

DOCKLANDS NEWS

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Virus can't stop Docklands' Star from shining

While the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) saw the Melbourne Star Observation Wheel join scores of local businesses in shutting its doors to the public last month, the attraction will continue to shine bright for Docklands as a symbol of strength and vibrancy for our community.

Docklands on pause amid uncertainty

WORDS BY David Schout LOCAL NEWS

As businesses close, workers clear and events cease, Docklands is bracing for an acutely uncertain 2020 amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

In the space of just two weeks in March, almost all Docklands-based businesses and events were forced to close or cancel after increasingly stringent government measures forced people indoors.

Many local residents now face the prospect of isolation inside apartment buildings, making the months ahead particularly challenging.

With less room to move (and practice social distancing) in these living arrangements, owners' corporations (OCs) throughout Docklands face important decisions about common areas and procedures to deal with residents who may contract the virus.

The local area, via its numerous hotels, may also host

return travelers who are forcibly quarantined under federal government directives. At time of publication, the state government said that Crowne Plaza was the only Docklands hotel to be doing so.

Accommodation giant Quest confirmed with *Docklands News* that while many of their hotels throughout the nation were offered as quarantine facilities, Quest NewQuay and Quest Docklands would not be taking returned travellers.

NewQuay franchisee Stacy Andronikos, however, said that the pandemic had hit his business hard.

"It's tough. It's been tough on the entire industry," he said.

"We're just taking it day by day at to be honest because things are moving so fast. It has been tough for the area and for Melbourne. Fingers crossed we can pick up as quick as we dropped off."

The impact on many businesses has been swift. An area defined by a large working population,

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How the virus has hit Docklands

The Docklands community and economy are, like the rest of the world, wading through an unprecedented experience.

WORDS BY Meg Hill ECONOMY

Docklands jobs have been lost, meaning Docklands workers are unemployed. Foot traffic is down, and sales are plummeting. On Sunday, March 22, Premier Daniel Andrews announced all non-essential services would be shut down in the following 48 hours, for an indefinite period.

Here's how events and impacts unfolded in Docklands.

Government and business

Amid announcements of federal and state government stimulus packages, the City of Melbourne passed its own stimulus valued at more than \$10 million on March 17.

The package focused on small businesses in the municipality and included:

- A virtual business support summit at Melbourne Town Hall;
- Suspending fees for *Food Act (1984)* registrations and street trading permits for three months;
- Halving rent for eligible tenants in Council-owned buildings for three months;
- Opportunities to deploy casual and part-time staff to enhance city cleanliness and amenity; and
- Developing a Rates Hardship Policy.

The business support summit, proposed by Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood, is a partnership with the state and federal governments, Victoria's Chief Health Officer and the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In fast tracking its rates hardship policies at a special council meeting on Wednesday, March 25, councillors

unanimously endorsed an economic package that included 14 initiatives to support businesses.

"As the closest level of government to the people, we are acutely aware of how devastating this virus is for our residential and business community," Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood said.

"We want to send a message that we know you are going through hard times. If you are worried about your ability to pay your rates on time, please get in touch with our support hotline."

"We will soon announce details of a virtual summit for business leaders. We need to help our business community survive this shock so they can power our economy for decades to come."

Yearly rates notices are issued in August. For ratepayers who pay via instalment, the fourth instalment due date is May 31, 2020. Businesses that fall behind on rates and charges can request that interest be waived if they are unable to pay their next instalment.

In the case of hardship, a request of assistance from Council must be made in writing, including the details of the circumstances preventing the ratepayer from meeting their financial obligation to Council.

The City of Melbourne said that it would advise of its decision in writing within 14 days for a person, or within 21 days for a body (small business), after receiving an application for financial hardship consideration, once all relevant information has been provided.

The City of Melbourne also announced that it would temporarily suspend fees such as street trading and outdoor dining area permits.

"We have fast-tracked our policy to provide options to defer, reduce or

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We're still publishing

WORDS BY *Sean Car*
EDITORIAL

The uncertainty currently confronting our world is well understood and, like everyone, *Docklands News* is not immune to it.

“Unprecedented”, “extraordinary” and “bizarre” are words we’ve all become sadly too familiar with in recent times as the devastating effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) continue to wreak havoc in our community.

But while the fear of the unknown is always a natural cause for anxiety, we should not allow panic to become a more powerful contagion than the virus itself. Calmness, compassion and care are some of the best cures we currently have in grappling with the fresh realities of this pandemic each day.

And as so many of you will feel isolated at home and cut off from your own communities during this period, there has never been a more important time for us to try and do our bit to help you feel that little bit more connected.

But with so many businesses shutting their doors and doing their best to weather this storm, we will be doing our very best to keep bringing you your local news while things return to normal, which they will.

In the meantime, if you’re a resident or business, please don’t hesitate to reach out, share your story with us and let us know how we can support you through this in any way.

To stay in touch with your community, you can also join our recently launched Docklands Community Hub Facebook page: facebook.com/groups/docklandscommunityhub ●



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We can still Love Our Street even when we are not allowed on them

WORDS BY *Dr Janette Corcoran*
ENVIRONMENT

We are now well used to reading the growing list of events cancelled due to COVID-19.

And, sadly, LOS3008 (Love Our Street Docklands) has a couple of events to add to this list.

The first is our regular community clean in Docklands and the second is a special event which was planned for May 2020.

This was our inaugural Vertical Village Waste Market – funded, in part, by the City of Melbourne (CoM) through its Waste Minimisation Innovation Grant program.

We had intended this column to be about the different displays that we had organised – a repair café, a toy library, and a wide range of schemes of actual use to residents living in high-rise apartments. And we had planned for the event to be held in Village St – becoming the first group to use this purpose-designed space for what it was intended – holding local events.

All is not lost, and we are currently working with CoM to see if we can hold this event at a later time – stayed tuned!

But in the meantime, the issue of litter in our streets continues – with COVID-19 having some unexpected impacts.

First, there are the strewn take away containers and coffee cups. As we are all well aware, serving take away food is now the life blood for many cafes and restaurants. But this in no way means that the packaging has to be left on the street!

The second noticeable impact is an increase in abandoned trolleys. A recent post on a Docklands Facebook page entreated people who had used these trolleys to, “Please return them ... Docklands is littered with trolleys.”

While agreeing that these should not be treated like O-bikes, there is also, I believe, a responsibility on the part of the supermarket to implement ways to stop their trolleys being so



“But in the meantime, the issue of litter in our streets continues – with COVID-19 having some unexpected impacts.”



used. Electronic locks, for example, are used in other locations and they work by automatically locking a wheel when a trolley is moved past a barrier sensor.

LOS3008 thanks all our members and the wider Docklands community for the great support shown for our clean-up work - and we will be back working together for a green and clean Docklands when conditions are right! ●

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▲ The sun sets on a quieter than normal Docklands last month.



▲ The art of social distancing in action.

Hoarding goes up

LOCAL NEWS

Permanent hoarding was installed by Development Victoria on March 12 around Central Pier to secure the now closed site.

The 125-metre hoarding runs along the frontage with Harbour Esplanade and has been supplemented with safety fencing along the water's edge. A floating boom has also been installed at water level around the pier as a protective measure to prevent any material from entering the waterway over time.

"It is important to both secure and preserve the existing site while we consider the next steps for Central Pier, recognising it will take some time before we understand what that future might look like," Group Head Precincts at Development Victoria Geoff Ward said.

"Just as the decision to close the structure was made in the interests of public safety, these protective measures are further reinforcement that safety remains paramount and will complement the 24/7 security arrangements on Central Pier."

Development Victoria said that it had begun discussions with Heritage Victoria and other key stakeholders around the planning process involved in any redevelopment of the structure and that a community and stakeholder engagement program would soon come about.

Development Victoria announced the permanent closure of Central Pier in early January, following a 15-week assessment of the 100-year-old structure which determined that it could not be made safe for ongoing occupation ●



Docklands on pause amid uncertainty

Continued from page 1.

Docklands has seen a rapid downturn in foot traffic that rendered some streets into ghost towns in a short space of time.

The City of Melbourne's pedestrian counting system indicates that more than 400 people typically walk past the usually busy corner of Bourke St and Harbour Esplanade on a Monday lunchtime (between 12-1pm).

But by Monday March 30, that number was down to just 40 as many businesses closed.

Some were uncertain whether their doors would open again.

Lord Mayor and Docklands resident Sally Capp said the health and economic impacts on the city were profound.

"Of course, the priority has to be health and the way we respond to our challenge around slowing the spread of this virus," she said in a social media address.

"It has been devastating to see the impact on the number people (present) and what that means for our retailers and hospitality businesses in particular."

Cr Capp said that people were "firmly at the centre" of the council's approach in the coming weeks and months.

"It's really important that we're all taking

a caring approach at this time. For us we're particularly looking at our most vulnerable, being our elderly and rough sleepers. So please, whatever you're doing, look out for the people around you whilst taking the necessary precautions for all of us to slow the advancement of this virus."

All the city's libraries, aquatic/recreation centres, arts and cultural centres, community hubs and visitor centres have been closed until further notice.

In Docklands this includes: The Hub, Library at The Dock, Melbourne City Marina and Yarra's Edge Marina onshore facilities (boating customers can still access their vessel through marina gates).

While parks remain open, playground equipment has been ruled off-limits at Buluk Park, Docklands Park, Point Park, Ron Barassi Snr Park, Victoria Green and Wharf's Landing.

Childcare facilities and in-home services such as domestic assistance, home maintenance, meals, personal care, respite, and individual social support would continue, as council staff were ordered to ask COVID-19 screening questions.

While the state and federal government's response would best determine the health and

economic impact of COVID-19 on locals, the council has made a number of moves to soften the blow.

Most notably, this included a \$10 million pledge to cushion the impact on city businesses and workers, something small business chair Susan Riley said the a favourable financial position allowed them to do. For more on what the package included read *How the virus has hit Docklands* on page 1.

Deputy Mayor Aaron Wood said relief would be swift.

"We're acting quickly, it's not all going to be perfect, but sometimes 'perfect' can get in the way of 'good', and that's really why we're moving as quickly as possible," he said at the March 17 Future Melbourne Committee meeting.

For updated local government advice on COVID-19, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au ●



David Schout

JOURNALIST

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A different crisis for the worse off

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY *John Tadigiri*
 HOMELESSNESS

When society grinds to a halt, events are cancelled, businesses shut and most of us head indoors to self-isolate, but what happens to our vulnerable?

The city's homeless and those organisations that care for them are bracing for the dire impacts that may soon be felt. Everything from food, medical resources and buildings are being sourced to care for the pre-existing homeless community plus a potential influx of individuals thrown onto the streets during the crisis.

Major Brendan Nottle from the Salvation Army said the charity was working frantically.

"We've had our café we operate for people that are homeless deemed an essential service by the Chief Medical Officer and we're doing everything we can to stay open and remain safe," Major Nottle said.

"Yesterday we had a forensic clean of the building that took about eight hours. The cleaners are back again this afternoon for another eight hours."

He said the café had replaced all cutlery with disposable utensils, and that he was having additional freezers delivered for storage, while also working with the City of Melbourne to source buildings to get the homeless off the streets to isolate and quarantine.

All of this was in the goal to avoid a chilling worst case scenario.

"We are preparing for a day that may come where we have to close the café and deliver those meals onto the street," Major Nottle said.

"In the worst-case scenario, we've purchased face masks and are trying to source hazmat suits to deliver so people don't go hungry and remain in social contact."

As everyone increases what has come to be known as social distancing, Major Nottle said we should be mindful of what that meant for the homeless and vulnerable.

"Social isolation for the people we work with is one of the biggest issues they have to deal with," he said.

"We will need to be checking in on people's mental and physical health on the street."

"We're trying to access really quite large volumes of food in an environment that is inviting and not threatening."

"Presumably there will be lots of people who have never approached us before."

Major Nottle said the Salvation Army was also working on technological communication capabilities to check in on mental health and keep social communication open – even while social distancing.

He also thanked the Victorian Government and Premier

Daniel Andrews for homelessness and public housing support announced on March 18.

The state government will provide almost \$6 million to homelessness organisations to help them deal with the crisis.

It will help with the search for temporary housing for the homeless and private rental brokerage for those at risk of falling into homelessness.

Minister for Housing Richard Wynne said the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic would have wide-ranging impacts across our community but would hit the homeless particularly hard.

"This funding will help to get a roof over the head of more Victorians, helping to reduce transmission amongst the community and provide those who are unwell with a safe place to recover," Minister Wynne said.

"We're also making sure our public housing tenants have the information, advice and support they need to look after themselves during this pandemic."

The Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) also welcomed the announcement from the state government.

