silence filled my world. Lockdown had worn me down and the Melbourne winter was freezing. I had no money, I was

homesick and I got to the stage that I didn't want to wake up. I had no choice but to go home.

In September, just a week before the spring *News* was published, I took an Uber out to Tulla to fly to Vietnam. The airport was deathly quiet, and only the Vietnam Air and Brunei Air check-in counters were open. My last taste of Australia before I headed to immigration was a raspberry muffin.

On the plane, all 200 passengers were given PPE to wear, urged not to leave skin exposed and required to put on masks during the nine-hour flight. The air-con system was turned off.

Soon it was like a sauna, and the girl next to me was sweating freely. "I'm burning more calories on this plane than in my daily workout," she said as she kept dabbing her forehead. My mind was racing as I saw the little houses on the ground and my beautiful Melbourne disappearing from view.

When we landed in Vietnam, we were immediately quarantined in a military base. Had I known that, I would have brought more snacks from Australia. We were loaded onto five huge buses and taken to the camp, three hours away, in rural Đồng Nai province. It was huge and totally deserted.

We had to share rooms, 14 people in each, and were assigned to a bed, given toothbrush, toothpaste, slippers and shampoo, and provided with three meals a day. Without wi-fi, we could only buy limited mobile data, but at least we had electricity and water. The sun was scorching and the humidity was stifling.

The 200 passengers began as strangers but soon became friends as we shared food. During the day we talked, walked and played sports on the exercise courts and at night we sang songs together. I'm still in touch with many of them and we plan to travel around Vietnam together.

Quarantine lasted 14 days and the hours stretched out endlessly. Our temperature was checked



Anna (left) and friend Cindy at Tulla, all kitted up for the flight home to Vietnam.

twice every day and we were only allowed to go home once everyone tested negative twice.

Now I'm back with my family in Ho Chi Minh City. I can continue my studies online but, unless Swinburne's rules change, I can't finish the whole course. I might have to defer.

I miss Melbourne so much. I miss North Melbourne, the parks, the people, the Errol Street cafes, the 57 trams and the bustling market. And of course, I miss the *News*. Will I be back? I hope so.

Anna Huynh writes regularly for the *News*. We also hope to see her back.



Anna's shared room in her 14-day quarantine camp in rural Vietnam.



Anna and fellow passengers entering quarantine.

## Arts House launches 'Makeshift Publics'

Jackie Johnston

Arts House is a City of Melbourne contemporary performance space, housed in the North Melbourne Town Hall, where artists and audiences gather to find new creative frontiers.

Arts House has recently announced a new two-year \$500,000 professional development program, Makeshift Publics, which will support more than 35 Victorian artists.

Makeshift Publics is an ambitious new program challenging artists to re-envision what public space means today.

Acknowledging artists as leaders, Makeshift Publics asks committed arts practitioners to explore new methods of rebuilding fundamentally disrupted social ecologies.

Arts House artistic director Emily Sexton explains that Makeshift Publics is a program that will be led and created by artists, for artists.

"After a year of massive upheaval, Makeshift Publics will support artists to investigate the new and different relationships between artist and community that need to emerge, rebuilding our sense of a shared public sphere," Emily says.

Each year, 10 artists and eight facilitators will create work adjacent to each other and share their learnings and experiences through in-person and digital gatherings, as well as acting as portals into the diverse communities that they are connected to.

Selected artists will receive an \$18,000 honorarium to participate in the Makeshift Publics program, including attending three key workshop weeks over the 12-month program, facilitated by a group of artists and makers.

A public open day will be scheduled at the end of the year.

The outcome will be art that rethinks what it means to be a member of a public body, what it means to share public space and what it is that makes us a public.

Makeshift Publics is open to all Victorian-based artists but it is geared towards mid-career and established artists.

Jackie Johnston is marketing manager at Arts House.

**Want to know more?**

Find out about Makeshift Publics at [artshouse.com.au](http://artshouse.com.au)



Anna (kneeling with mask) and friends after release from quarantine.



# Spoonville stirs up some fun at St Michael’s

Steven Hubbard

Spoonville came to St Michael’s Primary in September. The colourful collection of spoons started growing in the median strip of Brougham Street, just outside the school’s front door.

The Spoonville phenomenon began in Britain and was then embraced all around Melbourne’s suburbs when the harsh lockdown began. Gaggles of spoons, creatively decorated with googly eyes and of all shapes and sizes, suddenly appeared in parks and gardens.

St Michael’s students were quick to join in the fun after wellbeing leader Erin Jenkins promoted the idea to lift everyone’s spirits during what seemed an endless lockdown. “It was just so wonderful to see families and strangers stopping to look at our Spoonville and even contributing to it,” she said.

Other teachers were quick to echo Erin’s comments. “I was amazed at the number of spoons the children, their families and local people contributed. With so many people involved and putting their creative hats on, it brought a real sense of community spirit,” class teacher Fiona Dunne said.

Some students brought spoons from home, and we can only wonder how many kitchen drawers were raided by children desperate to join in the fun. St Michael’s also provided wooden spoons that could be picked up from the office by any spoonless students.

Our school was privileged to host two important visitors who made special trips to inspect our Spoonville. One was Victoria Police assistant commissioner Luke Cornelius who dropped in to add his own Gruffalo spoon as well some police spoons.

A second guest was the Greens state MP for Melbourne, Ellen Sandell, who planted some Halloween spoons then spent time chatting with delighted school student leaders Elisapeta, Siona, Mia and Astha.

Ultimately, it was the enthusiasm of all our children that shows the activity’s success. When one of our classes was asked what they



Victoria Police’s Luke Cornelius with St Michael’s student leaders.



The citizens of Spoonville come in all sizes and shapes.

thought about our very own Spoonville, their excited comments came tumbling out. “I created a spoon for each member of my family,” said one student. “Everyone at home got crafty and made their own spoony character,” another added. And of course, football got a mention with one girl bursting out, “I created an AFL spoon player.”

Steven Hubbard is deputy principal at St Michael’s.

# Telling the truth about history

Melinda Hinkson

Over two weeks in September, the Institute of Postcolonial Studies and the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University, co-hosted a series of discussions via Zoom on the theme ‘Decolonising Truth in Australia’.

Globally, truth-telling has been linked to processes of recognition and reconciliation within multicultural societies. In Australia, it has gained new momentum in the wake of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and negotiations towards a treaty in Victoria and the Northern Territory.

The idea of ‘decolonising’ truth-telling focuses attention on shifting the underlying power relationships.

Cherokee scholar Jeff Cornassel, from the University of Victoria in Canada, gave an inspired presentation on ‘The stories that shape us: Truth-telling, Reconciliation and Indigenous Nationhood’, sharing examples of regeneration of land relationships, community sustainability and cultural practices.

Australian historian Lyndall Ryan presented the University of Newcastle’s online map of colonial frontier massacres across Australia, 1788–1930. The map is a remarkable reference with great potential for use in schools and other educational settings.

Panel discussions shared ideas for the ways in which truth-telling can foster new relationships of care and justice between people and the places in which we live – locally, nationally and globally. Plans are underway for a second series in 2021.

Melinda Hinkson is director of the Institute of Postcolonial Studies in Curzon Street, North Melbourne.

**Want to know more?**  
The digital map of Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, 1788-1930 can be accessed at [c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres](http://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres)  
Recordings of the Decolonising Truth in Australia discussion series are at the Institute of Postcolonial Studies website: [ipcs.org.au](http://ipcs.org.au)



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I would have liked my column to start: "I'm writing this as I'm enjoying a picnic, perched upon a rocky headland overlooking the great Pacific Ocean. A few hundred metres away, sperm whales are frolicking. I'm not in Melbourne, I'm not even in Australia. I have used my Kiwi citizenship to escape your infernal lockdown." Well, that's how I wanted to start. But it's fake news.

★ ★ ★

Unfortunately, I'm still here. As usual, I got everything higgledy-piggledy and totally up the spout. As I write, I think I can buy a ticket home to New Zealand, flying via Sydney, but it's the leaving Melbourne part that isn't allowed. I Do Not Want To Be Here Any Longer. I'd go by boat if I could. Anyone got a sailboat they wouldn't mind losing if I got lost due to the nautical skills I don't have?

★ ★ ★

Now, on the subject of boats. Let's all spare a thought for poor little Gina

VERY IMPRESSIVE

Reinhardt. She's run into some problems with her boat – a Super Yacht called THE WORLD. It's about 87 feet long and dripping in luxury. It's moored in Fremantle, but poor little Gina hasn't been allowed to leave Queensland, where she'll be living in a million-dollar hovel. She can't go and visit THE WORLD. Deep sigh for Gina.

★ ★ ★

There is at least one positive bit of news that has come out of COVID-19. I'm trying hard to be a Wordness Creator Person like Sir William Shakespeare. But wait a moment! An extra 'Sir' seems to have slipped in there. I've done this ever since Sir tony The Rabbit Abbott started it. Spellcheck wisely decided not to award him a capital 'T' and because I'm such a good speller, neither am I.



★ ★ ★

If I could fly away to New Zealand, I'd do stuff I've only done once before. So many places to go. Auckland's Civic Theatre, which became Planet Hollywood. Claudelands Bush, a forest remnant near Hamilton. The North Island's Lake Taupo. The end of Aro Valley, past The Yellow

House, which is hopefully still yellow. The Waitomo Glowworm Caves, which I've NEVER been to. And there's always sooooo much to be seen in Christchurch.

