



DIVERCITY

March 2025



FROM THE
CHAMBER



CITY NEWS



ARTS IN
FOCUS



SHAPE
OUR CITY



SUSTAINABILITY



LIBRARY
VISIT



COMMUNITY
SPIRIT



WHAT'S ON

From the Chamber

Following up from my last column, I'm pleased to share that the Community Safety Roundtable has been hosted by our Council.

Lots of ideas were discussed by more than 20 attendees from a range of service providers and Victoria Police, all focused on looking at opportunities to work with us on improving safety in Port Phillip.

These discussions will inform Roundtable Chair Ian Gray's report, which is due to be presented at a May Council meeting. Community safety requires a collaborative approach from a range of agencies so Councillors are looking forward to seeing the report's recommendations.

The Roundtable is one of several inputs into the development of our new, wide-ranging Community Safety Plan. We are eager to hear everyone's views when community engagement starts as this is crucial to help us develop this important Plan.

It's always a pleasure getting out and about in our community so it was great to see so many children enjoying the official opening of the Hewison Reserve upgrade. In between face-painting and bubbles, they had fun experiencing the terrific new play equipment.

It was also wonderful chatting with Hamish, a Deaf music lover, who provided valuable feedback on the haptic vests at this year's St Kilda Festival. Their sophisticated technology translates sound into vibrations so Deaf or hard of hearing festival-goers can more fully share this special group experience.

Citizenship ceremonies are always joyful but there was a double celebration this week for a conferee who also took home an engagement ring. Congratulations Karina and Marcus!

I want to thank everyone who voted for a sculpture of amazing trailblazer Louisa Briggs to be installed on the St Kilda foreshore. We expect the sculpture, to be funded by the Victorian Women's Public Art Program, to be in place by the end of 2026.



Full details about all this Port Phillip news are in this issue of Divercity – as well as a day in the life of our wonderful City Amenity officers. Feel free to say hello or give them a wave when you see them on patrol!

Proudly Port Phillip

Cr Louise Crawford

Mayor, City of Port Phillip



Making a difference

It's 6 am and stars are still twinkling in the clear St Kilda sky. While traffic is yet to build, our Council's City Amenity team has already completed a preliminary scout of the streets.

Officers Richard, Wayne and Michael will also patrol parks, car parks and beaches, often accompanied by the Rapid Response cleaning team, during their shift.

The trio has experience in spades which stands them in good stead as they say 'no day's the same' on patrol in Port Phillip.

Lending a hand with fallen tree branches, offering assistance to rough sleepers and keeping footpaths clear of obstructions are just some of the varied duties they may perform during the daily patrols.

Richard says there is no judgment when they interact with people. "We assist as best we can".

"I love this job. With our previous backgrounds in enforcement (not policing), we'd see people and never see them again. Now we can see them more frequently and get to know them – and they get to know us."

The early check hasn't detected a new rough sleeper. If it had, they would follow-up with a welfare check and offer to link them to a housing service provider.

Sometimes a vulnerable person they stop to help on the street may have housing and needs other assistance.

This is the scenario when they stop off at an arcade in Acland Street where an older woman is curled up in the cold after becoming intoxicated. A walker sits beside her but there is no blanket.

Richard gently tries to wake her. "It's your lucky day, you wake up and see me," he jokes. Meanwhile Michael calls an outreach organisation which quickly arrives to help her recover before taking her home.

A man on a scooter stops to see what's going on. "Thank you for helping her," he says.

On Fitzroy Street they recognise a man who loudly calls one of them a "f-ing liar". They say he is holding a grudge about his dog being taken away by the animal management team after it attacked people in alleged robberies.

Next stop is a parking lot where three rough sleepers leave so the Rapid Response team can litter pick and pressure hose the ground. Syringes are removed along with dropped rubbish. The area was spotless the day before and will be returned to that state by the time the teams move on.

Some more rough sleepers elsewhere in St Kilda are checked. One of them, Robert, is picking up litter to keep the area clean. Although he has health issues, he is keen to find housing and get back into the workforce. Articulate and witty, Robert jokes that he is a "precocious little b-stard". The conversation suddenly takes a serious turn when he says "I just need stability and a sense of purpose".