CHP CEO Jenny Smith said the crisis highlighted the vulnerability of the homeless.

"This pandemic has highlighted the increased vulnerability that decades of inadequate provision of social housing has created for our community during a health crisis," Ms Smith said.

"Governments need to be planning now to ensure that longer term there is enough social housing to meet the need in our community from people who cannot afford private rental."

On March 26 the Victorian Government announced the kitchens at Parliament House would be used to prepare meals for vulnerable community members.

"The Speaker and I have decided that we must put Parliament's commercial-sized kitchens to good use in response to the Coronavirus emergency," Legislative Council president Shaun Leane said.

"We will be working with organisations such as The Salvation Army, The Lazarus Centre, St Peter's Eastern Hill Anglican Church, the Father Bob Maguire Foundation and Melbourne City Mission to help them get nutritious meals to people in need," Mr Leane said.

"Our own catering staff and the agency staff we regularly use can continue to get work as a result of this initiative, and we will be using Victorian food producers and suppliers," he said.

More than 400 meals were provided in the first days of this initiative. The state government said this would increase to around 2000 meals a day that will be distributed through the community programs run by the charitable organisations ●

Workers adjust to new regime

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
 LOCAL NEWS

The quiet evacuation of Docklands' workforce was completed by March 23, leaving construction sites, supermarkets and a few open cafes as the main signs of life in the suburb.

The workforce of 32,000, mostly young professionals, were left to begin the fast learning curve of working remotely.

Some were getting ready for their isolation at home by stocking up at COSTCO.

One video editor had 30 bagels loaded on top of his trolley while a NAB worker was trying to stay healthy by sticking to her fortnightly shopping regime.

The forced evacuation of NAB's Bourke St office grabbed the headlines two weeks ago but the more mundane issues of daily life and looking after others were preoccupying these workers.

Dominic Van Dyke from Yarraville was doing the shopping for all of his five siblings, aged between 25 and 50, who have moved in together.

"We'll have more family time. Life's pretty busy. We don't see much of each other as we've got our own schedules. It will be pretty nice," he told *Docklands News*.

The mood was less jovial at the Docklands Residences construction site at The District Docklands where work appeared at first glance to be going on as usual.

The construction company has introduced staggered shifts and hired a full-time cleaner to sanitise surfaces.

Productivity has only been marginally affected but workers are worried about their futures, despite extra safety measures.

A worker told *Docklands News* that the State would probably call a halt to construction soon.

Many adjustments to COVID-19 are occurring behind closed doors as companies develop systems for deal-



▲ Construction workers in Docklands.

ing with the crisis, both economic and social.

Employees are still working at Channel 7, but the newsroom is in lockdown to protect it from crews still out in the community.

"Journalists and camera crews are not allowed inside our Docklands' studio, as we are obviously most at risk of contracting the virus due to mixing with the public," police reporter Teegan Dolling told *Docklands News*.

"Our morning meetings are carried out over Skype, meaning we don't have any face-to-face contact with anyone in our office. The changes are huge, and obviously in our absence, it puts a lot of stress on those behind the scenes to make it all run smoothly."

Some corporates have been more proactive than NAB which publicly evacuated its building two weeks ago after an employee was supposed to have tested positive, giving workers no time to say their goodbyes.

Collins St publishing company Pearson sent its global workforce of 40,000 home three weeks ago. The company has an office in Milan.

Pearson permission manager, Alice McBroom, said that working from home in the corporate sector was a sensitive issue.

"There's a work station assessment and it has to be in a safe environment," she said.

"Even if you're living in a small apartment you can't just make do with a chest of drawers or a kitchen bench. We're meant to be following OHS to make sure we are sitting properly." ●



▲ Dominic van Dyke at COSTCO getting ready for more time at home.



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How the virus has hit Docklands

Continued from page 1.

waive rates and charges levied on a property – depending on the severity of the financial impact,” Lord Mayor Sally Capp said.

“If you are facing genuine financial hardship in paying your rates, fees or charges we urge you to contact council to discuss your individual circumstances. Our phone lines are open and we have staff available to support you.”

“In partnership with Spotless Services, we will also provide cross training and employment for approximately 200 affected casual staff to be redeployed to work on improving city cleanliness and presentation.”

The Docklands Chamber of Commerce (DCC) said it had “radically altered” its focus for the foreseeable future.

“The world has changed irrevocably in a matter of days,” DCC President Johanna Maxwell said.

“What began as a health concern has quickly become the greatest economic challenge this country has ever faced. Our heart and mind are in Docklands and that’s where we are committed to helping.”

The DCC said support to its members would include:

- Actively supporting, managing and advocating for any applications made to the City of Melbourne COVID-19 stimulus support package;
- Actively advocating on behalf of affected members in cases of rent and fee relief from the City of Melbourne;
- Working directly with the City of Melbourne in developing marketing assets and collateral so that Docklands is primed for a return to full functionality;
- Profiling every single one of its 200-plus member businesses across our newsletter, socials and websites with their response to COVID-19 and directly marketing these initiatives to the local community; and
- Continuing to pressure (at present behind the scenes) for permanent activation of Victoria Harbour along the lines of its

lights, laser and fountains presentation.

The DCC has also advocated on behalf of charter boat operators, who have received 50 per cent in rate relief from council.

Most Docklands businesses have had to respond to the crisis with major changes. Capri Café Docklands tried to solve problems related to supply chains and stock in the major supermarkets by offering a pick-up package of essential items to customers.

Rate hardship applications opened on March 30 and ratepayers seeking support can contact 9658 9658. Small businesses should press 1 to speak to the COVID-19 Business Concierge Hotline.

Eligible businesses and organisations can now also apply for City of Melbourne grants via melbourne.smartygrants.com.au

The state and federal governments have also announced a range of stimulus measures to support businesses. On March 30, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced an unprecedented \$130 billion package providing businesses with wage subsidies for up to six months.

For more information on both state and federal economic support packages visit business.vic.gov.au and treasury.gov.au/coronavirus.

Community

Charities and community groups are finding it just as hard as business to navigate the crisis.

On March 16, less than a month after opening its doors, Docklands’ Think Pink Foundation was one of the first among both community groups and business to announce it would close in response to COVID-19.

“This means all our current activities that require clients to visit the centre will be suspended until the State of Emergency is lifted,” Chairman Ron Smith said.

“During this time arrangements will be made allowing clients access to Breast Care Nurse support via telephone, email and facetime. Clients can book via telephone or by using our online bookings system.”

The Docklands Pop Up Neighbourhood



We will have volunteers ring people who we know are living on their own, and who have little, if any, support.



House has developed a Docklands Community Care Register to facilitate a community response to the COVID-19 crisis.

“Through this register, we will be able to link people together during their time of isolation,” Neighbourhood House coordinator Carolynne Venn said.

Ms Venn said all participants would feel out a registration form and be matched with a suitable volunteer.

“At times like this we need to consider people who are more vulnerable than others, like our seniors, people with a disability, people with low immunity, people sleeping rough, our family members who may be vulnerable, our health workers, people living on their own, international students and others,” Ms Venn said.

“People need to have access to essential items, which is inclusive of food, personal hygiene products, cleaning materials, medications and support for their mental wellbeing.”

“It is hoped that the Docklands Community Care Register may help us work together during this difficult time.”

If you are interested in volunteering and have a current Working with Children’s Check Police Check please email: commdev@centre.org.au or ring The Centre in North Melbourne and leave a message on 9328 1126.

The state government established a similar service for those in mandatory self-isolation.

Those running short on food and unable to have any dropped off by friends are now eligible for a “food and personal care package”, with a two-week supply of items like long-life milk, pasta, canned fruit, cereal and sugar, as well as some personal care items.

People wishing to request a pack should call Victoria’s dedicated Coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398.

Arts

Cr Rohan Leppert, chair of the City of Melbourne’s Arts, Culture and Heritage portfolio, said some of the most immediate impacts were felt in the creative sector.

“One after the other creative directors and CEOs are calling me and saying we’re about to cancel or defer our upcoming festival,” he said.

“The arts ecosystem is very deep and very broad, and like other sectors the City of Melbourne is overexposed to there’s a lot of independent contractors and casual workers.”

Representatives of the arts and culture sector addressed the Council on March 17 to outline the impact they have already felt locally and nationally.

Matthew Peckham, production services manager at Her Majesty’s Theatre, told council hundreds of jobs in the live theatre and entertainment sector alone had already been lost in the area ●

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dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus



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A MESSAGE TO OUR COMMUNITY



As we face into the biggest public health challenge we've ever experienced, the City of Melbourne is here to reassure you that the health and wellbeing of our community is at the heart of all our decision making.

This is an unprecedented time and we are committed to supporting all residents and businesses by delivering essential services and helping combat the spread of COVID-19.

We are urging everyone to adhere to the advice from health authorities to help keep our community as safe as possible.

You can count on us to continue to deliver services such as waste and recycling; support for the elderly, isolated and at risk; children's services; homelessness services and animal management. It's what we're here to do, and we won't let you down.

To the businesses within the City of Melbourne, we have established a Business Concierge service to provide information and advise you about available support - call **9658 9568** and press 1 to access this service.

For the latest on how we're supporting you and the community in these fast-changing times, visit **melbourne.vic.gov.au**

Take care, stay healthy, and look out for each other.

Melbourne City Council



(From left) Councillor Susan Riley, Councillor Kevin Louey, Councillor Beverley Pinder, Councillor Nicolas Frances Gilley MBE, Lord Mayor Sally Capp, Councillor Nicholas Reece, Deputy Lord Mayor Arron Wood, Councillor Rohan Leppert, Councillor Cathy Oke, Councillor Philip Le Liu, Councillor Jackie Watts.

Council well placed to support battling businesses

WORDS BY *Stephen Mayne*
COUNCIL AFFAIRS

At a time when small business is getting wiped out by the coronavirus, it was good to see City of Melbourne councillors nimbly come up with a \$10 million support package at the committee meeting held on March 17.

City of Melbourne has the second strongest balance sheet of any Australian council after City of Sydney. The latest quarterly update showed a cash balance of \$144.5 million as of December 31 and no debt.

Some of the stimulus detail is still to be worked out but offering 500 grants of \$4000 to artists and small organisations was a great start. Similarly, offering 600-plus Queen Victoria Market (QVM) traders rent relief, including a 50 per cent 3-month discount for non-food stalls and 25 per cent off for food-related traders, was terrific. However, it may need to be a complete rent holiday if parts of the market are closed.

Councils across Australia are well placed to provide support to their communities and City of Melbourne was one of the first to act. As the federal government deluges cash on individuals and businesses, it should also think about giving money direct to councils for locally managed stimulus programs.

Should council add to its property holdings?

One thing that councils can do during a crisis is use its balance sheet to pick up additional property holdings, particularly if there are distressed sellers of strategic assets.

Over the years City of Melbourne has bought into a variety of property assets including The Regent Theatre (held in a 50-50 joint venture with the state), the Kathleen Syme centre in Carlton, the Boyd Community Hub in Southbank and the Munro site next to QVM.

In hindsight, council should have swooped

on the Palace Theatre at the top of Bourke St when it was sold for \$11.2 million in 2012. One of Melbourne's biggest and best live music venues was then sadly closed in April 2014 and internal demolition started a few weeks ago. What a shame!

If other theatres become available during this crisis after being forced to close, council should be ready to step in.

Similarly, the AFL is reportedly asking the state government for a \$250 million interest free loan to help it through a cash crisis.

Perhaps it should consider selling its biggest asset – Marvel Stadium at Docklands – to City of Melbourne or the state government.

Most stadiums around the world are owned by governments and having long term control of Marvel Stadium would be a great strategic move for City of Melbourne in terms of managing the future development of Docklands.

With net assets of more than \$4.4 billion and no debt, such a move is within the capability of council.

Councillors disagree with officers over new Dexus office tower

The Reserve Bank building at 60 Collins St is an iconic location at the Paris End of Collins St, so it is exciting that property giant Dexus is proposing to build a new high quality \$140 million office tower on the site, although this will probably be delayed by the COVID-19 crisis.

Sydney-based Dexus is close to finishing its \$1.4 billion twin towers across the road at 80 Collins St – a project it bought from the Queensland government in 2019.

An unusual element of council's involvement in the Reserve Bank tower proposal was that the council officers recommended Minister for Planning Richard Wynn refuse it, partly because it would overshadow the food court at AMP's Collins Place across the road.

The councillors unanimously overturned this advice at the March 17 committee meeting, instead passing a resolution saying that it didn't



Most stadiums around the world are owned by governments and having long term control of Marvel Stadium would be a great strategic move for City of Melbourne in terms of managing the future development of Docklands.