★ ★ ★

I want to visit Laurence Gere in Timaru, between Christchurch and Dunedin. Most of all, I want to visit Waitati in Dunedin to meet my current dream cat friend Lewis. Hopefully he falls in love with me like I am with him. He has David Bowie eyes. And while I'm there, I want to see the magnificent Mandy Mayhem puppies. Even my wonder dog, Nunga, will find it impossible to ignore them.

★ ★ ★

PS: At a News meeting a few years ago, someone (forget who) said there was too much 'I' in my writing. I bet that she is not liking this column.

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

It's time to break out the summer shorts and singlets

Runners, you sure have run a great race during the long lockdown! While all of Melbourne beat back the second wave, you all kept up the good work. You survived the curfew and the masks, endured the lack of events and welcomed new running newbies. And, like me, you kept running. Just before summer arrived, we spring-cleaned our homes and we have been spring-cleaning our running closets. We've put our warm leggings and long sleeves back in the wardrobe, and now it's shorts and singlets on the agenda. I highly recommend you do some sorting through op shops and start checking out secondhand sellers online. There are bargains out there for runners on any budget. Personally, I love running

MARATHON GIRL  
Thea Oakes



in 2XUs (that's compression tights, for any non-runners). Their mix of compression and stretch is amazing. However, the price tag can be a bit hefty, even nudging around \$100. But you can do better than that. I bought a secondhand pair for just \$10 and I couldn't be happier. They're great. Alternatively, think about selling or donating the running gear you don't use anymore. It could become someone's new PB outfit. Shoes can be donated to Australian non-profit Shoes for Planet

Earth, which collects recycled running shoes and gives them to the homeless and needy. It's a great cause. While there's much to celebrate, it could be a while before fun runs are back up and running. But even with lockdown lifted, you can still compete in virtual events that cater for lots of runners and even send out medals. Last month I competed (virtually) in The Afterglow Half Marathon, starting at sunset and wearing the stipulated neon clothing you can find at Glimmer Gear.

In other exciting news, some of you seasoned runners might be surprised that I recently tried energy chews for the first time. I usually never use gels, special drinks or anything like that. I hate seeing them littered all over the path at running events, but I thought I should at least give the chews a try. So, I gave Gu Strawberry Energy Chews a go. I ended up running my longest distance and I'm convinced they're some kind of magic. Or perhaps they're just a kind of crazy placebo. Yes, sustenance supplements aren't for everyone, but they might give you a lift. For me, bread and chocolate milk always works best. Runners, get those shoes back on and I'll see you in 2021!

*Thea Oakes writes a regular column for the News.*

Dating deal breakers? It's all a matter of personal taste

On a slow news day, one of the perennials that always get an airing is the one about the man drought. This story warns all the single women out there that if they haven't found a man by the age of 30, the odds of doing so are so much stacked against them that they have more chance of being hunted down by wolves than by a decent bloke. So what are women to do with this information? Move to another country where the gender balance is more in their favour? Settle for a rubbish relationship for fear of being left out in the cold? Resign themselves to being single and adopt a million cats? Speaking of cats, does anyone else smell a rat here? Are there more women than men in the population? Well, the lower life expectancy of men means that women in their nineties looking for love

LET'S MAKE A DATE  
Suzie Luddon



will be up against some stiff competition. However, statistics show there are up to 5% more women than men in any age group in Australia. Take into account the incidence of dating across age groups, same-sex dating and people who have no desire to date at all, and the numbers become insignificant. But that doesn't change the perception that finding a good man is akin to winning the lottery and unfortunately is just as unlikely to happen. My friend Melissa (not her real name) is despairing of ever meeting her

match. She's tried Tinder, Plenty of Fish, eHarmony, dating agencies, speed dating, hanging out at bars and pubs and asking friends to set her up. But all to no avail. Sure, she's met plenty of men, there are a lot out there, but none of them felt right. Is she being too picky? Well, there was one guy who showed up for a date wearing a check shirt and striped shorts, topped off with a classy socks-and-sandals combo. There was no coming back from that for Melissa. Then there was the bloke who

proceeded to describe all his grossest dating experiences. Others didn't get past go due to not posting a photo, not being able to tell the difference between "your" and "you're", and saying they liked country and western. But should those things be deal breakers? It depends on what you're looking for. If grammatical errors make you break out in hives, or if colour clashes send you into paroxysms of shame, then put them on the list of not-negotiables. Fear induces panic, so don't buy into the hype that there are only ten eligible men left on the planet and that none of them lives in Melbourne. And don't lower your standards. Just be clear about what you want and then get out and find it!

*Suzie Luddon shares her insights into dating in each issue of the News.*



# The Angels will wing it and sing it as they did in the past

Rosie Greenfield

There was nothing much to sing about in lockdown, was there? Errol's Angels community choir was unable to get together to rehearse or perform.

During lockdown, choir members shared favourite memories of past glories. A highlight was singing from the balcony of the Town Hall as part of the Melbourne International Festival. We sang *Laneway Labyrinth*, written specially for the performance, to an audience enjoying a banquet in front of the Legion building.

Few have forgotten the horrific bushfires of 2009. The Angels were honoured to participate in a community music concert to raise funds for the Mia Mia Fire Brigade. The event was MC'd by long-time

ABC Radio host Hilary Harper, and we joined with other community choirs to create an uplifting afternoon of song.

The chief firefighter from the Mia Mia brigade addressed the audience and was so moved by our efforts that he gave a heartfelt speech of appreciation that brought many to tears. This event led to the Mia Mia community inviting us back for lunch and a community sing. It turned out to be great fun and an unforgettable day.

Another memorable Angels' event was our musical soiree at the now-closed Lulu's Café and Gallery in Queensberry Street.

We gathered at the café with friends and were able to have a drink and a nibble in between sets of our repertoire.

The evening culminated in the

choir singing the canon *Dona Nobis Pacem*.

The highlight was the attempt at audience participation, and choir members dispersed among the attendees to lead them in the singing of each part. We aimed to develop six parts and we built towards the six by establishing first two parts then three parts before jumping to six. The jury is still out on whether we succeeded, but it certainly was a lot of fun.

As Dean Martin used to croon, memories are made of this. We know that the Angels' good times will come again. Soon, we will gather again, we will sing again, we will perform again. Rest assured that when we can get back to singing together, we will!

Rose Greenfield is a member of Errol's Angels.

# Singer/songwriter finds a new creative voice

Shannon Colee

Paul Milnes used the recent extended lockdown to do something useful. He self-published his debut novel, *Battle of Bands*, which he had been working on for the past 30 years.

The local writer's book tells of Archie and Lucy Saunders, who leave their country Victorian town to move to a Catholic school in Melbourne after the death of their mother. Lucy spirals out of control while Archie competes in Battle of the Bands, eager to follow in the footsteps of their musician father.

Paul explains that the story largely shaped itself over the last few years. "It just created its own life, based on a handful of songs I had written. And there's also a country side to it, influenced by the fact that my partner grew up in the Wimmera."

A singer and songwriter for 20 years, Paul has his own back story that shattered his singing and performing dreams.

"In 2010, I developed whooping cough, which damaged my vocal cords, and I haven't sung since. Being unable to perform has done my head in," he admits.

"I've gone into dark places since then. I started my own promotional talent and staffing agency but I lost that due to COVID-19. Writing became the social outlet I needed and I became obsessed with finishing the book. The past few years have been intense, including hiring and collaborating with professional editors."

This year was especially challenging for Paul. Not only did lockdown prevent the planned local launch of his book but he also



Paul Milnes with debut novel *Battle of Bands*.

contracted coronavirus in midyear. "I'm happy to report that I'm very much on the road to recovery," he says.

At year's end, Paul is proud of *Battle of Bands*, which he describes as igniting the nostalgia of the music scene of the 1970s and '80s.

Finishing it has led him to urge other aspiring writers who feel they have a book in them to sit down and finish it. His advice is simple. "Just write. You can do all the finer stuff down the track. It doesn't have to be perfect right away. You can speak notes into your smartphone. Just write!"

Shannon Colee writes regularly for the News.

**Want to know more?**

Paul Milnes' novel, *Battle of Bands*, can be purchased on [battleofbands.com.au](http://battleofbands.com.au). A sample of the novel can be downloaded for free.



Photographer Meg De Young was on a mission to visit local cafes (see page 20) but was drawn into Heartland Records on the way. Paul, Gina and Lucy are happy to be welcoming music fans back into the shop on the corner of Victoria and Chetwynd streets. Drop by and step back into your musical history.

## Something to share?

Do you have a skill, talent or expertise to share? Would you like to start a club or discussion group? The Centre could be just the place to get started. Call in or drop us a line at [admin@centre.org.au](mailto:admin@centre.org.au).

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THE GREENS

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# Sport gives Simonds students a taste of freedom after lockdown

Hayden Wallis

When Simonds College students returned to school after the long lockdown, it was soon obvious how much they had missed the usual inter-school sporting competition against other Catholic colleges.

So, our staff decided to be proactive, and we took steps to ensure our boys had lots of opportunities for the physical activity they love.

We started with some informal competition with head of sport Sean Westaway taking our badminton players across town to play against our senior campus, St Brigid's in North Fitzroy.

However, most of the sporting action has taken place at St Mary's, our Year 7-9 campus in Victoria Street.

With summer in mind, our enthusiastic cricketers began fighting out test matches at lunchtimes, with each counting as a separate session of play. The tests were waged with the same intensity as any Ashes clash.