A patrol in sand dunes on the St Kilda West Beach reveals an abandoned tent. They let it down and will remove it the next day. If there are concerns about an encampment, they return with police.

It's the end of the shift and they say it has been quiet.

The closely-knit trio enjoys some good-natured banter with each other after the patrol.

Wayne recalls the media excitement when he was recently filmed helping a Sydney visitor who had bogged his car on Elwood beach. "I also removed a rock blocking a laneway. We're pretty versatile, it's good we can all use skills we have gained over the years."

"Every day is different," Michael agrees. "We enjoy using our problem solving and resolution skills."

They relish the success stories – the people they get to know who proudly tell them they have found work or housing.

"Some people stay on your mind. But at the end of the shift, I think I've done my bit and helped make a difference – like we all do," Richard says.

This is part of an occasional series profiling teams in our Council.



Rounding back to our community

More than 20 service providers and Victoria Police representatives attended the Community Safety Roundtable convened by our Council on 19 March.

Their organisations are:

First Step
Housing First
South Port Community Housing Group
Launch Housing
St Kilda Community Housing
Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation
Port Phillip Community Group
Sacred Heart Mission
Better Health Network
Windana
Salvation Army / Access Health
Alfred Health
South Port Community Legal
Southside Justice
Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association
Neighbourhood Justice Centre
Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association
Victoria Police.

All of these organisations play an invaluable role in supporting people experiencing homelessness and the safety and amenity of our City and we appreciate their time and openness in discussing what more our Council can do to make our community safer.

This involved identifying actions, collaborations, services gaps and opportunities to improve safety for all in our City.

Councillors attended the final session to hear first-hand the ideas raised.

The participants' conversations, ideas and submissions will inform Roundtable Chair Ian Gray's

report, expected to be tabled at a Council Meeting on 21 May to be released for public comment.

The Roundtable is one input to the new, wide-ranging Community Safety Plan (CSP) we are developing. Formal community engagement will start in late May as we want everyone to have their say as we are eager for our community's views to inform the Plan. This will include in-person and online opportunities including surveys, workshops and pop-ups.

We understand the strong community interest in community safety and will continue to keep you updated.

City News

Don't waste this opportunity

We're about to develop our next waste and recycling strategy to guide us with all things waste related for the next few years.

Before we get started, we want to know your views on the future of recycling and our transition to a circular economy.

This is why we are seeking feedback on topics including glass recycling, reducing garbage through increasing recycling and how you like to receive information on waste and recycling.

<https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/about-the-council/news-and-media/have-your-say-on-the-future-of-waste-and-recycling>



Wiping out graffiti

Did you know that our street cleaning crews removed 12,721 square metres of graffiti across 4,136 jobs from July 2024 to January 2025.

That's just over 30 full sized basketball courts worth of illegal graffiti removed.

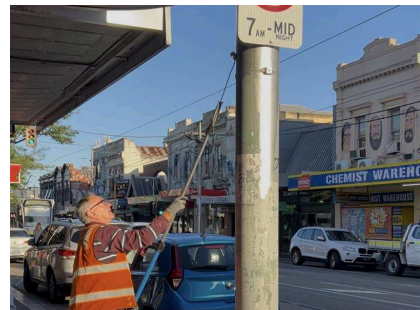
With graffiti on the rise, our teams are working hard to keep our city clean.

Help keep our streets clean by reporting illegal graffiti (especially offensive graffiti) through:

My Port Phillip (online reporting)
Snap Send Solve (send pictures and location)
Phone 03 9209 6777

<https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/about-the-council/news-and-media/how-to-report-and-request-graffiti-removal-in-your-area>

[Find out more](#)

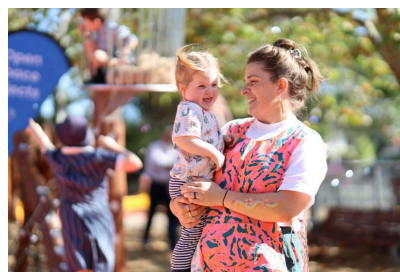


Hewison Reserve upgrade

There was a festive feel for all ages at the Hewison Reserve upgrade's official opening in St Kilda East.