The detail hasn't been disclosed in the 2018-19 City of Melbourne annual report which explicitly disclosed the pay arrangements for the new CEO Justin Hanney but not his predecessor.

This was the second ex gratia payment to Rimmer by the council, who also received sick leave payments over and above his contractual and statutory entitlements in 2016.

As one of the councillors who agreed to the sick leave top-up payments at the time, I think it was the right and compassionate thing to do in terms of retaining a talented new CEO battling an unexpected illness. However, the details should have been disclosed at the time, rather than kept confidential.

The same principle applies to any exit payment. CEO contracts are typically generous at the City of Melbourne and if additional payments are going to be approved, at the very least this should be disclosed and explained to the public.

Farewell for now

Finally, this will be my final *Docklands News* column for a while. While not certain, there is a possibility that I'll be a candidate in the City of Melbourne elections come October and in those circumstances it is appropriate to head to the exits.

Keep supporting your wonderful local monthly newspaper in the period ahead as they provide the best coverage of all things City of Melbourne ●



Stephen Mayne
JOURNALIST AND FORMER CITY OF MELBOURNE COUNCILLOR
NEWS@DOCKLANDSNEWS.COM.AU

object to the proposal provided the overshadowing was limited to less than 30 per cent of the Collins Place food court between 11am and 2pm on September 30.

This will be an interesting test for the Minister. Just how high is too high at this iconic site and should a privately-owned enclosed food court be protected from shadowing?

Maximum transparency on CEO pay

As promised in last month's columns, there are some important disclosures to be made about the remuneration arrangements of former City of Melbourne CEO Ben Rimmer, who departed from Town Hall in January 2019.

Rimmer, who is now the state government's director of housing, is believed to have received a six figure ex gratia exit payment over and above his contractual entitlements.

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▲ Teja Sri Kaja.

Community isolation

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
LOCAL NEWS

Teja Sri Kaja decided to move to Docklands two years ago to be submerged into a new community.

Moving from India to live with her husband who works at NAB in Docklands, the couple originally planned to live “in the suburbs” where their friends lived.

“But we thought maybe in the city I would meet people. I’m not the best at speaking English and I have to develop my communication skills, so he thought maybe this place is the best,” Teja told *Docklands News* at the end of February.

She said that it was the right decision. She made friends, participated in community groups at the Red Cross and the Library at the Dock, and volunteered at Docklands’ pop-up Neighbourhood House.

“I’ve met so many people and made so many friends. I like the people here because in India if I don’t know someone I don’t talk to them, but here everyone says good morning, hello, how are you,” Teja said.

“In India I worked as a pharmaceutical analyst. I’m looking for a job here but first I need to improve my English and communication skills.”

“That’s why I go to the Red Cross and Neighbourhood House and some other meet up groups.”

“I meet people from different cultures and learn about them and about diversity. There are 15 to 20 other volunteers at the Neighbourhood House and we all are friends.”

We caught up with Teja at the end of March. She was self-isolating in her apartment with her husband and had stopped engaging in most of the activities that helped her grow into a new community and develop her

“We have friends here but we have to stop meeting. I used to go to the library and work on my English but now I’m just using English and grammar books I have in my home.”



English.

“I’m stuck inside at my home. This week I couldn’t go to the Neighbourhood House but I think self-isolation is best at the moment. My husband is working from home too,” she said.

“I’m reading books and watching television, sometimes we play games like Monopoly.”

“We have friends here but we have to stop meeting. I used to go to the library and work on my English but now I’m just using English and grammar books I have in my home.”

The couple also had to cancel their trip home, planned for May. It would have been Teja’s first visit to India since moving to Australia.

“I’m calling my friends though and keeping in touch. I’ve been calling my family in India too, they have the same problems there. I’m calling my mother and father and making sure they’re safe,” she said ●

From the Mission to Seafarers

WORDS BY *Sue Dight*
COMMUNITY

To all seafarers and port workers, the unsung and unknown frontline key workers for the movement of essential cargo to keep all countries’ wealth and health stay afloat during this extraordinary time. Thank you.

The seafarers continue to bring in important medical supplies and other essential items to countries in desperate need of them, but are never regarded as citizens of the world or considered equally as important as their cargoes. They are constantly sent to danger zones and endure fear, danger and the uncertainties of being stuck on seas and in ports.

They are confined to their ships to “relax” even when they come to a safe zone as they are feared to have come from dangerous countries. Ships are one of the safest places at this time, due to the crew having to endure being stuck on board as they travel the distances of the oceans across our globe. They are not being able to go home to their families, who may also need them, due to restrictions of no or few crew changes at this time. They are “imprisoned” on their ships

due to restrictions of not being able to go ashore.

The Mission to Seafarers is there for them. Help us to be recognised for our work in keeping the crews mentally and spiritually healthy. We have had to close our doors temporarily, just like every other hospitality business, but we are here to ensure their basic needs are met. Seafarers can’t get to the supermarket for shampoo, vitamins, and deodorant (and who doesn’t need that when we are confined to quarters!), so we are their shopping buddies. We supply them with phone cards to be able to phone home to connect and see how their families are going, we ensure that they have the little treats in life, like a book to read or a beanie for their next journey on the ocean.

When we all re-open our doors, you will be able to see how the Mission works, and has done since 1857. Our work for the welfare of seafarers is just as important today as it was when we first started, and by letting others know about the Mission to Seafarers you will have supported us in these difficult times. Like us on Facebook or follow us on twitter, Instagram or see our latest film on YouTube ●

▼ *Delivering supplies to another grateful ship’s crew here in Melbourne*



For more information:
missiontoseafarers.com.au

Reality closes in on riverside community

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
LOCAL NEWS

Thursday, March 19 was a difficult day for Mel, even though the sun was shining, the water glistening and no-one in sight was wearing a face mask.

She had just been made redundant from her head office job in retail after three-and-a-half years.

“They called me this morning,” she told *Docklands News*.

Her partner also works in retail but he still has a job and they have a nice apartment overlooking the water.

That doesn’t stop her from worrying about their financial situation.

“Right now I feel it’s the unknown of when I will be able to find work. I might not find a job in six months. It will take a long time for companies to rebuild.”

▼ *Mel contemplates life without a job.*



▲ *Retail therapy for Tanya.*

Mel’s company adapted to the crisis by splitting the workplace into two teams and put staff on a rotating roster so they weren’t in the office at the same time.

Each team worked from home for two days and in the office for three.

That was for the first week. This week they were issuing redundancies across the entire business, Mel said.

“It’s better than being laid off. At least I will get a pay-out.”

As the city grows more used to the current State of Emergency, retail is hurting but some local residents are intrepid shoppers and will do

anything to look after after their families.

“None of the shops are closed,” Tanya Melideo said, who was lucky to have two members of her household bringing in incomes.

She had just returned with six bags from Myer “before they pull the pin”. Inside were a popcorn maker, a juicer, pyjamas and track suits to keep her two grown-up children happy during lockdown. She wore a mask and plastic gloves to go into the city by tram but walked back.

“I was going to take an Uber but what else have I got to do? Go home and clean the clean house?”

It would be difficult to find a more pleasant place for a residential lockdown than Victoria Harbour Promenade with its north-facing balconies and enough space for keeping a regulation two metres distance from others.

The Melido family lives in a three-storey townhouse by the river. “It’s a bit quieter but it’s always quiet down here.”

Her son has been laid off by Crown Casino. For now, her lawyer daughter is working three days a week from home and her husband’s tow truck business is doing well ●

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▲ (Main) The stadium during construction in the late '90s, (top right) in action during an AFL match and (bottom left) as it stands today.

20 years on from stadium's frantic start

WORDS BY *David Schout*
HISTORY

It's 20 years since Docklands Stadium opened its doors, and while the ground has generated a fair share of controversies over the years, it remains a critical piece of Docklands furniture.

It was March 9, 2000, and Essendon was playing Port Adelaide in the AFL season opener at the league's new glitzy, roof-retractable Colonial Stadium.

Built to replace Waverley Park and become Melbourne's second AFL venue, fans flocked to the new stadium on the balmy night with an equal mix of excitement and intrigue.

What they got, however, was ticketing issues, long queues and a playing surface the AFL eventually admitted was not ready for games.

In the weeks leading up to the first match, the league had rushed to get the venue ready, but encountered many issues on opening night.

"Lights, camera, action ... and most fans are still outside," Caroline Wilson's report in *The Age* read.

"The \$460 million stadium, which probably needed at least another month for completion, opened in desperation and with much trepidation last night. But as far as the AFL was concerned, the show had to go on."

The night saw Essendon run out 94-point winners, while Michael Long ensured his name would feature in pub quizzes for years to come as the first ever goalkicker at the venue.

Former AFL chief executive Wayne Jackson has since admitted the surface was not up to standard for the opener.

While footy has remained the stadium's bread and butter (the AFL now owns the venue), it has hosted a range of other sports, events and concerts.

In fact, just six days after the Essendon v Port Adelaide match, Barbra Streisand played in front of 70,000 fans - the first of many concerts to come.

After a rocky start, the stadium slowly became accepted within the AFL community, notwithstanding constant media speculation about the state of the surface, which at its worst would see players slipping and even injuring



Long-awaited details on the stadium precinct's redevelopment remains unclear, despite the state government in 2018 pledging \$225 million to the project in a landmark deal with the AFL.



themselves on the sub-standard turf.

While Colonial bank had paid for 10-year naming rights, soon after the stadium's opening it was taken over by Commonwealth Bank who later on-sold the rights to Telstra at the end of the 2002 AFL season.

The stadium was then known as Telstra Dome - or more colloquially, "the Dome" - until 2009 when Etihad Airways took over naming rights.

In September 2018 a deal with Walt Disney Company Australia, the parent company of Marvel Entertainment, would see it renamed Marvel Stadium until at least 2026.

Long-awaited details on the stadium precinct's redevelopment remains unclear, despite the state government in 2018 pledging \$225 million to the project in a landmark deal with the AFL.

It is hoped the redevelopment of the stadium precinct will improve the economic potential of the area during both events and non-event days.

Among a swathe of changes, the large-scale upgrades propose a "more vibrant" connectivity with the stadium and both the CBD and Southern Cross Station, plus new public space on the southern end of the concourse ●

Stirring words from Channel 7

WORDS BY *Rhonda Dredge*
LOCAL NEWS

Just three weeks ago Channel 7 reporter Teegan Dolling was outside the County Court reporting on a culpable driving case.

She was joking with the cameraman and taking a matter-of-fact line on the offence.

It was a typical bread-and-butter job for a police reporter pre-COVID-19 - get some footage of the affected families, take a hard line on offenders and file for the evening news.

Now, all that has changed. Juries no longer exist, governments are about to release prisoners and we are expecting a lot more of our journalists.

"I worry, like many, about getting the virus, and I fear for the health of my partner, family and friends," Teegan told *Docklands News*.

"But I also trust the experts and believe if we all band together and follow the guidelines, the light should soon start shining at the end of the tunnel."

This is the new regime for reporters. They are expected to find stories that will keep the community going and the words to express them.

On a personal level, the last three weeks have been complex for Teegan. She has been on annual leave to move house while watching from a distance as her workplace changed radically.

"I have felt useless not being at work lately, to help my colleagues who are working such long hours," she said.

She is back at work this week, ready to adjust to the lockdown of the news room, filing from cars and home and increased use of Skype and FaceTime to record interviews.

"Any time we can prevent a face-to-face meeting, we will," she said.

"We also have new equipment like microphone poles, to help us carry out our interviews - it ensures we are following all the regulated guidelines including being 1.5 metres away."

From a professional point of view, this is an extraordinary time for the media. There have never been so many stories to cover but they are being approached differently during the crisis.

"Different journalists in the office have different rounds; I am a police reporter, but when we have huge issues like this, we all work together, but focus on different angles for our viewers."

Channel 7 prides itself on interpreting information for the viewer and it has done a good job of seeking out those at the coalface to interview, such as supermarket managers rather than politicians.

"Seven is very community focused, so we will continue to break down all the confusing information, that changes by the hour, and deliver it as accurately as possible," Teegan said.

The COVID-19 crisis is likely to be the biggest story journalists will cover in their careers.

"I flew to New Zealand for the Christchurch terror attack, I was up in the north east for the recent summer bushfires, and I worked at the Bourke Street Mall attack - but this is different, it's something that effects every single one of us, right around the world" ●



▲ Teegan Dolling on the job at Channel 7.

Meng Meng He answers your legal questions

Q. As of 1 March 2020, the changes to the Sale of Land Act passed by the Victorian Parliament on 4 June 2019, came into effect. A key change is that Vendors (and their agents) must disclose 'material facts' to purchasers, and it is an offence to knowingly conceal. What should prospective Vendors (and their agents) watch out for?