Year 11 coordinator Taylor Dykstra's online high-intensity workshops proved a real hit.

"I organised teams and put the boys and even some of the teachers through their paces. The exercise routines were designed to create high levels of fatigue and they led to awesome fitness gains," she said.

Many boys participated in the volleyball competition organised by PE teacher Patrick Kirley. Players

were so keen that they had the net set up within five minutes of the final bell.

Rain, hail or shine, the court was always packed, with players taught to dig and spike, and they learnt the importance of teamwork in this demanding sport.

Some boys preferred a more individual approach and joined the Wednesday-afternoon running club set up by Year 9 coordinator Luke Scerri.

"It was a lot of fun and we ran down in the Flagstaff Gardens," he said. "It gave the boys the chance to blow out some of the cobwebs from the long lockdown when they were all cooped up at home."

Hayden Wallis is head of health and PE at Simonds.



Whistle about to blow to start the game at Simonds.



Cricketers take a break in a lunchtime 'test' at Simonds.

# Peel Street – from Haymarket to Flagstaff Gardens

Stephen Hatcher

Peel Street is claimed by both North and West Melbourne. It runs north-south from Flemington Road to Dudley Street.

Its northern point is the Haymarket roundabout (near where it intersects with Elizabeth and Franklin) and its southern point where it converges with William, Dudley and Franklin near Flagstaff Gardens.

It was named after political dynamo Robert Peel, born in Lancashire in 1788, who twice served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He created the modern police force, whose members became known as 'peelers'.

Gazetted in 1867, Peel Street had been used since 1858. Even earlier, the surrounding native bushland had been chosen as a site to replace Melbourne's first cemetery, Burial Hill, which was in use in the Flagstaff Gardens until 1837.

The newly designated burial area near Peel Street was used until 1922. Well after it started, it became

## RIGHT UP OUR STREET Stephen Hatcher

part of the site of the Queen Victoria Market in 1878. The remains of thousands of early settlers still lie buried beneath today's market.

Prior to 1859, homes along Peel

Street were commonly single-storey weatherboards. The first known brick cottage, near the cemetery, belonged to a John Brown.

Five years later, greengrocer John

F. Todd, his wife Helen and their six children arrived. They operated a family grocer and provision store at number 126 from where they served local residents in a building now long gone.

By 1865, four architecturally designed early Victorian terraces had sprung up. A year later, Michael Flanagan's Sir Robert Peel Hotel opened its doors on the

Queensberry Street corner. It is still on the site, now trading as Bobbie Peel's.

In 1878, 90 Peel Street was built by the local Thurgood brothers, on the site now occupied by the market's A to F sheds. By 1880, more than 100 families were living nearby in low-rise Victorian-era homes.

Some original buildings are still standing. At number 111 is a beautiful Federation-era two-storey home with its own private backyard garden oasis.

However, Riggio's Continental Grocery Store, once at number 57, is now gone. From 1937 to 1964, Frank and Angelina Riggio sold everything from coffee beans, tea, bread, biscuits, pasta, cheese and olive oil to razor blades, candles and brooms.

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

### Want to know more?

To discover more about the history of the streets in North and West Melbourne, go to [melbournestreets.com.au](http://melbournestreets.com.au)



Peel Street. Photograph: Stephen Hatcher



# Book a stroll to a little library

Nancy Lane

How lucky we are in North Melbourne to have our 'little libraries' or 'street libraries'. These tiny, protected book-recycling nooks, accessible from the street and open 24/7, invite people to take books and also to donate books they have finished reading and no longer want.

Street Library Australia is a non-profit organisation that encourages people to 'plant a library in their own front yard'. Check their [streetlibrary.org.au](http://streetlibrary.org.au) website, which enables anyone to find their nearest street library. Intriguingly, while several are listed for Parkville, Kensington, Flemington and Carlton, I found that only one in North Melbourne is on the map.

That one, at St Michael's Primary in Brougham Street, was featured in the *News* summer issue last year. It grew from the school's love for reading and was a way of sharing with the community and has been a great success. "In the year since the library

was set up, it's never been empty, never," Rita Totino, the school's literacy leader, said.

Another little library is at 197 Roden Street, at a private residence. It is not quite in the front yard – there isn't one – but on the front verandah. It's bright red and easy to spot.

Two other North Melbourne street libraries are adjacent to 'little free pantries', and they provide a great service to people with hungry tummies as well as hungry minds. One mini library-pantry combo is at the West Melbourne Baptist Church at 4 Miller Street. The other is at Our Community House at 552 Victoria Street.

House manager Sabrina Matthaues explains Our Community House is a co-working space for the social sector, focused on social inclusion and social equity. "We want to help make it easy for people to care and be cared for. We're totally onboard the book-sharing pantry-sharing movements," she said.

Sabrina accepts the library is only a small gesture but she feels it has had a big impact in showing that the community cares and she wants to inspire people to share.

"Our little library gives books a second, third or even a twenty-seventh life. It is a first step in the right direction to creating a better community," she said.

Nancy Lane writes regularly for the *News*.



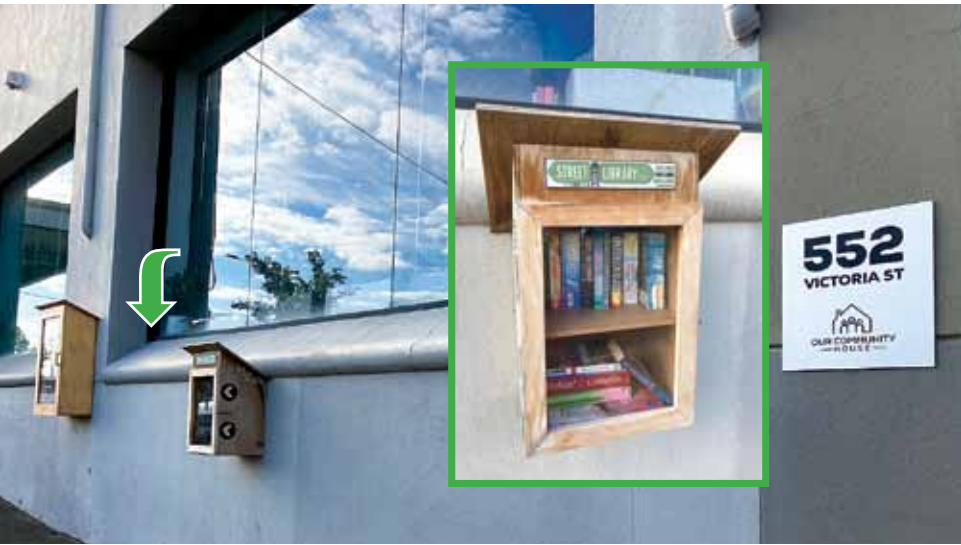
The little library at St Michael's Primary, Brougham Street, North Melbourne.



The little library at the West Melbourne Baptist Church in Miller Street.



The little library in Roden Street, West Melbourne.



The little library at Our Community House in Victoria Street, West Melbourne.

# ELLEN SANDELL

## STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE

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# From the archives

Michelle Brett

The North Melbourne Advertiser was distributed in the area from 1873 to 1894. Some of the most intriguing articles involved the criminal cases heard in the North Melbourne court. Here are some of the stories that ran around this time more than 120 years ago.

## Cheeky young Dowling to end up with a howling (1883)

A young man named William Dowling got in strife for giving Constable Sexton a hard time. He was charged with constantly annoying Sexton and making rude faces. The magistrate gave young William a good talking to, then sent him home to his mother, who promised to suitably chastise her errant son.

## Boys' offence was setting school fence alight (1883)

Three local lads were charged with setting fire to the fence of the Errol Street school. It was put to the bench that the D'Arcy brothers and their friend, Sketcher, should merely be cautioned because of their tender age. The boys were duly discharged to their parents to get a jolly good hiding.

## After-hours snowdrapper comes a cropper (1887)

Edward Wrigglesworth attracted the eye of the law for his after-work pursuits. He was charged with larceny of ladies' underclothing from locals' clotheslines. While exact details of the unmentionables weren't mentioned in court, the magistrate frowned on his undercover work. Wrigglesworth couldn't wriggle out of being placed on remand.

## Nasty smell about William's rotten bananas (1888)

William Cargotovitch had only recently arrived in Victoria when he began selling fruit at the local market. Inspector Taylor was far from impressed with the quality of the fruit and charged him with selling rotten bananas. The defendant pleaded guilty, said he was unfamiliar with the strict local sanitary laws, and was duly fined.

## Chicken thief gets a whipping for his foul act (1889)

Two young boys, John Evans and Joseph Currie, were charged with the theft of two hens. Mrs Annie Smith had heard a noise in her poultry yard then saw the offenders running away. The magistrate clucked over the theft, fined Evans and sentenced Currie to 12 stinging strokes of the birch.

Michelle Brett writes regularly for the News.

# Step out of your door and into the past

Words: Lorna Hannan  
Photographs: Meg De Young

## 1. Pleasance Gardens

Canning Street between Dryburgh and Abbotsford streets

Charles Pleasance was the elected Lord Mayor of Melbourne in 1904 after changing his name from 'Pleasants'. In 1864, he bought a homeopathic chemist shop at 85 Collins Street and renamed it Martin and Pleasance. In the 1940s, locals called these gardens the 'Plannie' or the 'Plantation'. It is still a much-loved site for people who grew up nearby and used the 'Plannie' as their playground. A local story persists that there are underground caves here.