The upgrade provided by our Council includes a mini forest fort, Subiaco climber, extra swings and a raised tee pee to help our younger residents' imaginations run wild.

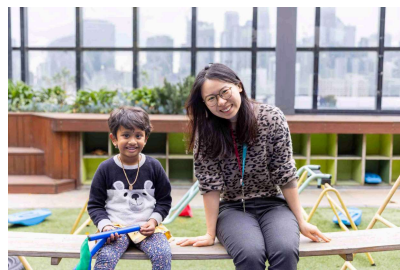
The Rotary Overseas Relocated Playgrounds Project dismantled former playground equipment at the reserve so it can be shipped to be enjoyed by disadvantaged children.



Childcare openings

Looking for childcare services in your area?

We currently have spaces available for select age groups across all five of our Council-run centres located in St Kilda, Southbank, Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and North St Kilda.



Our purpose-built facilities are staffed by qualified educators and offer engaging, high-quality programs tailored to children's interests and developmental needs. Secure your child's place today!

<https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/council-services/family-youth-and-children/childcare-and-kindergarten>

Citizenship ceremony surprise

Port Phillip resident Karina was only expecting a certificate from a Citizenship Ceremony at St Kilda Town Hall.

After our Council agreed to help play Cupid, she also went home with a sparkling engagement ring presented on stage on bended knee by partner Marcus.



"I was already proud and emotional about becoming an Australian citizen. I was very happy, crying tears of joy," Karina said.

While the St Kilda couple had tied the knot in a registry wedding in 2020, they say their marriage never felt complete. No parents, friends or even an engagement ring were at the simple ceremony. COVID-19 restrictions and overseas employment obligations further delayed their plans to hold the wedding celebration of their dreams.

"We never felt we had married properly, I felt there was unfinished work there," Marcus said. But with the timing now right, he was determined to bring the romance – and a ring.

After Marcus spoke to our Council, the plan was hatched for Mayor Louise Crawford to ask Karina to come up on stage to receive a commemorative Port Phillip pin. Marcus followed her and then presented the ring.

The couple is now planning the wedding they always wanted, possibly in Kazakhstan where Karina and her parents are from. Friends and family will be joining them to finally officially celebrate their love.

Karina was among 138 Port Phillip residents from 44 countries who became Australian citizens at that ceremony.

Federal funding commitments for Adass Israel Synagogue

The City of Port Phillip is pleased to see the recent bipartisan funding commitments from both the Australian Government and the Opposition for the Adass Israel Synagogue. This significant support underscores the importance of preserving our community's cultural and religious richness.



The exceptional funding will ensure that the Adass Israel Synagogue and community centre in Ripponlea, Victoria, undergo comprehensive reconstruction.

These funds will guarantee that the synagogue continues to serve as a safe and welcoming place for worship and community activities.

Arts in Focus



Louisa's legacy

Trailblazer Louisa Briggs will be immortalised with a sculpture on the St Kilda foreshore.

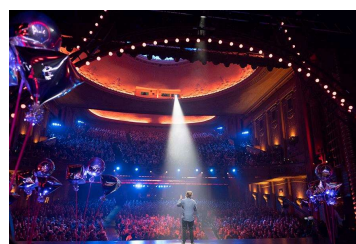
This was one of six public artworks announced on International Women's Day under the State Government's Victorian Women's Public Art Program.

A public vote helped determine which women should be recognised through public art.

Louisa Briggs, born on the south coast of Melbourne in the 1830s, was an Aboriginal rights advocate whose life was marked by courage, resilience and a profound commitment to her community.

Tragically, as a young girl, she was kidnapped by sealers and taken to Preservation Island in Bass Strait. Despite these early hardships, Louisa became a force for change and justice, dedicating her life to improving the lives of First Nations people.

City of Port Phillip and the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council's (BLSC) joint proposal for Louisa Briggs' story to be brought to life for the thousands of people who live near or visit the St Kilda foreshore annually reflects its timeless message of courage and commitment.



Have a laugh

You don't have to travel into the city to catch local and big name shows at this year's Melbourne International Comedy Festival. Our gig guide to this year's comedy shows Southside includes:

The Comedy Crawl (UK)

Ellora, St Kilda

Five comedians. Four bars. One hilarious day. Laugh and drink your way around St Kilda on The Comedy Crawl, with some of the best festival comedians has popping up at each venue.