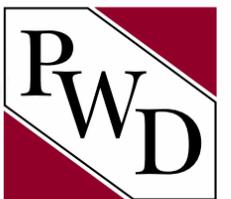
A. Originally, the government flagged homicides and drug laboratories as examples of 'material fact'. The 'material fact' guidelines released by Consumer Affairs Victoria have expanded the definition substantially, and are far more wide-reaching. Additional examples include (but are not limited to):

1. Prior tests revealing a structural defect, pest infestation, combustible cladding, asbestos or contamination;
2. Building work or other work done without a permit or is illegal; and
3. Facts about the neighbourhood surrounding the property that aren't immediately apparent on inspection (i.e. prospective development proposals) that would greatly affect use and enjoyment of the property.

It is critical that Vendors (and their agents) get the disclosure right and comply. If in doubt, we advise that you seek our advice early on.

Call for advice on wills, probate, estates & trusts; property law & conveyancing; family law; commercial & business law; litigation - commercial, civil & general and mediation & alternative dispute resolution.

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Council slams state, federal inaction on housing crisis

WORDS BY *David Schout*
HOUSING

City of Melbourne councillors have slammed upper tiers of government for a “disgraceful” response to the housing crisis and said “business as usual” would no longer cut it for the city.

In passing a new draft affordable housing strategy, a piece of policy some conceded would not have the power to enact real change, councillors pleaded for urgent action on the pressing issue.

Cr Nicolas Frances Gilley, a former CEO of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, said the lack of affordable housing was an issue that had significantly worsened in recent years.

“It’s been a big issue in this country and started lots of organisations,” he said at the March 3 Future Melbourne Committee meeting.

“We really had a response to it when the state took on building public housing. But something changed. We stopped, and it’s gone backwards. And not only that, we’ve replaced it with nothing ... I would say to the state government, you have not acted for some time and you have been in the position where you could.”

The council revealed there is a current shortfall of at least 5500 affordable rental homes for people on very low to moderate incomes, a number that would quadruple to around 23,200 by 2036 if no action was taken.

“Affordable” rent is generally defined as below 30 per cent of a household’s income.

When rental repayments exceed this, tenants are forced to sacrifice necessities of daily life such as food, healthcare or education.

The council’s draft strategy pledged to lobby the state government for “inclusionary zoning” in Victoria, a move that would force developers to include some affordable housing in new developments.

On council-owned land (a small amount in the municipality), it aimed to deliver up to 25 per cent of residential development as affordable housing.

Cr Rohan Leppert said that the upcoming public consultation period, followed by the final strategy, was “one of the most important” things councillors would do this term.

But he admitted that their role was still small when compared with the state and federal governments.

“Even if all of the actions that we’re discussing and proposing in this strategy come to life and can be acted on, we’re still tinkering at the edges; we’re not re-writing market economics here,” he said

“We don’t dictate what the state planning provisions are going to be. We can advocate for something, but it doesn’t necessarily mean we will get it.”

Cr Leppert said he was now looking for “the strongest possible leadership” from the state government, despite the lack of national vision.

“We still have no national housing strategy and that is an absolute disgrace,” he said.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp agreed that the strategy was “momentous”, but argued the council’s impact was not insignificant.

“I actually disagree with comments about the fact that we can’t play a major role in this. We can, just by changing our own thinking and policy response to this; we are creating ripples that can have a major impact,” Cr Capp said.

Earlier in the evening Michael Lennon, the managing director of not-for-profit housing provider Housing Choices Australia, said Melbourne’s reputation was dented by the housing crisis.

“Lewis Mumford, the American urban theorist, said the test of any city was the life it made possible for its citizens. On that definition, we are failing a significant number of people,” Mr Lennon said.

The council’s planning chair Nicolas Reece agreed, and said Melbourne’s proud “liveability” claim should be put under the microscope.

“What is very, very inescapably clear is that ‘business as usual’ is not going to cut it for Melbourne if we want to see ourselves as a truly fair, equitable and liveable city ... we like to say we’re the world’s most liveable city, but you can’t be [that] if people can’t afford to live here,” Cr Reece said.

“There is no silver bullet to solving affordable housing. The truth is, it’s something the City of Melbourne can’t do alone. We need to collaborate and work with other tiers of government.”

You can have your say on the council’s Affordable Housing Strategy before April 5 at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au ●



▲ The District Docklands’ CEO George Karabatsos is interviewed by radio station 3AW.

George’s Good Friday

WORDS BY *Tamara Clark*
LOCAL NEWS

The District Docklands’ CEO George Karabatsos was one of a number of high-profile guests who participated in 3AW’s Neil Mitchell’s Good Friday Appeal fundraiser at Melbourne Star on Friday, March 6.

The District Docklands, with the help of guests, precinct partners and suppliers, helped raise \$11,580 for the Royal Children’s Hospital, with \$5000 of the total coming from the precinct’s owner Ashe Morgan.

“The District Docklands was delighted to be a part of Neil’s Wheel at Melbourne Star again this year,” Mr Karabatsos said. “When you bring so many Melburnians together to raise funds for children in need, the atmosphere is always electric.”

While this year’s Good Friday Appeal campaign will run differently

to previous years as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, Mr Karabatsos urged all locals to support in any way possible.

“COVID-19 has temporarily changed life as we know it,” Mr Karabatsos said. “But it’s critical that we all adhere to the advice of Government and Health officials for the wellbeing of our entire community.”

“With every event throughout Australia being cancelled or paused and households being isolated from one another, we’re reminded of how rich and incredible our ‘normal’ life is and it’s something we’ll never take for granted again.”

“I have no doubt next year’s Good Friday Appeal will be more special than ever.”

The money raised by The District Docklands will go towards a pathology tissue processor and microtome equipment for the hospital’s labs ●

Gig economy grey area

WORDS BY *Meg Hill*
LOCAL NEWS

In November last year, food delivery drivers working for platforms like UberEats in the CBD were targeted in a Victoria Police traffic operation. Two hundred infringement notices were issued, with at least a quarter of offences relating to delivery bike users.

A state government report into Victoria’s “gig economy” workforce is due by March 31. As a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic it will likely be delayed.

But social distancing and self-isolation has already made us even more reliant on gig-workers. As we go out less, and businesses begin to close public areas, there may still be many delivery riders out on our streets bringing us our food.

In 2018, when the state government commissioned an inquiry into the workforce, its background report estimated that about 80,000 people in Australia earned income through “peer-to-peer” platforms like Uber, UberEats



▲ A food delivery person in the CBD in March.

and Deliveroo.

But there is a lack of certainty from legal professionals and government regarding the status and rights of workers across the “gig economy”.

Associate professor at the University of Melbourne Alysia Blackham said Australia needed to ensure our laws were protecting those workers.

“The issues relate to how well our laws extend to people who don’t fit our traditional idea

of an employee,” she said.

“The way many platforms have been set up is to say the relationship is not between the platform and the Deliveroo rider, but between the consumer and the rider.”

“Platforms are trying to take themselves out of the equation and limit their responsibility.”

This potentially means if a rider causes an accident, they would be held personally responsible, even if it’s caused by poor training and conditions. Conversely, if a rider has a problem with their employment, it is hard for them to prove they have a relationship with the platform, not the consumer.

When booked for infringements, riders are held responsible as individuals. Riders that were issued infringements in last year’s police operation told *The Age* their fine amounted to their entire day’s wage.

The government’s 2018 report said it was difficult for these workers to earn “sufficient and fair remuneration” – many earning under the minimum wage.

“On-demand platforms allow employers to select at will from a pool of workers who often

rely on positive ratings for continued work,” the report stated.

The report went on to state those factors contributed to “workers accepting low wages and inferior conditions”.

Furthermore, vulnerable workers from a range of demographics were overrepresented in these precarious forms of work, including many young workers, visa holders and women.

Many of the pressures felt by delivery riders, on top of their precarious and vulnerable starting point, may push them to sacrifice safety and road rules. They are often rated on the speed of their deliveries and need to use their mobiles to accept new jobs quickly.

And it is unclear whether or not there is proper training and information given to riders, who often use electric driven bikes or scooters.

Associate professor Blackham said the issue was about a safe system of work.

“It all comes back to the question of safe systems of work and if there is a way to do the job safely while meeting the platform requirements. We need greater transparency around how these platforms are operating,” she said ●



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▲ Introducing our new Precinct Perspective columnist Tim Martin.

A new perspective from Batman's Hill

While different sources provide different boundaries, I shall take the precinct to be bounded by Spencer St, Bourke St, Harbour Esplanade and Flinders St. I may also occasionally stray just across the border into Stadium Precinct and North Wharf for which I hope you will forgive me.

So far in this column you've heard from Victoria Harbour, NewQuay and Yarra's Edge, which are far more residential than Batman's Hill which is primarily commercial. But rest assured there are still quite a few of us "Batman's Hillers" hiding away in buildings including Village V1, Watergate Apartments and Grand Central Apartments with new residents expected in the soon-to-be-completed Melbourne Quarter East Tower, the (hopefully) soon-to-commence Melbourne Quarter West Tower and the Seafarers residences to be built above the heritage-listed Shed 5 in North Wharf (there ... I told you I'd stray across the border!).

In my infrequent columns I hope to cover a range of subjects including the history of the area, stories behind street names, local artworks, the urban forest, local businesses and anything else you may find interesting and wish to suggest. In view of the current state of affairs and the increasing likelihood that people may start going a bit stir crazy at home, I thought this article would be a good place to suggest a couple of (very) local tourism destinations to get you out and about and more familiar with interesting parts of our wonderful precinct. It's fun to explore. Having said that, with everything changing so much day by day, it's possible by the time this is published some of my recommendations may be inaccessible, but you will never know unless you go for a walk!

First stop would be the "Southern Cross Mountains"; a low-flying bird's eye view of the roof of Southern Cross Station – quite an

Instagrammable sight. From the right place you can imagine yourself standing in the midst of a metal mountain range, hence my nickname. To get there, go up the escalators at 664 Collins St (the high-rise building immediately adjacent to Southern Cross Station on the western side overlooking Wurundjeri Way). At the top of the escalator, turn right and follow your nose. Bingo, amazing view of the station roof. Just keep following your nose and you will eventually reach another set of escalators which take you down to the Bourke St concourse between Marvel Stadium and the station.

Next stop, since it's nearby, would be the plant-covered Medibank building foyer adjacent to Marvel Stadium on Bourke St (yes, I've strayed across the border again, I know!). I would suggest entering from Bourke St rather than Marvel Stadium podium. That's because entering from Bourke St means you get to walk up a long, wide, kind of circular ramp which meanders to the main foyer. On the way, give your neck a workout and look up. The view is spectacular. The atrium extends all the way to the roof with curvaceous floors of different pastel hues extending into the void. Well worth a walk and a look. If you exit the building from the main foyer you will find yourself on the Marvel Stadium podium.

Again, since it's nearby, turn right and make your way anticlockwise around the stadium. After a short walk you will find a Spiderman climbing wall which is designed to look like the outside of an apartment building. On match days it is open and staffed and best of all, free! And yes, adults are allowed to have a go. Once spectators are again allowed to attend matches, my suggestion would be that you get there early so you don't embarrass yourself in front of all the monkey-like, fear-free children.

Next, I'd suggest checking out the Collins

Square development which can be entered from Village Street, Collins St (look for the giant yellow straw-like sculpture), or from Batman's Hill Drive. Inside you will find a massive upmarket food court (obviously now only open for take-away), bars, a selection of cafes, a Woolworths and a variety of other shops. Collins Square often has generous special offers or events running. If you are interested you can sign up to receive notification of these by visiting collins-square.com.au/whats-on/subscribe/. Since you are in the building it's worth heading to level 12, Tower 2 which is tenanted by Deakin University. They have an interesting art collection which is open to the public and it will also provide you the opportunity to take in some interesting views from the office windows. In my experience you will have no problems with social distancing there.

After all that walking, climbing and eating I would suggest taking a break in the Melbourne Quarter skypark which is a park elevated over Collins St. You can access it via a large circular staircase or a glass lift from the Melbourne Quarter forecourt diagonally opposite Southern Cross Station near the peak of the Collins St overpass. There is well-kept grass, nice seating areas, gardens and pleasant views of the city. All in all a nice place to be when the weather's good.

Well, I hope that gives you a few ideas on how to be a bit of a tourist in (and around) Batman's Hill. On the way home if you don't feel like cooking, drop by Nine Elephants Thai Restaurant at 67 Village St, near the corner of Fishplate Lane. Really good Thai food and service at a reasonable price in a casual setting but again, only open for takeaway at the moment. Until next time, happy exploring ●



Hello Docklands News readers. My name's Tim and I'll be periodically keeping you abreast of the comings and goings in the Batman's Hill precinct.