## 2. Bangalore

A landmark house on the corner of Dryburgh and Canning streets

This handsome house, built in 1892, belonged to the Gidney family. They came to Melbourne in the 1870s and set up a horse-breeding business that sent horses to the Boer War and later polo horses to India. The house has two entrances. One, the residential entrance, faces the gardens. The other, set back on the Dryburgh Street boundary, led to the Gidneys' horse trade office. Older locals recall the office door was later the entrance to the doctor's surgery.

## 3. Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Cathedral

Ukrainian Cathedral on the corner of Canning and Dryburgh streets

Known locally as the 'Ukrainian Cathedral', it opened in 1958 and is named after two of Christianity's



This is the first in a series of walks around the area.

founders. Its dome is prominent by day and a striking landmark at night. The cathedral follows the same church calendar as Orthodox churches and shares a belief system with the Roman Catholic Church but services such as the Mass are different. The cathedral is known for choral music for voices only and does not use any instrumental accompaniment.

## 4. Lady Huntingfield Kindergarten

87/93 Haines Street

American-born Margaret Eleanor Crosby met Lord Huntingfield in India. After they married, she lived

in Melbourne from 1934 to 1939 as the governor's wife. In that time, she was often written up in the press as a great supporter of women's health and the Queen Victoria Hospital. Funds for the kindergarten on this site were raised at a 1940 garden fete held at the University of Melbourne. Opened in 1941, it was rebuilt in 2020.

## 5. Gardiner Reserve

Corner of Haines and Dryburgh streets

The gardens honour James 'Tiger' Gardiner (1848–1921). London-born, he grew up in North Melbourne when it was called Hotham. He founded the Hotham Football Club (later the North Melbourne Football Club). He was also a player, treasurer and

chairman. It's sometimes called 'Spider Park' because children thought the old play equipment resembled a spider in its web. A plaque to Tiger Gardiner is near the Dryburgh Street entrance.

### 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. Details: [www.hothamhistory.org.au](http://www.hothamhistory.org.au)





# Creative ideas for the post-pandemic world ahead

John H. Smith

A grassroots movement is stirring in North Melbourne. Three highly respected locals are significant contributors in a recently published book that is truly ground-breaking.

They are social historian Professor Janet McCalman AC; retired politician and educator, Professor John Langmore AM; and educationalist Dr Elizabeth Hartnell-Young. The trio have combined their talents with Per Capita executive director Emma Dawson

The book, *What Happens Next? Reconstructing Australia after COVID-19*, is bursting with ideas to stimulate creative thinking about the kind of society we want, and how we might reach those goals. Its four sections contain short and readable chapters.

Co-edited during lockdown by Janet and Emma, the book has a simple purpose. "We want to alert people that a lot of creative thinking is going on about how we can get ourselves out of this mess," Janet says.

She believes many people are interested in working to reconstruct society on a new basis. "Australia has been in this position before, and we have several models to draw on to create a new path – two are the post-World War II reconstruction and the 1983 Accord."



Janet's interest in the project began with her own family. "My involvement was driven by young family members who, due to the climate crisis and growing inequality, are extremely pessimistic about the future," she explains.

John and Elizabeth were attracted to the project by their own personal motives. John, a key architect of the 1983 Accord, felt the need for a new agreement, while Elizabeth believed many people wanted to see changes in education.

An approach from Emma to Janet sparked the book. "I contacted Janet, whom I had never met, hoping she and John would participate in a conference I was organising," Emma says. "It was to mark the anniversary of a Curtin-era

white paper on full employment that brought post-war prosperity to Australia."

Emma calls COVID-19 an "era-defining disruption" and believes we are now at a critical turning point. "We can't return to business as usual, and great reforms have been implemented at times like this, often brought about by social democratic movements," she says.

For Elizabeth, the situation is crystal clear. "We cannot simply build back to what we had. We have to reimagine the society we want, and then rebuild."

The book's first chapter, 'Time to heal; Uluru healing the people and the land', is written by First Nations leader Thomas Mayor. For Janet, this was the obvious place to start. "I wanted 'Uluru' first, because the moral beginning of everything is full Indigenous recognition," she explains.

Janet imagines forums, both local and regional, that will listen to people's concerns, involve the authors and share ideas. "There will have to be specific rules to prevent political partisanship taking over. There would be no banners!"

Emma hopes the book will reach a wider audience, shift the public conversation and build a mass movement for change. "Present political thinking has undermined the foundations of our commonwealth. COVID-19



Janet McCalman

has given us an opportunity to do things better in the future," she says.

The pandemic has exposed a cruel reality. Workers such as those employed in childcare and food delivery, and others who keep society going in tough times, receive the least financial and social support.

Emma urges that we all consider what we value most. "Then we must develop policies and processes that deliver those values but without entrenching disadvantage. It is more efficient economically to invest in prevention of social problems than to mop up afterwards," she says.

Just imagine a society that recognises our First People, runs a



Emma Dawson

carbon-clean economy, provides quality social housing, extends unemployment support and mental health services to those who need it, invests generously in research and development, and educates people for a future that we cannot yet see.

It is possible! Now is the time to get involved and to act.

John H. Smith writes regularly for the News.

**Want to know more?**  
What Happens Next? is available now in bookshops. Forums to discuss the book's issues will be held, but details are not yet available. Keep your eye out for them.

## Meticulous attention to barbering

Joe Misuraca

A free beer or whiskey with every haircut? Cheers! I'll drink to that!

You too can enjoy an ale if you drop in to Irfan Ozalp's Meticulous Room barbershop on Errol Street. A cool beer is always on tap for customers. "It gives the salon a cool vibe," co-owner Irfan says.

Irfan has been snipping away at Meticulous Room since the middle of last year. A former floorer, he made a dramatic career change four years ago and decided to follow his hairdressing dream.

"I've always had a knack for the game and I enjoyed doing my mates' hair, so, in 2016, I began a barbering course. It was such a change to what I'd been doing and the interactions with people were so different," he says.

Irfan's eyes light up as he explains the joy he gets from his work. "I love

hairdressing. It's such a good feeling to see customers feeling better about themselves. You can have such an impact on somebody just from cutting their hair well."

He runs Meticulous with his former colleague and now business partner, Lee Chen Teoh. "She has such a passion for the job. We became friends when working together years ago, and now we share the business," Irfan says.

Lee is happy to explain the shop's impressive-sounding name – Meticulous. "Our aim is to create quality cuts. Both Irfan and I are very focused and we care about every fine detail. We won't let a client leave the chair without feeling we've provided a great service," she says.

Irfan shudders as he speaks of the old 'shearing shed' style. "We wanted to build a contemporary barbershop, not the sort with your traditional barber with cutthroats

and old-style clipperwork. We aimed to combine hairdressing and barbering."

Like any shop, Meticulous gets its share of colourful customers. "One dude came in – he had dreadlocks and about 10 different hairstyles in one. A bit of long hair here, dreadlocks there, a shaved part here, a bit of a Mohawk there. And it really suited him," Irfan laughs.

Some customers drop in for a trim while visiting their sick kids in the Royal Children's. Lee and Irfan get to know them well and have heard the most heartrending stories.

"One man told us about his two-year-old who needed a heart transplant. That broke us up. And next time he told us that a heart had been found and the operation was successful. When he brought the child into the salon, it was so amazing," Irfan says.

Joe Misuraca writes regularly for the News.



Irfan Ozalp in full flight at Meticulous Room.

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## THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

### Ellen Sandell

The long lockdown we all endured made it hard for me to get out and about. As a result, it certainly restricted my usual work within the community.

However, I was able to be involved in two excellent school-related ventures. In the first one, I was privileged to visit St Michael's Primary's Spoonville in the Brougham Street median strip just outside the school's front door.

I joined in the fun by contributing a spoon person to Spoonville. Given the time of year, I got to work making a spooky Halloween-themed spoon, and it joined a thriving and colourful spoon community.

The second educational project was when I joined in an online video chat with students of St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre about leadership and youth empowerment.

While these students aren't able to attend mainstream schooling, they are determined to overcome barriers to their education and they are supported by the Queensberry Street learning centre.

Despite the pandemic's downside, it brought home to me how much I love seeing all the creative ways people in this community find to make each other smile. It proved we were all in it together.

We started the year with rainbows in residents' windows, then teddy bears appeared, and later Spoonville communities began

popping up in our local parks and schools.

This year was a real doozy for us all, especially for the parents who had to juggle their kids' learning from home and for the teachers and school staff who had to go above and beyond to make it work.

A massive shout out to you all. Thanks for every lesson you taught at home in your ugg boots.

Thanks to all the parents who brushed up on their maths or science, even when they were tired to the bone. Thanks to all the teachers and parents who juggled babies, toddlers and pets while on Zoom calls.

Thanks to the parents who had to do their own work in the wee hours so they could help home school kids during the day. As a parent of two, ages one and three, I feel blessed I didn't have to do the dreaded home schooling, but I do appreciate how hard lockdown was for everyone.

It's been a year like no other and we've all worked so hard and sacrificed so much to get to where we are. From me and my family, thank you.