Friday 18 April and every Saturday and Sunday from 29 March to 20 April, at 2 pm.

Opening Night Comedy Allstars Supershow

Palais Theatre, St Kilda

Melbourne International Comedy Festival's Opening Night Comedy Allstars Supershow is the ultimate kick-off to nearly four weeks of uninterrupted comedy brilliance!

Wednesday 26 March, at 7.30 pm

Local Laughs

The Local Taphouse, St Kilda East

A hand-picked selection of local comedy treats and a sprinkling of some of the Festival's finest international acts.

Mondays from 31 March to 14 April, at 8.30 pm

Eat, Pray, Walk

Gasworks Arts Park, Albert Park

Eat, Pray, Walk is the critically acclaimed one-

The proposed site, rich with cultural connections to the Boonwurrung people, provides an ideal setting for this tribute as visitors will be able to experience the story of Louisa Briggs in a place closely tied to her cultural roots.

man show by storyteller, comedian and UNESCO Dual Pilgrim Marcus Ryan, who has performed in 57 countries and six continents. Mondays from 31 March to 14 April, at 8.30 pm

Help Shape our City



Funding for the future: Reviewing our Community Funding Policy and grants programs

We want to hear your experiences to help shape how we structure funding programs to support community-led activities and projects in Port Phillip. Whether you're part of a local organisation, a previous grant applicant, or simply someone who is interested in the future of our City, we want your ideas to help us improve our programs.

[Share your feedback by Sunday 30 March](#)

Proposed changes to dog on- and off-leash restrictions

We are proposing some changes to dog on- and off-leash restrictions at several sites across our City and want to hear your thoughts. These proposed changes have come out of a set of Guidelines that the community helped to inform during 2022-2024.

[Share your feedback by Friday 11 April](#)

The future of waste management

We're developing a new strategy to align with the Victorian Government's mandated four-stream system, including separate glass and food/garden organics collections. This shift boosts recycling and reduces contamination, contributing to a circular economy. Your input is crucial as we plan the rollout of new bins and drop-off points. We want to get it right, together!

[Share your feedback by Sunday 13 April](#)

More projects open for feedback on our Have Your Say website:

- [Port Melbourne Light Rail Linear Parks Plan](#)
- [Small parks for Balaclava and St Kilda East](#)
- [Reviewing the Dickens Street pop-up park, St Kilda](#)
- [St Kilda Botanical Gardens public toilets](#)
- [St Kilda Library uplift](#)
- [Community Reference Group EOIs for Our Coastal Future](#)

What we've heard from you

You can read the community engagement reports for some recent projects we've heard feedback on here:

- [Greening Fred Jackson Reserve and Sandridge Beach](#)

To access all these links, go to:

<https://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au>

Sustainability

Climate ready communities

We're excited to launch Climate Ready Communities. This innovative program empowers you and your neighbours to tackle climate challenges head-on, right where you live.

Through our partnership with The Resilience Canopy, you will be supported to establish, sustain and grow climate action projects for your local community.

Ready to be part of a national network of like-minded people? To register for training or to attend an information session on Thursday 3 April go to:

<https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/council-services/sustainability-and-climate-change/top-10-ways-to-take-action/climate-ready-communities-program>



Library Visit

Let's talk about death

St Kilda Library is hosting a cafe with a difference every month. South Side Death Cafe is a relaxed space to discuss the end of life, facilitated by funeral celebrant Klara McMurray.

Whether you have experienced the loss of a loved one, are going through something yourself or are simply death-curious and want to prepare both mentally and practically for the inevitable, the death cafe is the place for you.

This is not a grief support, counselling or networking session, it's about an open group of like-minded people holding non-judgmental, safe conversations around the one topic that affects us all. Sessions are free and bookings are essential.

<https://library.portphillip.vic.gov.au/what-s-on/south-side-death-cafe>

Phone: (03) 9209 6655 or email libprograms@portphillip.vic.gov.au



Community Spirit

Good vibrations

There were even more good vibes at this year's St Kilda Festival (SKF) with Deaf and hard of hearing music lovers able to feel the beat through haptic vibration vests.