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- DEALING WITH THE ATO
- DECYPHERING WHAT FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FROM FEDERAL/STATE/LOCAL LEVEL
- BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING
- CASHFLOW PLANNING

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CRITIC

A lively tale of derring-do

WORDS BY Rhonda Dredge

A novel set among the cranes of Melbourne's working port was released last month and it offers a gritty, suspenseful read with a tough but wimpy journo in the starring role.

Chrissie O'Brian, a fly-in from New Zealand, has got a job at the *Argus* when other journo's are being laid off.

Everyone in the office resents her and this doesn't help her mental health.

When a female crane driver at the wharves falls to her death, Chrissie latches onto the story as if it's a life raft.

As she digs deeper, the story threatens to engulf her as unions, employers and even her own boss at the newspaper are implicated.

Chrissie has many theories as *Where the Truth Lies* unfolds but not enough evidence to clinch the story, particularly as she's been transferred to obits at the newspaper.

Author Karina Kilmore does a good job of pulling apart the drama of the storytelling craft and the way it works at a newspaper. Information is always partial and a journo never gets enough support.

Kilmore has first-hand experience at the *Australian Financial Review* under the byline Karina Barrymore and after being made redundant turned to fiction as an outlet for her storytelling skill.

The reader is neatly positioned in this novel behind Chrissie, despite all of her nervous habits. She wants to make her name in Melbourne with a good story and so do we.

All journalists struggle to get the front page and Chrissie's analysis of the legal implications and the search for an angle under time pressure is instructive.

Such close mental work takes its toll, though. Chrissie drinks too much, takes too many pills and ends up in hospital. Bravado is easy in writing, she messages her dad.

This aphorism is the crux of the matter for

journalists. How much of their story-making is real? Accidents seem to follow Chrissie. Is she a cause, or at least, a catalyst for more deaths on the docks? How far should a journalist go?

When the intrepid investigator skills yet another glass of sauvignon blanc the tension rises. Union bosses are sending her texts. She is at the centre of the story, every journalist's dream. This is better than fiction!

The language in the novel is great. "Hear you've got hurdles at work", texts the union boss. Why is this always the case? There are more redundancies in the pipeline. The accountants are closing in. How does he know?

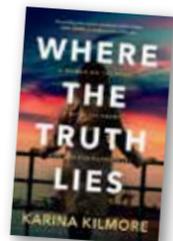
The descriptions are also spot-on. "His pale grey shirt and charcoal pants belied his working-class roots. Today he blended seamlessly into the city office crowd ... Chrissie blended in too, easily overlooked, just as she liked it."

At its core the novel is a heart-rending account of the tragic effect of the new digital age on journalism. It's difficult to have a scoop because other media rip off the story as soon as it's on the website.

If there's one fault, Chrissie's emotional vulnerability is a bit over-played. She has a secret past and that is another hurdle she has to cross on her way to the front page.

Chrissie is a bit of a cry baby. Shit keeps happening and it brings up her own self-destructive impulses, which make full use of the reader as confidante, like it or not.

Wallowing in self-pity may be realistic but a bit of digital voodoo wielded by Chrissie's clever next door neighbour proves to be a great antidote in this lively tale of derring-do ●



▲ *Where the Truth Lies*, Karina Kilmore, Simon & Shuster, 2020

Five strategies to get through coronavirus (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is not the only thing that's contagious at the moment ... so is the fear, anxiety and overwhelm that's permeating our community.

WORDS BY *Dr Mike Edgley*

In this article I will share five strategies you can utilise and focus on in these times of uncertainty. I'm committed to staying centred during this chaos and being responsible for my own emotional tone rather than letting the media set it for me.

1. Stay informed – think about where you're getting your information from. Is it a reputable source? Is it purposely fear-inducing? Or is it an official, well-informed and accurate source? Information about the virus should be sourced from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the federal and state governments. Unfortunately, friends, family and social media are generally not a great source of information. Additionally, when reading news articles, read the whole article, not just the headline, as headlines are attention grabbing and do not convey the entire message. It's important that we take steps to manage stress and anxiety as this impacts our immunity. Stress is the number one predictor of someone getting ill, more than smoking, eating, etc.
2. Staying in service – when you get up in the morning, ask yourself this question: how can I serve my community today? For me this looks like this; how can I serve my

friends and family, how can I serve my patients at Docklands Health and how can I serve the greater Docklands community? That means providing a safe and happy environment for my young kids and wife to live in and providing the safest clinic environment possible for my staff and everyone who walks through our doors. The same is true for the greater community - Docklands needs us more than ever. We need to utilise our local services more than ever. We will serve you to the highest standard possible.

3. Upping your self care – in line with reducing stress and reducing the chances of getting sick, it is important to enhance your lifestyle choices. Things such as getting more sleep, prioritising exercise, having a healthy diet and using strategies such as meditation to switch your mind to a more positive outlook are all vitally important.
4. Perspective – it is important that we appreciate the situation we're in, but also acknowledge that our bodies are designed to fight such viruses and health challenges. Yes, this is a new strain, but our bodies' immune system has built in innate systems to battle and adapt to these challenges. This is why it's important to maintain your self-care, both physically and mentally.



5. Gratitude – find those moments during the day that remind you that we still live and work in this amazing place we call home. Whether it be moments with friends or family, watching the sunrise over the Yarra or whatever activity you happen to be doing. Take the time to acknowledge that and appreciate the things we do have. For instance, the mornings are absolutely beautiful at the moment. The other day I was walking across Webb Bridge with the stillness of sunrise and the moon setting over the Bolte Bridge. So, I took a moment to take it in and watch the rowers on the Yarra and smile to the others on the bridge on their morning walk. It's moments like these that you will remember and treasure. The picture in this article is the picture I took while taking in our amazing Docklands.

Please utilise some or all of the strategies above as it will help the entire community get through these difficult times. If you or anyone you know needs help, please reach out. We are here to help both your physical and mental wellbeing. If it's not us, your trusted health expert will always be there ●

For more information visit:
docklandshealth.com.au

WE LIVE HERE

We need a clear cladding policy – now!

We are still waiting for a coherent government policy on combustible cladding that can provide clarity for owners' corporations (OCs) facing massive bills for rectification.



More and more buildings are getting caught up in the nightmare, receiving building orders with no appropriate follow-up, and no end in sight.

In 2018, the government's ill-fated attempt to introduce a loan scheme ended barely 12 months later. The government itself deemed the scheme unworkable, something which We Live Here had pointed out to them, long before the scheme was introduced into Parliament.

In July 2019, Cladding Safety Victoria (CSV) was established by the Premier of Victoria and the Minister for Planning. CSV was tasked with the responsibility for rectifying higher risk buildings identified by the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) through a state-wide cladding audit.

Audits? Nothing to see here, move along

Would you like to know the outcome of the audits? Sorry, it seems we residents do not have that privilege. Nowhere can we find any information on the outcome of the audits.

A map on the VBA website shows the number of audits carried out within each municipality and we can see that more than 2200 audits have been conducted in Melbourne.

And that's about all you can glean from the VBA cladding webpage.

The government needs to communicate much better than this.

For a start we want the Premier and the Minister for Planning to answer these questions:

- What criteria are used to deem a building to be high, moderate or low risk?
- What was the determining factor for the 15 buildings selected for government funding?
- What happens to the owners in the other 1054 cladding-affected buildings identified by the VBA as being a danger to life? Are these buildings suddenly no longer a danger to life?
- Why the secrecy – can we please have some honesty?

We apartment owners inherited the problem created by dodgy construction and reckless government oversight.

The cladding lottery – 15 lucky winners!

Congratulations! Of the 1069 buildings in Victoria identified with cladding that is a "danger to life" – 15 will benefit from the government's meagre munificence.

To the other 1054 buildings who played the game, thanks for investing your life savings in your residence - and good luck with that!

This outcome proves what we have been saying for many months – the state government has not been able to raise enough money to make any meaningful impact on the massive extent of the cladding scandal.

And it proves our oft-repeated allegations that the real budget figure has always been: \$150 million – not the risible \$600 million figure that made a really great sound bite, swallowed whole by the mainstream media last year.

You can find evidence of the government's figure of \$150 million in the State's Treasury papers and the same figure is confirmed by the Baillieu-Thwaites report – albeit in small print. The figure of \$600 million is as fake and as meaningless as the 1069 certificates of occupancy that the government authorised for buildings with flammable cladding.

\$400,000 fines for Building Orders?

Failure to comply with a Building Order to undertake rectification works, is an offence pursuant to section 118(1) of the *Building Act (1993)*. For a body corporate, the maximum penalty is just over \$400,000. If your OC is charged with an offence under the Act, the matter would be heard in the Magistrates Court.

It is a no-win situation and frankly a disgrace that the government should yet again ignore the thousands of owner-occupiers who live in high-rise strata communities.

This is a scandal of monumental proportions. And the culpable parties - the government and the building industry - are trying to get away with it.

Tell us about your cladding issues

We Live Here would like to hear from buildings that have been caught up in the combustible cladding issue and how you have dealt with it, or are currently dealing with it. Please head over to our website at welivehere.net and go to the "Cladding Survey" page. Alternatively, you can email us at campaign@welivehere.net.

We need facts. Facts are ammunition to take to the government to demonstrate the impact their feeble legislation is having on OCs having to manage the consequences of combustible cladding.

Thank you in anticipation - we look forward to hearing from you.

Your resident stories

Thank you to all those who have contributed to date, we will publish more throughout the year, so keep your cards and letters coming in!

Campaign donations

As a not-for-profit organisation, donations from individuals and buildings keep our campaigns going. To register as a supporter of We Live Here or to donate please visit our website at welivehere.net.

We Live Here does not accept donations from commercial tourism interests ●

Barbara Francis &
Rus Littleton

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LEARN MORE AT WELIVEHERE.NET



Sustainability in a pandemic world

Paraphrasing Ernest Hemingway, unfolding developments move slower until they happen suddenly. Today, the coronavirus outbreak may lead to a tipping point at which gross domestic product and its supporting metrics are supplemented by alternatives more conducive towards a sustainability transition.

Disruptions related to coronavirus (COVID-19) are predicted to become more severe in coming weeks. They could also come with an unexpected side effect: an impact on carbon emissions. The spreading virus has caused a dip in global greenhouse gas emissions. Reasons include a temporary setback to industrial activities in China, falling demand for oil and a decline in air travel. In China, the world's largest carbon emitter, experts estimate that emissions over the past month have been about 25 per cent lower than usual. These effects aren't wholly unexpected. History suggests that global disasters, particularly those with major impacts on the economy, tend to drive a temporary decline in carbon emissions. The 2008 recession, for instance, was accompanied by a temporary dip in global carbon emissions.

Environmental change equals social impact

The United Nations (UN) launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to address an ongoing crisis: human pressure leading to unprecedented environmental degradation, climatic change, social inequality, and other negative planet-wide consequences. This crisis stems from a drastic increase in human consumption of natural resources to keep up with rapid population growth, dietary changes toward higher consumption of animal products, and higher energy demand.

Environmental change also has direct human health outcomes via infectious disease emergence. Infectious diseases, including Ebola, Influenza, SARS, MERS and Coronavirus, cause large-scale mortality and morbidity, disrupt trade and travel networks and stimulate civil unrest. When local emergence leads to regional outbreaks or global pandemics, the economic impacts can be devastating. The SARS outbreak in 2003, the H1N1 pandemic in 2009, and the West African Ebola outbreak in 2013–2016 each caused over US\$10 billion in economic damages. The current outbreak of a novel coronavirus, closely related to SARS, is once again keeping the world on its toes. Both the disease and the fear of disease have had considerable economic and social impacts, with restrictions on international travel worldwide, the quarantining and self-isolation of millions of people, dramatic drops in tourism, and disruption of supply chains for food, medicines, and manufactured products. Estimates of the

likely economic impact are already higher than US\$150 billion.

While the challenge of getting the coronavirus outbreak under control is surely ominous, it merits recognising that from a sustainability standpoint, we may have a rare window of opportunity. The challenge will be to lock in the reductions in energy and material utilisation that are already occurring and will probably intensify in coming weeks and months. COVID-19 could inadvertently contribute to meaningful progress toward meeting the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Sustainability transition

The transportation sector is one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. As schools and businesses close their doors, reduced travel could temporarily lower carbon emissions in communities where people are spending more time at home. Even partial closures will motivate businesses and other organisations to deploy flex-time arrangements that allow employees to design their own schedules and work remotely. Less vehicle traffic on its own is great for the climate, but there's a potential catch. If people are spending more time at home, they could be using more energy. It depends largely on weather conditions, geography and family lifestyles.