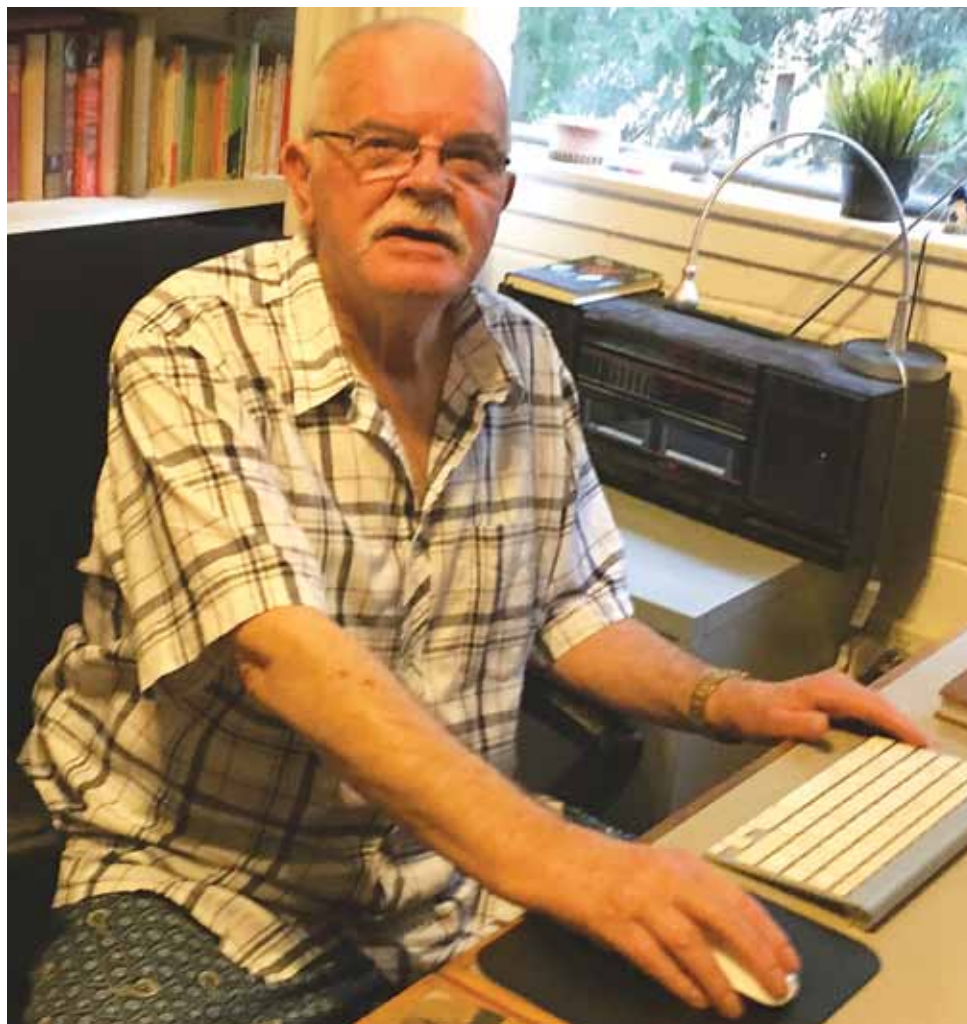
Ellen Sandell is the state MP for Melbourne.

#### Want to know more?

If there's anything I can do for you, or if you'd like to know more about my work in the community, please get in touch: [office@ellensandell.com](mailto:office@ellensandell.com).



Ellen video chats online with St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre students.



John Hood at home in North Melbourne.

## A lifelong link with India

Ansh Verma

It's a long way from Dr John Hood's unit in North Melbourne to the vast Indian sub-continent.

A genial academic, John's speciality is Indian cinema and filmmakers, especially Bengali cinema. However, his path to the study of Indian history and cinema was an unlikely one. "My initial area of expertise at university was beer and billiards," he smiles.

His lifelong embrace of India had an unlikely beginning. "I was a second-year resident student at Queens College and I had a French Revolution history essay due the next day. I'd done no reading for it and some mates and I were drinking gin and looking for a solution. One suggested I get someone else to write it," he says.

John decided on another tack. "I decided to drop that unit and enrol in another. So I grabbed

the Arts handbook, opened it at random, prayed that it wouldn't be economics or psychology, and picked the first subject I saw. It was Indian Studies and that moment shaped the rest of my life."

When he first met famed Belgian Sanskrit scholar Dr J. Jordan, he blurted out that he knew nothing about India other than having heard of Nehru and Gandhi. His new mentor waved his doubts away, saying: "Don't worry, we will teach you all you need to know."

John never looked back. Soon he was eagerly pursuing his lifelong fascination with religion, ancient history and literature. He first visited India in 1966 after finishing his degree and went to Delhi, Jaipur, Bombay and Madras.

"I've been to Kolkata more than 50 times and have a flat and car there. I took a group of students to India in 1975 and spent my long service leave there in 1977," he says.

Until COVID-19, John would leave Melbourne after the Grand Final, and return, like a homing bird, for the first round of the next season. Of course, the virus has changed all that. "I worry about my Indian friends like Prafulla Roy. Some of my happiest times in life have been sitting in his living room and talking with him," he says wistfully.

John's love of India and its people is palpable.

"It is they who draw me back. All those humble families who have extended friendship and kindness to me, who have taken me into their homes," he says.

As an Indian myself, now happily settled in Melbourne, it has been such a joy to meet John. I can connect with the lingering sadness in his voice. "Autumn is a lovely time in Kolkata. I would normally be there now."

Ansh Verma writes regularly for the News.

Madeleine Scully

The City of Melbourne Bowls Club, nestled in the pretty Flagstaff Gardens, was bowled over COVID-19.

In many ways, 2020 has been our most challenging year since we moved into our beautiful new building in 2009. Club members have been unable to gather in the clubrooms since we held our 'Farewell to the Bowlo ... for now' function back in March.

The greens have for many weeks lain unused but certainly not unloved due to the care of our excellent greenkeeper, Peter

## Bowled over by virus

Barron. Some months back, when stage three restrictions were lifted, members keen to get back on the greens were able to use the online booking system and to comply with all the COVID-safe rules.

When winter pennant competition was cancelled, we made plans for an in-house tournament and were excited with the prospect of re-opening the clubrooms. We were running a limited bowls program until the

tough stage four restrictions arrived and we had to put all our plans on ice.

The club has used the time to do some work on our facilities and our systems. The lounge has been fitted out with new chairs and new tabletops, ready to be enjoyed when functions resume. Less visible are the new systems being bedded down, which will make life easier for members' accounts and bookings.

Like so many other organisations,

we have been making use of technology to stay connected with members. Our annual meeting in July was the first held via Zoom and the best attended in memory. The board has also been using Zoom for monthly meetings since March.

The club celebrated its 154<sup>th</sup> birthday back in August. However, we couldn't keep up our now decade-long tradition of an annual party in our new clubhouse. That night it was sadly empty and silent. Instead, we all shared a celebration over Zoom, complete with cakes, candles and glasses raised to toast the occasion.

Members are staying in touch

through regular Friday evening Zoom sessions, newsletters and email updates. Some also report occasional personal encounters while out walking, though recognising our masked-up fellow bowlers was challenging.

We mustn't forget how fortunate we are to be part of a 154-year-old club that has risen to many challenges over its history. The project to write that history is nearing completion, and we hope to soon hold the book's launch in our own clubrooms.

Madeleine Scully is secretary of the City of Melbourne Bowls Club.



For the Tobin family, winter Saturdays in the 1950s meant just one thing – football. Until I turned five, I'd be left at home with Mum while Dad took the bigger kids to watch North Melbourne play home games at Arden Street. By 1952, I would head off with the family to the game. The ground then had few amenities. You had to be in the know to get a seat undercover in the grandstand. Luckily, the Tobins were in the know. My father, Phonse, was vice-president of North Melbourne, and a wink from him would get us into any area of the ground. A few years later he became club president.

## TOBIN'S TALES

### Gavan Tobin

Memories of the old grandstand come tumbling back. It was already 25 years old when I visited Arden Street for my first game and it was both a rabbit warren and a fire-trap. The ground floor featured an open area where players would crowd in before and after matches, always surrounded by hordes of supporters. Off this main area was a far from glamorous change-room and separate shower room. There was

no privacy as players washed off thick-caked mud then wandered around naked as they towelled themselves down. We kids would look down on the action from a mezzanine area. After leaving our seats in the stand, we'd enter via a door manned by an ancient club stalwart. The old bloke would mutter, "G'day, Phonse", and we were in. On the same level were a committee room, secretary's office

and an entertainment area where post-match socials were held. In one of VFL suburban footy's great traditions, home clubs used to host opposition players, officials and supporters – even the umpires – for a post-game drink. It was an all-male event and usually very raucous with cold beers and colourful language flowing freely. Children weren't welcome but the Tobin crew were well known and we usually got in. They were simpler times and a golden era. We'd pat the police horse before it ran out to protect the umpires then we'd jump the fence to pat our North heroes and have a kick on the sacred turf.

In the rooms, we'd ogle our North idols and sometimes even dared to speak to the ones we knew. In the 1960s, I once saw the *Herald's* Alf Brown interview iconic Demons' coach Norm Smith. Later, we heard it on the car radio as we headed home. Mum often stayed home instead of attending the game. When Dad and the kids arrived home late, we'd get a very frosty welcome. If North had won, it didn't matter.