St Kilda Festival was lent several [haptic vests](#) as its prize for winning the Best Metro Festival Award at the Music Victoria Awards. The Festival paid for sound engineers to facilitate the vests translating sound frequencies to skin vibrations. The wireless setup includes a harness as well as two wrist and ankle bands to provide specific vibrations to the user's body across 24 touch points.



One of the participants was regular Festival-goer Hamish. A former Port Phillip resident and Deaf music lover, Hamish has enjoyed live music in our City since the 1980s. SKF was the first time Hamish, a long-time Midnight Oil fan, was able to experience Peter Garrett's set with a haptic vest, provided by The Newmarket Collective, and Auslan interpretation.

Hamish was keen to provide feedback to SKF:

"The availability of the haptic vibration vests was an outstanding success with a nine-year-old profoundly deaf girl wearing the haptic vest for the first time and loving it. Wearing the vest added the sensory enjoyment of the watching Peter Garrett and the Alter Egos. It had a touchy feeling element to it through electronic pulses in my skin. Many people came up to me and said they enjoyed the Auslan interpreters at the Festival, with some indicating an interest in learning Auslan."

Other accessibility improvements made over the last couple of years at SKF include:

- Auslan interpretation across five stages, spanning the New Music Stage (to foster an access lens in upcoming artists) through to the Main Stage
- free accessible buggies by Travellers Aid available all day on Sunday
- an accessible viewing platform, with an improved sightline this year
- a Quiet Space at the Victorian Pride Centre all day on Big Festival Sunday.

Image of haptic vests at SKF: The Newmarket Collective

What's On



Hop to South Melbourne Market

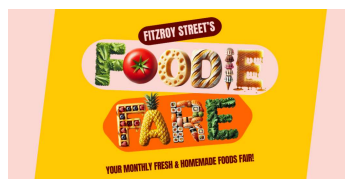
16 to 20 April (closed April 18 and 21)

Get everything you need for a delicious and festive Easter at South Melbourne Market.

From fresh seafood and local lamb to artisan chocolate, specialty hot cross buns, and unique gifts, you'll find it all under one roof while supporting small businesses.

The Easter Bunny will be making a very special appearance at the Market on Thursday 17 April between 11am to 2 pm.

The Market's annual Easter Egg Hunt is perfect



Foodie Fare at Fitzroy Street

Sunday 20 April, St Kilda

Together with the Rotary Club of Southbank Elsternwick, Fitzroy Street Business Association is bringing a monthly Foodie Fare Market to the neighbourhood on the third Sunday of every month.

From 8 am to noon, shop for fresh and homemade foods and condiments, with an emphasis on locally produced, or supplied by local traders.

Think fruit and veg, chocolate, tea, oils, sauces, jams, fresh bread, flowers, homemade pet treats and more.

There's also fun for the



Be captivated at Berlin Burlesque

Gasworks Arts Park
2 to 26 April

Set in Berlin in the 1920's and present day, Berlin Burlesque will transport you into a world of intrigue.

Fresh from a sell-out season in NZ this innovative original production from Lyttelton Circus Theatre Company combines intelligent theatre, mesmerising circo arts and virtuosic musicianship to tell the extraordinary life story of Eric Jan Hanussen – illusionist, clairvoyant, charlatan and...lover.

The show is a high-energy fusion of intelligent theatre, captivating circus arts, and a dynamic live soundtrack.

entertainment for the kids and a great way to get them into the Easter spirit! From 9 am on the 17th, little adventurers will have a blast hunting for all the Easter eggs in the Market while following a map. This year, your \$5 booking fee will be donated directly to The Good Friday Appeal.

Go to the Market's website for full details.

kids with free face painting, a roving one-man band and a giant inflatable penguin for pics.

You'll find the market on the footpath along Fitzroy Street, between approx Melbourne Physiotherapy Group at 201 Fitzroy Street and Professionals Whiting at 155 Fitzroy Street.

Expect a rollercoaster of emotions, from comedy to tragedy, all wrapped in an unforgettable package of live music, magic, circus acts, and even a little bit of nudity.

It's a magic combination making this a riot of a show.

To book tickets, go to the Gasworks Arts Park website.

Sign up to What's On



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