There's also the possibility that people may spend more time watching television or using appliances if they're cooped in their houses. Pandemics like COVID-19 could also spur less obvious behaviour changes, which may nonetheless affect a household's carbon footprint.

Reports have suggested a recent spike in online shopping and home deliveries, especially for groceries. This is a likely by-product of the virus as people are increasingly avoiding public spaces. The carbon footprint of online shopping, compared with making in-store purchases, is often tricky to parse out. According to recent studies, it may largely depend on whether the deliveries come from a store in the community or are shipped in from somewhere else. It also depends on what form of transport the shopper would ordinarily use to pick up the goods in person. A trend to sourcing products from local vendors will reduce resource throughput and contribute to more sustainable consumption patterns.

Supply chain vulnerability

A Harvard Business Review study found that 60 per cent of the 779 readers they surveyed warned that poor visibility of who they do business with is a significant source of risk. Shocks such as disease outbreaks and natural disasters often expose global companies to vulnerabilities in their supply chains, and the results to business continuity can be punishing.

China's economy is 16 per cent of the global GDP. Its electronics sector accounts for 28 per cent of the industry globally, while China's share of the global textiles industry is 40 per cent. Suffice to say that when China catches a cold, the rest of the world sneezes.

This current epidemic is likely to result in companies taking a more proactive approach to managing risks in their supply chains. Identifying areas of vulnerability and ensuring potential disruptions are dealt with promptly and are taken more seriously in boardrooms.

Health impact

As automotive and industrial air emissions decrease, respiratory conditions will improve. A widely disseminated 2015 study estimated that air pollution contributes to 1.6 million deaths in China (17 per cent of all fatalities). If we assume that air quality in the country is 20 per cent clearer today due to the downturn in travel and manufacturing activity, a substantial number of lives have been spared. Such extrapolations are tricky—and would need to be counterbalanced by the health impacts of reduced physical activity, emotional anxiety, nutritional inadequacy, and so forth—but this is not a reason to ignore them.

Corporate response

Today, investors watch company decision-making through multiple lenses. With impact and ESG investing estimated to be \$20–30 trillion of assets under management, according to various estimates (MarketWatch places the number in the USA alone at approximately \$12 trillion).

The Conference Board's 2018 Global Leadership Forecast showed that purpose-driven companies outperform the market by 42 per cent. An Edelman Earned Brand Study reported that nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of consumers around the world are belief-driven buyers, choosing brands based on their position on social issues.

Purpose-driven companies that offer employees a sense of certainty have an edge over those that don't. This becomes more real in turbulent times — such as during global market fluctuations and broadscale public-health issues. Today, we find ourselves in one of the most disruptive periods in modern history, with companies (and their leaders) being tested to make decisions and act in ways that remain aligned with their purpose, while also creating greater certainty for employees, despite the external challenges.

This is not the first global crisis or moment of high market volatility that most organisations have faced in recent years. However, the nature of uncertainty is different. It involves health and wellbeing, rather than climate, technology or other issues — making the challenges feel far more personal and far less predictable.

Whether people continue to apply the more carbon-friendly changes in their behaviours after the pandemic is another question.

Certainly, in the short term, you'll see big changes in behaviour that are going to have an impact on emissions—either positively or negatively. The more important questions are: Are there going to be long-term changes? Will any of these behaviours stick? Will people learn to telecommute; will they learn that they like online shopping; will they learn to stay at home more, or be less willing to travel?

One can only hope that in these kinds of events—where people are pausing, confined to their homes and have the chance to reflect—we are using these moments to communicate some of these bigger issues that are facing us.

An observation frequently attributed to Winston Churchill is that we should “never let a good crisis go to waste”. The coronavirus outbreak is a deeply unfortunate situation that is unquestionably causing widespread suffering. While this is regrettable, we should not dismiss that the event provides an opportunity to make some significant headway toward a timely and necessary sustainability transition ●



Dr Kaushik Sridhar

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OWNERS' CORPORATION LAW

Social distancing in apartment blocks is hard to do, but necessary right now

“

Right now, for the good of all persons' health and wellbeing, we are socially distancing ourselves from each other. For those of us living in apartment blocks though, it is more difficult to completely self-isolate due to the close proximity of our neighbours.

”

The committee needs to spring into action here and take certain steps to communicate to owners and residents about what it is doing in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

My recommendation is that notices should be put up on the common property, setting out the following matters (at minimum):

- The cleaners have been instructed to use special antibacterial products on all common property doors, gates, front entry buttons, elevator surfaces and all other parts of the building where people touch with their hands;
- The cleaners have been allocated extra hours to do additional cleaning;
- Any person living in the block who has been tested positive to COVID-19 should contact the strata committee to inform them, so that additional cleaning procedures can be deployed on that floor, and so that support with buying groceries, etc can be arranged;
- If the building has a pool or gym and if the Committee determines it should remain open, then procedures should be put in place

to limit the number of persons using at any one time. Anyone using the gym should wear gloves and a mask and use hand sanitiser after using each machine.

In addition, the strata committee should consider the mental health and anxiety of owners and residents in their complex and see if there are any ways to bring a little positivity and cheer, while respecting the social distancing rules. There may be persons living your block who are having a very hard time (out of work, anxiety, small kids/cabin fever, etc) and those persons should feel encouraged to reach out to contact the strata committee if they are not feeling great. After all, we are all in this together.

From a legal perspective, the *Owners' Corporation Act (2006)* is very well set up with a mechanism for the executive committee to meet remotely via email and teleconference, Skype, etc.

Any special general meetings or annual general meetings that are required to be convened can be performed by written ballot. Your owners' corporation (OC) manager can facilitate this process very easily under Section 83 of the *Owners' Corporation Act (2006)*.

My recommendation is that an FAQ or explanatory note to all motions should be sent out to accompany the ballot. Some of my buildings are offering to host a teleconference hook-up or Skype/Zoom session so that owners can ask questions about the motions on the agenda and get answers before making their decisions.

This will be the new normal for OCs over the next few months. Victoria is well ahead of other states in moving to this type of flexibility in their legislation to hold meetings electronically. The rest of Australia is not so lucky and is often just having to defer their important meetings. I would encourage us all to take advantage of these flexible arrangements and try to keep “business as normal” as much as possible. So much within a building depends on the executive committee, OC manager and building management team keeping up with the workload ●



Tom Bacon

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Faces of Docklands

Question:

Where is the best coffee spot in the Docklands?



TINA, CAFÉ ALL ROUNDER

I don't usually drink coffee but when I do I get it from Banoi. I like it because it is Vietnamese and has good food too.



LUKE, VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISER

Cargo does the best coffee. It is quick and convenient for me. They generally get the coffee to you in two or three minutes.



JOHN, IT SPECIALIST

Bang Café at the bottom of the NAB building has the best coffee. You have to have the same person making your coffee every day. They call me "Mr Flat" there because I always order a flat white.



CHARLI, CONTENT CREATOR

My favourite coffee is from Blended Beard. I've done the rounds over the years. The staff are friendly and the coffee is always spot on, no matter what you order.

CHAMBER UPDATE

COVID-19 and the Chamber's response

What is the Docklands Chamber of Commerce (DCC) doing to help its members during this time?



1. We will actively support any member applications and requests for support to the City of Melbourne COVID-19 stimulus package, including administrative help, writing, liaising and advocating on their behalf.
2. We are working closely with the City of Melbourne to develop marketing assets so that when we are ready to go back to normal life we can all hit the ground running.
3. Over the coming months we will be profiling and marketing every single member and their individual response to COVID-19. We want to make sure that everyone knows you're still operating and are aware of any changes you've made. If you want to hit the ground running, reply to this newsletter with what you are doing and we will get it out on all channels - social, newsletter, our websites.
4. We will be continuing to pressure for permanent activation of Victoria Harbour - what greater need is there than when we come out of this pandemic and we all need to launch back into business

Docklands Events

All of our chamber events are currently on hold and, with everyone adhering to the federal guidelines for the foreseeable future regarding social distancing, it's unlikely we will see any public activities before July. Our efforts are going to be directed towards supporting our member businesses, advertising their innovative offerings and encouraging Docklands as a community to support our locals ●



Shane Wylie
 MEDIA DIRECTOR
 DOCKLANDSCC.COM.AU


10 YEARS ON

Looking back at Docklands News - 10 Years On

APRIL 2010 | ISSUE 52 |

DOCKLANDS NEWS



Melbourne Water moving to Docklands

Melbourne Water has committed to locate its new 12,100m² head office facility at 990 LaTrobe St, in the south east corner of Digital Harbour above the link road access to Etihad Stadium.

Digital Harbour Director, David Napier, said: "The proposed \$85 million single tenant, purpose built building will provide a 6 Star Green Star outcome for Melbourne Water placing them at the forefront of sustainable office accommodation in the Australian commercial office market."

Large 2,000m² floor plates, with a series of open, interconnecting, atrium spaces linking the six upper levels of the building will provide the opportunity for enhanced collaboration between the various departments of the Melbourne Water organisation. The orienta-

tion of the atrium spaces will also provide magnificent uninterrupted views of the Melbourne city skyline.

Mr Napier said: "The convenient location of the building fronting both LaTrobe Street and Wurndjeri Way will provide quick and convenient access for Melbourne Water engineers to all of their suburban treatment plant facilities via Melbourne's extensive freeway network."

The proposed Melbourne Water development will be the fourth building to be constructed at Digital Harbour alongside the Innovation Building, 1010 LaTrobe Street (Customs House) and the Life.lab strata office/home office building at 198 Harbour Esplanade.

Construction of the Melbourne Water building is scheduled to commence in the third quarter 2010 with completion mid 2012 ●

The importance of running a well-maintained building

WORDS BY *Alex Smale of The Knight* – OWNERS' CORPORATION OC MANAGERS

“Do we really need to pay to get the anchor points certified every year?” ... “Do you want someone to fall off the roof?”

This kind of conversation is all too common at the annual general meetings of strata properties. All buildings have machinery and systems which owners need to pay to maintain. This machinery is often behind closed doors and not visible to residents. This is particularly true of larger buildings which will have complex fire systems, HVAC systems, large booster pumps for pumping water up many stories and more. While owners understandably want to find ways to cut costs, the consequences of not correctly maintaining this equipment can be enormous. This maintenance is so much more than items on the financial report, it guarantees the peaceful enjoyment of the building for residents as well as maintaining the safety and the security of your investment.

One example is back flow prevention valves which need to be tested. These valves prevent contaminants from getting back into the water supply. If the test is not carried out and the valve fails, it can cost several thousands of dollars to replace. More importantly, it can put others at significant risk by risking contaminants getting back into the water supply. For example, you leave a hose pipe in a pool, and the water main has a burst resulting in back siphonage, then the pool water can be sucked out of a pool and into the water supply. People have died from drinking water that has been contaminated in this manner.

HVAC systems that are not well maintained, or do not have adequate filters, can encourage the spread of viral diseases including measles and tuberculosis. HVAC systems also monitor



levels of carbon monoxide in car parks. If there is a failure in the machinery, it can be deadly for residents.

Speaking of car parks, savvy owners will also be aware that sump pumps need to be serviced regularly or you risk a flood which will not only affect residents' cars but may also threaten machinery within the car park. There have been instances where water has flooded lift wells causing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of damage.

OC managers, building managers and committees are tasked with an extremely im-

portant job of understanding the maintenance requirements of their buildings and ensuring this maintenance is carried out to prevent these potentially catastrophic consequences.

If you are an owner of a strata property, take an active interest in the maintenance of your building. If there is a maintenance item on the financial reports of your OC that you don't understand, ask. Ensure you engage effective, qualified OC managers, building managers and contractors who can understand the maintenance requirements of your building. The consequences of not doing so could be deadly ●

ABBY'S ANGLE

Slow down. The panic is coursing through all our veins

Slow down. The fear has us running in directions that we may never have thought we would be following.

Slow down. The stress is making nights longer and days harder.

Slow down. We are all in this together. Certainly, there is an incredibly diverse set of experiences we will all go through at different times, at different stages. And they range from apathy, to denial and anger, to decisions and actions, to resignation and grief – and many more. But we need to slow down.

When we stop the panic and fear rising from the extraordinary brutality of the speed in which our world and lives are changing, then we give ourselves a chance to think properly through our actions. When we slow down and work to find some inner peace, however briefly, we give ourselves a chance to calm and breathe, and reduce stress. And when we do this, we can have some clarity to trust that we are going to be ok and make plans to protect ourselves, our families, our community, our country.