*Gavan Tobin will write regularly about his beloved North Melbourne. The family runs Tobin Brothers Funerals and his dad, Phonse, is a Kangaroos legend.*

# Spanish book club turns page to bright new mañana

Nancy Lane

When Fiona Bunworth was overseas in London and New York, she saw some Spanish language book clubs and thought they were a good idea. "When I returned to Melbourne, I was waiting for somebody to start one. Then I thought, 'I'm somebody. I could start one,'" she says. It didn't happen immediately. Eventually, when she was in between jobs and temping at the Melbourne Arts Centre, she found she had some spare time on her hands. This coincided with meeting Panagiota Kagkali, a Greek woman who had studied Spanish literature in Spain and who was involved in setting up Lulu's Café on Queensberry Street as an arts hub. "Lulu's was a very welcoming café. You could sit and chat at the bar. It was like a spiritual home," Fiona says. Out of her conversation with Pana, the Spanish Reading Group was born. It started in 2017 and met regularly in the patio at Lulu's. "Pana gave me the idea for our first selection. She grabbed a book of short stories from the shelf, an anthology by Julio Cortázar, and

suggested we read his story Axolotl, which is the name of a Mexican walking fish. It's still one of my favourite stories," she says. Fiona initially sought members by posting the group on the Meetup website. "You don't have to pay as much if membership is less than 50, but online membership soon went over that. Not that they all ever showed up for our discussions," Fiona laughs. She then changed the group to Facebook and also advertised at the North Melbourne Library and the North Melbourne Books in Queensberry Street. Each month, Fiona would select a Spanish language short story that was also available in English. Authors came from various Latin American countries as well as Spain, and included Jorge Luis Borges, Isabel Allende and Gabriel García Márquez. At least six people showed up and the discussion was always lively. Fiona set no minimum language standard. Anyone interested in Spanish-language literature was invited to participate, whether they were native Spanish speakers or beginners wanting to learn. The discussion was mainly in

English, though participants were invited to read parts of the stories aloud in Spanish. When Lulu's closed, the group moved to Willows and Wine on Victoria Street. Last year Fiona decided to focus on *Como Agua Para Chocolate* (Like Water for Chocolate) by Mexican writer Laura Esquivel. The book links a recipe for a different Mexican specialty connected with each month. After COVID-19 forced the group to go online, they have been meeting via the net on the third Sunday afternoon of each month. Plans for 2021 have not yet been set. "We're all very keen to start meeting in person again next year, even if it means we have to sit outdoors in a park rather than in a café," Fiona smiles.

Nancy Lane writes regularly for the News.

**Want to know more?**  
To be on the mailing list and receive announcements about the Spanish Reading Group for next year, email [Spanishbookclubbeginners@gmail.com](mailto:Spanishbookclubbeginners@gmail.com).



Spanish Reading Group's Fiona Bunworth in Errol Street.

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# Tiny Sally saddled up on Jumbo

Maurice Gaul

An elephant running wild with a young girl perched on its back. It's one of footy's classic stories and it took place just down the road.

Early in 1978, reigning premiers North Melbourne were hosting Collingwood, their grand final rivals of the previous year. A huge 31,000 crowd packed the tiny Arden Street oval, dwarfed in that era by the towering Macaulay Road gasometer.

Enter an elephant, stage right.

Exactly why an elephant was on the ground minutes before the biggest game of the season is lost in the mists of time. Some say it was advertising Sole Brothers Circus that had come to town.

A minute later, an official asked the North cheer squad who would like to ride the huge animal. Sally Wood, barely eight years old, put her hand up and squealed, "Me, me, me". Another minute later she was being hoisted onto the elephant's back and into football immortality.

"I was so excited," she recently told the *Herald Sun*. "At the time I thought it was supposed to kick footballs but I certainly remember getting on it, and hanging on for dear life as it started to walk around."

Then, the unimaginable happened.

On the far side of the ground, North ran out behind skipper Keith Greig and the massive crowd erupted. Spooked by the roar, the elephant broke away from its hapless handler and lumbered towards the outer wing with little Sally, totally unrestrained, clinging on for dear life.

While a bit short of stampede pace, it was

moving at a fair old clip and the fans near the fence scattered in fear.

Gavan Tobin, son of legendary Kangaroos' president Phonse, was up in the old wooden grandstand.

"I think it ran straight off the oval through the open gates as the crowd parted like the Red Sea. I've always thought it headed up the embankment, but my memory's not as good as an elephant's," he grins.

In fact, the handler had managed to slow it down, and a breathless Sally was able to dismount. "When I got off, everyone was cheering. I felt like a rock star," she said. Later she heard that Channel Seven's Lou Richards had described the "boy" atop the elephant. "Well, I did have a bowl cut," Sally laughed.

Her mother had seen her wild ride on live TV and had wondered aloud what silly parents would allow their kid to do that. Years later, Sally ended up marrying a staunch Magpies' fan. "The very first time I met him I told him the story, and he said, 'Oh my God'. Now he tells the story to everyone," she said.

Now a 50-year-old postie in Queensland, Sally is happy to relive her wild ride and she has become a regular media favourite. Last year she shared her memories with Mick Molloy and Sam Pang on Channel Seven's outrageous *Front Bar*.

"The 1970s was a magical era. I'd stand in North's cheer squad, my foot on the fence ready to jump over when the siren went. Then I'd go into the rooms, clutching my autograph book, in my duffle coat covered in players' names," she told the *Herald Sun*.

That day is etched in Vince Misale's memory. "I was just 15 and my brothers and I had walked from home in Queensberry Street to



Sally Wood rides the elephant at Arden Street (1978). Photograph: Channel 7

the ground. I wore flared jeans and my duffle coat had Malcolm Blight's number 15 on the back. We were there all day, watching the thirds, the reserves then the seniors," he says.

"I'll never forget the elephant running around before the game with the girl on top. North won and stayed top of the ladder, so after the siren, I ran out to pat Blight on the back. Then we kicked our footy on the

outer wing as we pretended to be our North heroes."

The post-game kick-to-kick on the oval was one of suburban footy's most cherished rituals. "But that day we kept an eye out, just in case the elephant had left something behind," Vince laughs.

Maurice Gaul is editor of the News.



The pretend elephant at Arden Street (2017).



Left: Old mates Scott Witham and Andy Wilson at Hello Jose.



Right: Mexican restaurant Hello Jose in Peel Street, West Melbourne.

Nicole Pereira

Next time you're heading to the Queen Victoria Market, glance across Peel Street and you'll spot Mexican restaurant Hello Jose.

Andy Wilson and friend Scott Witham, now a silent partner in the business, were work colleagues and flatmates. One day they decided they were "sick of reporting to the man" and both quit full-time jobs to embark on a new adventure and to pursue their passion for food.

These two ordinary Aussie blokes were curious about starting a restaurant and spent a year learning the game. In 2015, they opened the doors at Hello Jose, their very first café venture. Andy gives a disarmingly simple explanation for their choice of cuisine. "Mexican was just the flavour of the month," he says.

He admits he felt like an imposter as he

## Say Hello Jose, Andy and Scott

had never been to Mexico and was wary that customers might think the Hello Jose fare wasn't authentic. "To be honest, we never wanted to do Mexican exactly like in Mexico and certainly not Tex-Mex, the Texan-Mexican style. Rather, we wanted our own version of Mexican," Andy says.

"In fact, we even toyed with the idea of running a by-line like 'Inauthentic Mexican' so we wouldn't get barred up by people saying this is not right," he says.

Despite his passion for food, Andy is strikingly relaxed, totally without pretension. He happily speaks of his first attempt at making a taco. "It was a beef taco, with a whole heap of ingredients and a handmade tortilla. It wasn't Mexican in any way shape or

form, but at least I got the tortilla right!"

Andy reveals it was his first taste of a true tortilla that was a personal epiphany. "It changed my experience of Mexican cuisine. Until then, all the Mexican food I'd tried had been El Paso stuff that was put in a box with corn chips," he grimaces.

Andy and Scott aimed to create a *taqueria* (a Mexican café) that looked as if it had been lifted right out of Tulum, a buzzing tourist hotspot in Mexico, and planted in West Melbourne.

"Unlike me, Scott had travelled to Mexico several times and he came back with thousands of photos that inspired the café. Our walls and interior also borrow from street art and graffiti," Andy says.

The long lockdown proved tough for Hello Jose, and Andy shudders at the memory.

"We had established ourselves as a local taqueria on the city's edge, where people could sit down, have a beer and enjoy. Then, when COVID-19 hit, we lost almost 90% of our revenue. We managed to keep all our Mexican and Brazilian staff but had to cut wages by about half."

Andy breathed a sigh of relief when the green flag was waved and the doors reopened to dine-in customers last month. "It was great. We did a week's worth of Uber Eats in just one night," he smiles.

Nicole Pereira writes regularly for the News.

**Want to know more?**  
Hello Jose is at 85 Peel Street, West Melbourne. Bookings are open for Christmas and birthdays reservations. Phone 9326 3934.



# Africa – from the wilds of North Melbourne

Flora Sciarra

Writer Anthony Ham feels right at home here in North Melbourne where he lives with wife Marina and daughters Carlota and Valentina. “We love being close to the city and we really enjoy the real sense of community in the suburb,” he says.

He and Marina met in 2002, soon after he had moved to Spain to live. “We met in Madrid and the girls were born there. At home we speak both Spanish and English,” he smiles.

Anthony is the full package – a writer, traveller and explorer all rolled into one. A one-time lawyer for asylum seekers, he has been widely published, having written or contributed to more than 130 Lonely Planet guidebooks covering such exotic places as Kenya, Tanzania, East Africa, Botswana and Namibia.

He has also written on different cuisines for Lonely Planet’s food guides and has contributed to many newspapers on conservation, current affairs and politics.

However, it is Africa that absorbs him. “I’ve always been fascinated by wild places,” he says. It is no surprise

that the continent is the focus of his recent book, *The Last Lions of Africa – Stories from the frontline in the battle to save a species.*

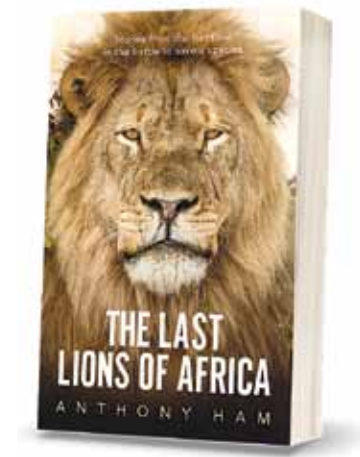
*The Last Lions of Africa* takes the reader on a journey into the world of lions. Anthony travelled into the African wilderness to discover why lions are dangerously close to extinction and to show how they might be saved.

He is passionate about these magnificent creatures and their wild habitats and hopes the book will draw attention to their plight. “Lions are the species that can get people interested in the natural world,” he says.

Anthony credits the assistance given to him by Australian biologist Luke Hunter, now president of PANTHERA, a group dedicated to conserving the world’s cat species. “Luke introduced me to many stories, some of which ended up in the book,” he says.

*The Last Lions* has attracted wide critical praise. Fiona Capp’s glowing review (*The Age*, 26/9) mentions the disturbing fact that lions have disappeared from 29 African countries and their population is in sharp decline.

Capp captures Anthony’s awe and



delight in these majestic animals by noting that when he first saw wild lions, he felt he had glimpsed eternity. Her review quotes his lyrical description of lions that “stalked the earth as if this were their time”.

Critic Tony Park, author of *Last Survivor*, described *The Last Lions* as a “moving tale with a heroic cast of characters, leonine and human, a must-read for anyone passionate about wildlife and wild places”.

Anthony’s next book takes him far from the wilds of Africa.

Set in the Brazilian Amazon, it is the powerful story of one man’s fight to save the precious rainforest from imminent destruction.

“I was lucky that I was able to do my research before lockdown stopped international travel,” he says.

Flora Sciarra writes regularly for the News.

# Building a bright future

Geoff Pound

Our Community is a social enterprise that assists not-for-profit organisations in Australia. Its North Melbourne base is the aptly named Our Community House at 552 Victoria Street.

I recently attended an Our Community-sponsored webinar and was surprised when the host mentioned that 1,600 people nation-wide were logging in. The presenter was rising Labor star Andrew Leigh, shadow assistant minister for treasury and charities, and the webinar’s focus was his new book, *Reconnected: A community builder’s handbook*, co-authored with Nick Terrell.

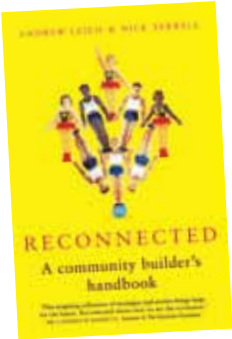
Leigh spoke of the ‘disconnection disaster’ in Australian communities. Compared to the 1960s, Australians today are less likely to be active members of a community group such as scouts or Rotary, or a church.

His analysis is borne out in many of our local community organisations. For instance, the Hotham History Project has few members under sixty. And the board members of Hotham Mission, which oversees the social service of the Uniting Church and partner churches, are of a similar vintage.

Worrying signs of social disconnection are volunteer numbers falling and charitable-giving flatlining. If these trends were not bad enough, COVID-19 has sent volunteerism into even sharper decline – many philanthropic foundations have had their resources depleted, we now have fewer friends and we are less likely to know our neighbours.

Despite this widespread social disconnection, Leigh is upbeat about the future of our communities. He and Terrell are not writing a eulogy for Australian civic life; on the contrary, they are seeking to nurse the patient back to good health.

An extract from Leigh and Terrell’s book paints an alluring vision of an ideal community. They define it as:



*One in which you’ve got plenty of friends, and plenty of time to spend with them. A society where your street is lively and safe, and neighbours are happy to mind your dog when you’re on holiday. Local cafés where people know your name. Creative communities telling Australian stories. More local sporting teams than you can shake a cricket stump at. The kind of politics where people work together to solve local problems, rather than bickering about leaders, slurs and slip-ups.*

The co-authors write of the pleasure of living a more connected life and of the way that such collaboration enables us to tackle larger challenges such as climate change, inequality, inactivity and loneliness.

Their book is full of inspirational stories of Aussie individuals and organisations that have done innovative things that have connected people and that built up the ‘social capital’ of their local community.

The book would make a thoughtful Christmas present or a stimulating suggestion for your book club. It’s certainly a must-read for leaders and members of every local organisation and business.

Geoff Pound is a local resident and minister of the West Melbourne Baptist Church.

## Want to know more?

Read *Reconnected* (Leigh, A & Terrell, N), La Trobe Uni Press in conjunction with Black Inc. Paperback: \$32.99; eBook: \$14.99. Our Community invites you to use the code OURCOMMUNITY at the checkout to receive a discount.



Anthony Ham provides a lookout post for a friendly meerkat.



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# Toy pellets shoot kitty off to vet

Suzanne Kundevska

**S**mokey is one fun-loving kitty. He and his brother Bandit like to get up to all kinds of mischief. However, it doesn't always end well. Recently, Smokey found himself in Lort Smith's intensive care unit after eating four foam pellets, the sort that are used as bullets for a toy Nerf gun.

"We were all at home and I noticed Smokey was vomiting," says his owner, Simone Demaux. To her horror, she watched her much-loved pet bring up not one but three-and-a-half Nerf pellets. "The first thing I thought was, 'Where's the other half?'" a worried Simone says.

The family rushed Smokey to Lort Smith Animal Hospital where vets could feel the remaining part of the pellet in his stomach.

The vet team gave Smokey fluids and other medication to help stabilise him. Soon after, he was taken into surgery with Dr Tracy Tang, who was able to remove the remaining part of the pellet from the cat's intestine.

"Smokey is lucky to have such attentive carers. As soon as they knew he was in trouble they came straight to the right place. If he had been left in this state much longer, the damage could have been more severe," Tracy says.

"All animals love to play, it's in their nature. However, it is important to keep a close eye on them if small objects are nearby as these can be easily ingested and cause problems."

These past six months have meant that we have all been home more often so it's understandable that there are more toys around the house than usual. Small toys or



**Smokey dodged a bullet after eating a foam pellet.**

anything your pet could potentially eat need to be placed where curious cats cannot get to them.

"It's also good practice to wash your pet's toys regularly to ensure they are clean and have no signs of wear and tear. Small pieces of a once durable toy can dislodge and pets can eat them," Tracy says.

Owner Sophie confirms that Smokey has definitely not learned from his experience and is still trying his paw at Nerf pellets,

"He's so cheeky," she says. "We thought he may have learned a lesson, so we tested him out with a Nerf pellet. He is still very interested in them, so we are going to be on high alert for some time."

This tale is a timely reminder to keep a watch on our furry friends and to ensure we put any potentially hazardous objects out of their reach.

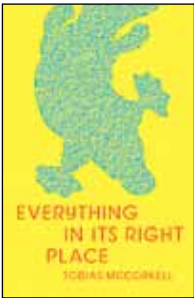
If you do need help, Lort Smith continues to offer emergency, urgent and essential care to animals even when government restrictions are in place.

The hospital provides telephone and online consultations that allow clients to speak with a vet instead of visiting in person.

*Suzanne Kundevska was PR manager at Lort Smith until recently.*

**Want to know more?**  
*If you require urgent medical care for your pet, Lort Smith is open every day from 8:30 am to 10:00 pm. Call 9328 3021 or visit [www.lortsmith.com](http://www.lortsmith.com)*

## BETWEEN THE COVERS Chris Saliba



### Everything in its Right Place

*Tobias McCorkell (Transit Lounge, RRP: \$29.99)*

Sixteen-year-old Ford McCullen lives in Coburg with his mum and grandparents, Noonie and Pop. When his paternal grandmother, Queenie, comes into some money, she gifts him an enrolment at St Anthony's in posh Toorak. Shuttling between the two suburbs, his violin in tow, Ford cops some flak from his Coburg mates. The violin playing is endured to keep his family happy but is seen as pretentious by Coburg standards. Ford is muddling through life, carrying a lot of emotional baggage. Some of his friendships are getting complicated: he longs for a girl named Ellie, his mother has serious mental health issues, and his relationship with his father, who left his mother for another man, is strained. He wonders where he fits in, if at all.

Tobias McCorkell's debut novel, *Everything in its Right Place*, is a funny, heart-wrenching and refreshingly frank portrayal of troubled youth. Ford's story of increasing isolation and disconnection is told in the loutish street talk of boozing and brawling teenage boys, yet is also smartly written and organised. A coming-of-age story that devastates with its sense of grief and loneliness.



### Work: A History of How We Spend Our Time

*James Suzman (Bloomsbury, RRP: \$29.99)*

James Suzman is an anthropologist who has lived with the Ju/'hoansi Bushmen of Namibia, a hunter-gatherer people whose lifestyle predates agriculture. His research on the Ju/'hoansi resulted in his first book, *Affluence Without Abundance*.