My entire business has been annihilated from the very first announcement. With one-third of my business focused on weddings and events, one-third focused on consulting contracts in tourism, and one-third focused on commercial design for hotels and venues – well my strategy of diversification was blown apart. That Monday morning the phone started early, as discussions with venues, clients, brides, hotels, designers and wineries all ended in the same place by the end of the week – we were ALL closed for business.

It's hard to think clearly – or rather, more

specifically, it's hard to sort through the million ideas, strategies, thoughts, and emotions that rise through that next week or so. Suddenly no income, private school fees, mortgage and business premises rental is a lot to face on your own. Throw in home schooling for a ravenous year 11 student who seems intent to insist they needn't study for chemistry and you have a perfect storm heading straight for the chilled bottle of vino at 5pm on the dot. A perfectly understandable strategy, but not particularly helpful!

So, I spent the time that was needed responding to cancellations and contracts and refunds and reassurances and making sure that all my wedding and event clients were secure knowing we would honour all our business for a date in the future. And then I spoke to my contract clients and worked with each of them to continue our marketing strategies, at no payment. One of my clients cried, saying she just couldn't pay anyone – I simply asked her if she was paying herself? No, of course not. “We are in this together”. These businesses closing is not a reflection of their business. It's not a reflection of their planning. It's not a reflection of anything other than a pandemic – that has come on the back of a long drought, and a devastating bush-fire season. We are in this together.

Once I started reassuring people that we would find a way, I actually started to believe it myself. And that's what I'm wanting to share with people who have just started to go through it or have it still ahead – slow down, as it's only when you do that you can see a path in this. So now, I have looked for opportunities I would never have looked at before and do you know what? I'm actually kind of excited. If it wasn't for the no money bit, it would actually be very exciting. The reality is, it's going to be tough. But so you are, and we have to stay positive



and find the things that do help us to stay okay when it can feel like it's all falling apart.

And, while no one, not one single person would ever wish a pandemic as insidious as this horrendous bloody COVID-19 on the world, I am starting to find some good things again – the environment is being given a tiny reprieve, our home based lifestyles can have us reconnecting, our support of each other can remind us of what's really important – and that's love. Plain and simple. Love for self, love for each other, love for family and love for humanity.

Keep fighting Melbourne, love each other, slow down and maybe, just maybe, there will be a rose to smell ●

X



Abby Crawford

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Don't forget to shop locally

I live in the city with my partner. For days, we had been trying to buy our normal groceries with no luck. By Monday, shopping had become an incredibly anxious event.

The palpable stress of the city began seeping into our skin from the moment we stepped onto the street. It clung even heavier inside Aldi, and when we realised we couldn't get what we needed there, we found the same thing inside Woolworths and Coles. The sense of fear was amplified by seeing other people standing frozen in front of empty shelves, being passed by people rushing around frantic with mostly empty baskets. On Tuesday night, my partner went out to Coles Spencer St. He returned with a small bag of carrot sticks and a bar of Toblerone as consolation, instead of the meal ingredients that comprised our overly hopeful shopping list. On Wednesday, with trepidation for what I wouldn't be able to find and worried about how to avoid contagion, I ventured through the city with a backpack to seek an alternative. On the corner of Elizabeth and Bourke streets, I stopped for a loaf of bread from Woodfrog Bakery's street kiosk. From there I took the 96 tram to South Melbourne Market. Inside were people in lines 20 or 30 people long for some butchers, but they were laughing and chatting while they waited their turn. The rest of the deli aisle felt like another other, pre-COVID-19 day. There was a short wait for seafood, pantry goods, ready-made meals, pasta, quiche, pies, bread and sweets. I passed fully-stocked shops that were selling soap and toiletries. Tension left my shoulders completely when I turned a corner to see the abundance of vegetables stacked up in beautiful rows. There were no crowds. It was a relaxed environment to shop in. I did not see a single person cough or sneeze. Everyone was courteous and friendly, no one with more than their normal share in their baskets. While I was at South Melbourne Market, I washed my hands frequently and saw that others were doing the same. I was able to take the tram home while maintaining the recommended 1.5 metres from others. After seeing what was possible, on Saturday afternoon my partner and I went to Queen Victoria Market. We bought takeaway paella for lunch from the stand in String Bean Alley, then lined up behind all of four people to buy eggs from Eggporium. That was the longest wait that we experienced that day. The rest was even easier: cheese, ham, bread and pasta from Dairy Hall, shampoo and soap from Food For Your Skin in the organics aisle, no lack of fruit and vegetables in the sheds.

The market certainly missed the regular hustle and bustle of its tourism, but hasn't that been half the point? It was easy to maintain physical distance from others, shop safely, and get everything we needed. No stress, no touching, no bumping into people, no virus spreading. There was so just much food, I shook my head in wonder that we had been so focused on the supermarkets before then. Anxiety had been controlling our brains and shut down our rational thinking. We now remembered that, despite our local markets being advertised as tourist destinations, they were cheap, plentiful and high-quality supply sources for our regular shopping. Australia is a massive, agricultural and farming country. There is plenty to go around. There are 600 vendors at Queen Victoria Market alone. 80 per cent of businesses in Melbourne are small, not the chain stores that present a false front of food shortage in the city. Our collective psyche was already frayed as a result of bushfires. Can we all, collectively, take four deep slow breaths? There are a lot of things that are making this situation difficult. But this is one thing that many of us have some power over, by not letting fear take over when we make decisions about where we get our food. So many of us are in a position to consider alternative solutions to the challenges we face. If we follow through on them, it might mean giving a breather to people who don't have the same choices. We might even be able to keep each other afloat.

Cristen Smith



SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:
NEWS@DOCKLANDSNEWS.COM.AU

Pet's Corner

▼ Frances with her toy poodles, Mazie and Matisse.

Adorable therapy

“

These two red toy poodles, Mazie and Matisse, drew adoring looks from passers-by as their owner Frances spoke to Docklands News on a bench along New Quay Promenade last month.

”



WORDS BY *Isabelle Harris*

The pair wore tiny dresses that doubled as harnesses for their walk along the promenade, decked out in tiny sparkles and ruffles that complemented their adoring and friendly personalities.

And of course, they have separate Instagram accounts.

“I made one and now I regret it!” Frances laughed.

Docklands News asked Frances how she came to own Mazie and Matisse.

She explained that the pair had come into her life after a family tragedy a few years ago.

“A friend asked me, ‘why don’t you get a dog?’ so I did,” she said.

She added that they helped get her out of the house and were easy to manage and travel with due to their small size.

“They’re great therapy dogs!” Frances said with a grin as Matisse lounged back, her belly to the sun and her eyes half closed ●

SKYPAD LIVING

A chair’s perspective of vertical living in COVID-19 times

“

The advice is to self-isolate and, if necessary, quarantine at home – but what if home is shared with several hundred others in a vertical village?

”

For this instalment of perspectives on vertical living, I sought insights from the chair of an owners’ corporation (OC). And for this I turned to fellow Docklander, Jamie Tarling, who was the inaugural chair of Banksia - an award-winning building which, as the name suggests, was inspired by the Australian native flower.

And as the first chair to take the reins, Jamie had challenges aplenty.

Perhaps among the most difficult was sorting the myriad of contractual agreements put in place prior to the committee’s formation which were, in his words, “not ideal”. Some contracts were up to 99 years in duration and others had annual increases three times higher than inflation! This is where a committee shows its calibre and during the first two years of operation, the committee, led by Jamie, was able to lower annual fixed costs by \$120k without compromising amenity.

And his opinion as to the best feature of vertical living?

Along with great amenities, Jamie joins the chorus of praise for the sense of community within our vertical villages - “I’ve never been more social with my neighbours!”

But will such proximity and closeness to neighbours become a double-edged sword in these COVID-19 times?

Jamie shared that the Banksia committee had been considering the situation since the pandemic was first announced. Its objective was to find a balance between assisting individual residents and keeping all residents safe. And its starting point was the pragmatic recognition that low supermarket stocks would likely mean

that some residents would not have enough food to last 14 days of self-isolation. The flow-on from this is that food and/or grocery deliveries were highly likely:

“We’ve just been debating the merits of whether we continue to allow deliveries to residential floors, which assists residents in self-isolation, or whether we have owners collect all deliveries from the front doors.”

The rationale for the front door collection option is that it would prevent delivery workers from spreading the virus (if infected) within the building.

These concerns reflect discussions being held in other OCs where questions such as: what happens if a large number of residents are infected? Does the committee need to know? Do other residents need to know? Do they have the right to know? What happens if lockdown occurs? How is this handled? Where do the standards come from?

These and other legal questions were the subject of a recent webinar hosted by LookUpStrata, an independently and wholly Australian owned website. While it was emphasised that this was a legal discussion and not specific legal advice, it was apparent that current legislation gave OCs little guidance as to their responsibilities and powers under pandemic conditions. So, these remain questions to be answered in the near future.

And with mention of the future, my final question to Jamie was about what innovations he saw – or wished to see. And to this, Jamie quipped, “deliveries via drone to our balconies is on the wish-list!”

In a possibly more immediate timeframe, Jamie then nominated building security as an area in need of attention. In particular, knowing who had access to the building was a constant challenge as FOBs could be easily passed between individuals. This point has obvious relevance in these COVID-19 times and will be especially important to buildings with high numbers of short stays (as many host internationals).

Jamie then shared that he recently attended a presentation that demonstrated how phones could be used as building FOBs. To be activated, a resident’s phone must be registered in the system by the building manager. The underlying premise is that people will be far less willing to give their phone to someone else, especially a stranger.

“Just think of how this could help with identifying short stay visitors - giving the building manager the opportunity to ensure they’re properly inducted.”

Of course, an interesting catch-22 situation arises if you are inclined to let your phone go flat and your charger is in your apartment! ●



Janette Corcoran

JANETTE CORCORAN IS AN APARTMENT LIVING EXPERT.

LEARN MORE ON FACEBOOK.COM/SKYPADLIVING/

DOCKLANDER

Empowering women locally and abroad

WORDS BY *David Schout*

In late March, Rev. Ann Drummond was due to be formally inducted as a Member of the Order of Australia, a prestigious honour limited to just 365 Australians each year.

Instead, the Victoria Harbour resident found herself quarantined inside her apartment after returning home from Fiji, where she had completed another period of charity work.

Of course, the ceremony - like almost all other events in Melbourne and indeed the world amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic - was cancelled.

Yet amid everything going on, Rev. Drummond said the current sense of community being displayed in the local area was commendable.

While she was being looked after with groceries and essential items from her husband, she noted that the owners' corporation (OC) of her building had organised volunteers to buy essentials for those who didn't have such support.

"It's great to see," she said, speaking on the phone with *Docklands News* from her apartment in Dock 5.

"The people inside our building are friendly and very open, it's a great community."

Rev. Drummond was first recognised on Australia Day with the AM, for "significant service to the Uniting Church in Australia, and to women".

Her work with the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association), of which she is a life member, has seen her travel to countries like Mongolia, China and Fiji to empower women, particularly survivors of domestic violence.

She travels to Fiji at least once a year, fostering counselling and prevention services, and training women to be frontline advocates in their local communities.

"It's a fabulous organisation in that sense, linking women all over the world," Rev. Drummond said.

It was during a trip to Fiji last year that volunteers within the organisation started nominating her for the award, which she admitted was a real surprise.

She said while voluntary work is never about the acknowledgement, it was nice to be honoured.

"I guess it's a recognition of the work that I've done, and probably an appreciation of it. You don't do all this work in order to be recognised - it's a bit of a bonus I suppose. Most of the work I've done is work I've felt I could contribute to, and make some kind of change in the system or conditions for women. I guess it's a nice thank you."

The award also recognised her work with the Uniting Church, of which she has been a minister for 40 years.

Since the early 2000s she has also been on the sexual misconduct complaints panel - which she would later chair - for complaints made by adult parishioners against the clergy.

And while the position is wrought with difficulty and sensitivity, the responsibility to be thorough in each case is one she has excelled in. "It's not the most popular role within the church," she conceded.

Rev. Drummond has lived in Docklands for four years, and since moving in has never understood why the area isn't more popular.

▼ *Rev. Ann Drummond.*



"I love Docklands, and I like being close to everything. In Victoria Harbour you're close to the library, the post office, to Woolworths, the chemist, the doctors - all these things are on your doorstep. And then the city is just a free tram ride away."

"People always say 'oh you live in Docklands?'"

like you're a bit odd (laughs) but I think people have no idea the benefits of living here. It's busy during the week and nice and quiet on the weekends ... it's a great place in retirement, but not even that, if you work in the city it's a great place to be home within 20 minutes." ●

MARITIME

Maritime matters

Maritime heritage and the maritime sector are very significant elements of Melbourne's culture and economy. This is especially the case in Docklands.