This follow-up book is a sweeping history of how we spend our time, from the first planetary organisms to artificial intelligence. The book focuses particularly on our hunter-gatherer past. For most of our species' 300,000 years, we have dug up or plucked food and hunted wild animals. This gave us plenty of free time and a fiercely egalitarian lifestyle. Then 12,000 years ago we began farming, which gave us famines, slavery and hard work, but also surpluses and big cities.

*Work: A History's* narrative makes our 12,000-year road to the modern economy look like a slow descent into madness when compared to the way our species has lived for most of its existence. Suzman writes that his aim is to get us to rethink how we work, where we place value and what we want as a society.

A brilliantly researched, engaging, often witty history that will appeal to readers of Yuval Noah Harari's *Sapiens* and Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.



### The Pocket Chaotic

*Ziggy Hanaor and Daniel Gray-Barnett (Cicada Books, RRP: \$24.99)*

Alexander is a young joey who spends most of his time in his mother's pouch. His mum, Nancy, has a talent for many things. She's good at skipping, the piano and crafts, just to name a few. One thing she is not good at, however, is being neat. She's almost a hoarder, and is forever dropping things into her pouch – receipts, old cereal bar wrappers, bus tickets, bobby pins – anything and everything. Alexander likes it in the pocket. It's snug and warm, but things are getting too chaotic. He tries to keep things neat and he sets up a filing system to put everything away, but his mum keeps filling her pouch. Eventually, it gets too much and, when a half-eaten banana gets thrown in, Alexander can stand it no more. It's time to strike out on his own and become more independent.

Children will get a great laugh out of Ziggy Hanaor's tale of a cheerfully chaotic mother and her exasperated son. Daniel Gray-Barnett's illustrations offer the story an elegant simplicity reminiscent of Ludwig Bemelmans' *Madeline* series of children's books. Light, playful and full of surprises, *The Pocket Chaotic* is a delight.

For 4+ years

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



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The *North and West Melbourne News* is a quarterly publication produced by volunteers from North and West Melbourne and the inner city.

Readers' contributions and letters are welcomed. Where relevant the *News* may seek alternative opinions in the interests of balance. Contributors' opinions are their own, however, and the *News* takes no responsibility for them. We reserve the right to edit or omit articles considered unsuitable or when space is limited.

Articles should be submitted by email to [editorial@centre.org.au](mailto:editorial@centre.org.au). Please use minimal formatting and do not embed graphics in documents. Photographs of suitable resolution for reproduction should be sent as graphic files attached with the article.

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

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# Emerging into a changed neighbourhood

This year hasn't been a classic, although we can all be grateful that Australia has met the pandemic challenge so much more successfully than almost anywhere else.

North and West Melbourne will emerge from this unfortunate year changed by the experience. It may take a while to see how we will actually do so, but some things are already clear. Not every local shop that had to close during the year will reopen. Not every person who spent months all but housebound will immediately feel comfortable in crowds again, masked or not.

As neighbours, we've all been pretty good to each other this past year. Let's maintain that as we all contribute to keeping everyone safe while also getting our lives back on track.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR Tom Seddon



This will be my last column as director of The Centre (publisher of the North & West Melbourne News), a role I have relished over the past two and a half years. From next year's autumn issue of the *News*, this space will be occupied by incoming director Ariel Valent. I wish Ariel good times and great success for the future.

Thursday 12 November marked the end of Frances McMillan's long tenure as coordinator of foundation programs at The Centre.

This role involved driving our

homework clubs in Errol Street and Alfred Street in North Melbourne and also at the Altona North Library.

With sessions interrupted by COVID for much of the year, Frances was pleased when the West Melbourne Baptist Community Centre with its large meeting hall offered to host club sessions, allowing some students to return as Melbourne's lockdown lifted.

Frances also led The Centre's work with the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre (JLTC) in West Melbourne, where she and Louise Cindric deliver 'Workout', a program helping JLTC residents to acclimate to life after prison while also helping them with job search and interview skills.

As I go, I am thrilled to congratulate Maurice, Anne, Janet and the whole *News* team for the paper's much-deserved recognition at this year's Community Newspaper Association of Victoria awards (see page 1). It's a shame there wasn't a separate award for our dedicated delivery team as well!



Louise Cindric, Frances McMillan and Laurence Angwin at Frances' farewell gathering outside West Melbourne Baptist Church.

## Health and Wellbeing Program – Term 1, 2021

In-person Pilates and Older Adults Exercise Classes are returning to the Meat Market and the Legion in 2021!

Cost: \$197 per term or \$144 Health Care Card concession.

Face masks will be required and participants must supply their own mat and theraband. These can be bought from City North Physiotherapy: mats \$20 and therabands \$10

### Tuesday Pilates at the Meat Market

5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne

5.30– 6.30 pm Intermediate  
6.45– 7.45 pm General  
8.00– 9.00 pm Intro to Pilates/Rehab

### 2 February – 30 March

### Wednesdays at the Legion

George Johnson Lane (behind North Melbourne Library)

9.15–10.15 am: General Pilates  
10.30–11.30 am: Older Adults Exercise

### 3 February – 31 March

### Thursday Pilates at the Meat Market

5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne

5.30 – 6.30 pm Beginners  
6.45 – 7.45 pm Intermediate Plus  
8.00– 9.00 pm Intermediate

### 4 February – 1 April

### Fridays at the Legion

George Johnson Lane (behind North Melbourne Library)

12.15 – 1.15 pm Older Adults Exercise

### 5 February – 26 March

More information: 03 9328 3733 or [www.citynorthphysio.com.au](http://www.citynorthphysio.com.au)

## Thank you to News distributors for 2020

Despite the difficulties this year, our intrepid volunteers delivered four bumper issues of the *News* to North and West Melbourne letterboxes. Thank to the following distributors for their fantastic commitment.

Craig Barry	Agnes Girdwood	Nancy Nankervis
Anne Burgi	Janet Graham	Robert Niemann
Lisbeth Castellano	Susan Harraway	Kay and Rob Oke
Tim Cremean	Karen Hayes	Jacques Péril
Anthony Denehey	Mary Kehoe	Annette Rowan
Meg De Young	Jan Lacey	Eiko Sakaguchi
Gary and Robyn Dowling	Pat Lightfoot	Madeleine Scully
Elaine Drew	Kathleen McPherson	Tom Seddon
Carolyn Fyfe	Rebecca Mazzini	Rosemary Tonkin
Alba Gatto	Hanna Melissa	Rahul Velumani
Maurice Gaul	Helen Michell	Samantha Wilson
	Jack Mitri	

## Christmas Services in North and West Melbourne

With the uncertainty about COVID-19 restrictions, some local churches will be unable to hold their usual Christmas programs.



### St James Old Cathedral, Anglican

Corner King and Batman streets, West Melbourne (opposite Flagstaff Gardens). Check [www.sjoc.org.au](http://www.sjoc.org.au), for the latest news.

### St Mary's Anglican

Corner Queensberry and Howard streets, North Melbourne  
9.00 am and 11.00 am services every Sunday during Advent. Check [www.stmarys.org.au](http://www.stmarys.org.au), for Christmas service details as they are announced.

### Uniting Church, Mark the Evangelist

51 Curzon Street, North Melbourne  
A 9.30 am service on Christmas Day is expected, for on-site attendance and also live-streaming, subject to COVID-19 restrictions. Check [www.marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au](http://www.marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au).

## Advertisement sizes and rates for 2021

Size	Colour	Mono
Full page (24 cm wide x 34 cm high)	\$1732.50	\$1457.50
Half page (24 cm wide x 17 cm high)		
or 12 cm wide x 34 cm high)	\$841.50	\$731.50
One-third page (24 cm wide x 12 cm high)	\$610.50	\$533.50
One-quarter page (24 cm wide x 8.5 cm high)		
or 12 cm wide x 17 cm high)	\$451.00	\$390.50
One-eighth page (12 cm wide x 8.5 cm high)	\$225.50	\$198.00
One-16th page (12 cm wide x 4 cm high)	\$121.00	\$104.50
Business card (in Services Directory)		
(9 cm wide x 5.5 cm high)	\$104.50	\$88.00

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

## Send contributions, letters and feedback to:

North and West Melbourne News  
The Centre, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne 3051  
Email: [editorial@centre.org.au](mailto:editorial@centre.org.au) Telephone: 9328 1126

### AUTUMN 2021 ISSUE

Contributions deadline: Friday 12 February  
Publication date: Friday 12 March





## Follow the coffee trail

North Melbourne is justifiably known for its cafes and coffee, but don't limit yourself to your closest cafe. Walk in any direction in North and West Melbourne and you are sure to find a friendly face, fabulous coffee and food, and interesting decor. Photographer Meg De Young took a trip round the area in the first week after the 'Great Lockdown' loosened its grip on Melbourne to visit cafe owners keen to welcome visitors.

*Clockwise from top left:*

- 1. Matt at Ample Café & Bar (Howard Street)
- 2. Tina at Butcher Shop Cafe (Hawke Street)
- 3. Joelson at Twenty and Six Espresso (Queensberry Street)
- 4. Takumi at 279 (Victoria Street)
- 5. Giulia and Cristina at Paws 4 Coffee (Boundary Road)
- 6. Maximiliano at Fandango Cafe (Errol Street)
- 7. Beatrix (Queensberry Street)
- 8. Yura and Sean at Palette (Queensberry Street)
- 9. Bel and Jason at Code Black (Howard Street)