WORDS BY *Cr Jackie Watts*

CHAIR OF MELBOURNE MARITIME HERITAGE NETWORK AND COUNCILLOR AT THE CITY OF MELBOURNE

Docklands News has granted the Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN) this regular column.

February and early March was a busy period for MMHN.

The MMHN Board held its 2020 planning day. Given the ambitious MMHN agenda, matters discussed were wide-ranging and complex. We are delighted that Martin Dixon, former Victorian Minister for Tourism and Education, has joined the MMHN Board and Sue Scarfe has been appointed as technologies advisor to the Board.

A new MMHN special advisory group (SAG) focused on the tourism industry has been established. Other SAGs cover maritime commerce and industry, maritime skills, education and careers, museums and heritage and waterways and maritime infrastructure (piers, wharves, bridges etc). If interested, register to be kept in the loop about one or more SAGs at info@mmhn.org.au

We have been very active on advocacy, which underpins all of MMHN's major objectives. Here is a snapshot of our advocacy over recent months ...

We've had dialogue with Development Victoria (Central Pier, Victoria Harbour, Harbour Esplanade), the Departments of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (transport) and Education & Training (maritime skills), Creative Victoria (museums, heritage), Creative Arts (museum, events), the Immigration Museum, ACMI, MUA, Federation Square, Yarra River Business Association, the Navy, Koori Heritage Trust

Melbourne University, RMIT and Victoria Universities, the National Trust, City of Melbourne and Melbourne Water (MW).

Note that MW has issued a draft 10-Year Strategy for the Yarra - see melbournewater.com.au/about-us/strategies-achievements-and-policies/developing-yarra-strategic-plan. Inexplicably, they failed to consult with any maritime stakeholder organisations. This has triggered a strong response from MMHN members. It's important to ensure bureaucratic "amnesia" doesn't impede due recognition of Docklands and its maritime heritage, which encompasses the lower reaches of the Yarra, its tributaries and estuaries, Victoria Harbour and various piers, wharves and docks. As a consequence of our advocacy, another river strategy document created last year, by the City of Melbourne, did include references to heritage infrastructure along the river. MMHN is having an impact. Those who love Docklands and maritime heritage need to keep insisting: maritime matters really matter!

On February 18, MMHN director Dr Liz Rushen, in a collaboration with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV), launched her new book *John Marshall: Lloyd's reformer, shipowner and emigration agent*. This is a reminder that one of our greatest resources, migrants, have often arrived uninited by sea.

Two major maritime festivals went ahead as planned - the Geelong Wooden Boat Festival and the Williamstown Seaport Festival.

This flurry of activity occurred just before the new world of "social distancing" descended. A series of planned site visits, lectures, panels and tours have had to be postponed. Sadly, we've had to defer the planned April



6, 2020 panel presentation "Port Phillip Bay - Looking out, looking in: Aboriginal and Colonial perspectives" which was to be convened by MMHN and hosted by Federation Square, involving the Koori Heritage Trust, the Aboriginal Branch of the City of Melbourne and the RHSV. When it eventually occurs, this will reflect on perceptions at the point of contact. A planned collaboration between MMHN and Rare Books Melbourne, to be presented by Michael O'Brien as part of Melbourne's splendid Rare Book Week in June and July 2020 on "Maritime Melbourne: History on Paper" has also been postponed.

An event is still being planned (pandemic permitting), in conjunction with Offshore and Specialist Ships Australasia, to celebrate the final voyage of the *Aurora Australis*, whose arrival in Hobart in April will mark the end of an era - 30 years of remarkable service to science and to Australian Antarctic operations. This vessel, Australia's first and only purpose-built ship to service our remote Australian bases, has functioned as the platform for amazing marine science over a long period. This is a key part of Docklands' maritime heritage - until the 1970s, all of Australia's iconic Antarctic ships left from North Wharf on the Yarra close to the CBD.

Responding to the new necessity of "social distancing", MMHN is developing as a service to members a series of digital workshops which will assist members to understand and adopt new ways to foster recognition of maritime heritage. We aim to reach new audiences and better promote the work of existing organisations. Stay tuned.

Finally, as the COVID-19 pandemic plays havoc with our lives, the residents of Docklands and shipping enthusiasts might be interested in maritime angle on two earlier pandemics (Black Death, Spanish Flu) and an infamous shipboard epidemic (typhoid). Much has been written about these catastrophic events, but not often from the maritime perspective. I encourage you to access a brief Insight document prepared by MMHN Board members which can be found at the MMHN website: mmhn.org.au - just click on "updates" then "contagion" on the left hand side.

And keep checking the website for information about maritime events and opportunities. You can promote your maritime events free of charge.

On behalf of the MMHN Board, try to keep well - and stay "socially connected" though our shared enthusiasm for maritime matters! ●



零工经济的灰色区域

撰稿 Meg Hill

去年11月，维多利亚警方在中央商务区的一次交通行动中，对类似UberEats的快递员发出了200张罚款单，其中至少四分之一的违法罚款是与快递骑车者有关。

州政府将在3月31日前公布一份“零工经济”劳动力调查报告。由于冠状病毒(COVID-19)大流行，这个报告可能会延迟出台。

但是目前的社交距离和自我隔离已经让我们更加依赖这些零工快递员。随着我们外出越来越少，企业开始关闭公共区域，可能仍然会有许多送货员在我们的街道上，给我们送来食物。

2018年，州政府委托对劳动力进行调查时，当时的背景报告估计，澳大利亚约有8万人通过Uber, UberEats和Deliveroo等“点对点”快递平台获得收入。

但是，法律专业人士和政府对整个“零工经济”中工人的地位和权益缺乏确定性。

墨尔本大学的阿丽西亚·布莱克汉姆副教授(Alysia Blackham)说，澳大利亚需要有法律来保护这些工人。

布莱克汉姆副教授说：“问题在于我们的法律在多大程度上能适用于这些不符合我们传统雇员观念的人。”

“对于许多平台来说，这种工作关系不是平台和快递(Deliveroo)驾驶员之间的关系，而是消费者和快递驾驶员之间的关系。”

“各种平台正试图摆脱其责任，或者缩小其责任。”

这可能意味着，如果快递骑车者出了事故，即使是由于培训和条件不佳造成的，他们也要承担个人责任。相反，如果这些骑车者遇到就业问题，他们很难证明自己与平台(而不是消费者)有关系。

在收到罚款单时，快递骑车者则要承担个人责任。在去年的那次警察行动中收到罚款的骑手们告诉《时代报》，那次的罚款等于他们一整天的工资。

弱势群体的不同危机

当社会陷入停顿，活动被取消，企业关闭，并且我们大多数人都准备居家隔离时，我们的弱势群体又会怎样呢？

撰稿 Meg Hill

中央商务区的无家可归者和那些关心他们的组织正准备应对可能很快就会感受到的可怕影响。食物、医疗资源和建筑物的所有资源都将用于照顾先前存在的无家可归群体，以及在危机期间可能涌入街头的人群。

救世军少校布伦丹·诺特尔(Brendan Nottle)表示，慈善机构正在拼命工作。

诺特尔少校说：“我们已经在自己经营的咖啡馆为无家可归的人提供服务，首席医疗官认为这是一项必要服务，我们正在竭尽所能保持营业并维持安全。”

“昨天，我们用了约八个小时对大楼进行了法医清洁。然而清洁工今天下午又回来了再用了八个小时。”

他说，咖啡厅已经用一次性用具代替了所有餐具，正在运送更多的冰柜进行存储。我们正在与墨尔本市政合作寻找楼房，让无家可归者离开街道，并且能够独处和隔离。

所有这些都是为了避免出现最糟糕的情况。

诺特尔少校说：“我们正在为可能要关闭咖啡馆并送餐到街上的这一天做准备。”

“在最坏的情况下，我们已经购买了口罩，并正在设法购买防护服用于运送人员，使那些人不会挨饿并保持其社会联系。”

随着对每个人的社交距离要求，诺特尔少校说，我们更应该意识到这对无家可归者和弱势群体意味着什么。

他说：“对于我们工作对象的社会隔离是我们必须面对的最大问题。”



“我们将需要在大街上检查人们的身心健康。”

“我们正在尝试在一个安全可靠的环境中获取大量食物。”

“大概会有很多以前从未接触过我们的人。”

诺特少校说，救世军也在研究技术交流

能力，以检查精神健康，保持社会交流的开放性——即使是在保持一定社交距离的情况下。

他还感谢维多利亚州政府和州长丹尼尔·安德鲁斯(Daniel Andrews)在3月18日宣布的对无家可归和公共住房的支持。

病毒笼罩这座城市

正如全国乃至全球大多数地区一样，墨尔本市当地社区和当地经济正面临着一个前所未有的困难时期。

中央商务区(CBD)的工作岗位已经流失，这意味着在CBD的上班者失业了。客流量减少，销售额直线下降。在联邦和州政府宣布刺激计划的同时，墨尔本市政宣布了自己价值超过1000万澳元的刺激计划。

该一揽子计划主要针对市区的小型企

业，其中包括：

在墨尔本市政厅举行虚拟的商业支持峰会；

有关食物提供的注册以及街面商铺交易许可审批暂停三个月；

为在市政拥有的物业中符合条件的租户减半租金三个月；

提供及部署临时工和非全日工作的机会，以加强城市的整洁和舒适；

在3月底之前制定一份困难时期的市政费政策供考虑。

市政议员强调刺激计划只是一个开始，更多措施可能将在“未来几周”内宣布。

副市长阿伦·伍德(Arron Wood)说：“我们认识到，在未来几周和几个月内，现金流管理将成为小型企业的紧迫问题。”

“我们正在开发一项投资计划，为企业提供直接支持。其中将包括高达100万澳元的研究和支持费用，以及高达50万澳元

的拨款，以支持企业发展电子商务和在线服务。”

“我们还将实施礼宾式商务服务，为这次受疫情影响大的墨尔本企业提供一对一的建议和支持。”

由副市长阿伦·伍德提议的商业支持峰会也是一次与州政府和联邦政府，维多利亚州首席卫生官以及维多利亚州工商会的合作。

市长萨利·卡普(Sally Capp)表示，该计划将为受周一宣布的全州紧急措施影响的企业提供支持，这些措施包括实施社交距离，以优先考虑健康和

安全。市长说：“这种病毒对经济影响将是巨大的，我们鼓励所有人尽其所能支持本地企业。”

她说：“在与Spotless服务公司合作中，我们还将为大约200名受影响的临时员工提供交叉培训和就业机会，这些员工将被重新部署，致力于改善城市的清洁和形象。”

市政还将与维多利亚女王市场管理部门合作，为商家提供适当的支持。

市长说：“我们正在尽一切努力帮助企业保持营业，让墨尔本人继续工作。”

3月17日市政会议上，艺术界和文化界的代表也概述了他们在当地和全国范围内已经感受到的影响。

住房危机 上级政府无所作为

墨尔本市议员抨击上级政府对住房危机做出的“丢脸”回应，并表示“一切照旧”不会再给这座城市带来好处。

撰稿 David Schout

在通过一项新的经济适用房战略草案时，一些被认可的政策将无权实施真正的改变，市议员们呼吁就紧迫的问题采取紧急行动。

圣劳伦斯兄弟会(Brotherhood of St Laurence)的前首席执行官尼古拉斯·弗朗西斯·吉利(Nicolas Frances Gilley)议员表示，经济适用房不足的问题在最近几年已大大恶化。

他在3月3日的未来墨尔本委员会会议上说：“这是这个国家的一个大问题，并已经成立了许多相关组织。”

“当州政府开始建造公共住房时，我们也确实作出了回应。但是事情变了，我们停下来了，整个倒退了。不仅如此，我们没有任何东西取而代之……，我想对州政府说，你们对此已经有一段时间没有作为了，你们已经处于可以有所作为的位置了。”

市政透露，目前至少有5500套中低收

入人群负担得起的出租房短缺，如果不采取措施，到2036年，这个数字将翻两番，达到23200套左右。

所谓“负担得起的”租金通常被定义为家庭收入的30%以下。

当租金的支付额超过这一水平时，租户被迫牺牲其日常生活必需品，如食物、医疗保健或教育。

市政的战略草案承诺，要游说维多利亚州政府进行“包容性分区”，此举将迫使开发商在新开发项目中纳入一些经济适用房。

它的目标是在市政府拥有的土地上(在市中心很少的一部分土地)，以提供高达25%的住宅开发作为经济适用房。

市议员罗汉·勒珀特(Rohan Leppert)说，即将到来的公众咨询，以及随后的最终决策，是本届议员要做的“最重要的事情之一”。

但他也承认，与州和联邦政府相比，市政府的作用仍然很小。

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THE DISTRICT
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We thank our entire community of customers for your support and understanding as we work through this together.

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