

# 3002

EAST MELBOURNE & JOLIMONT MAGAZINE



Covid-19 Edition

# From the President



By Ian Mitchell, President

This is a special Covid-19 edition of our magazine with thanks to City of Melbourne for a grant to help defray costs.

Due to this pandemic many have lost, incomes, jobs and more. The hardships for many are real and ongoing.

The East Melbourne Group has recognised the vulnerability of many in our community and has established the EMERG group spearheaded by committee member Susan Henderson. This group has set up connections between those needing assistance or reassurance and our wonderful volunteer 'buddies'. We owe Susan a huge vote of thanks for her outstanding work with EMERG and for her ongoing commitment to caring for the East Melbourne community. This has been a major success.

There are other positives from the pandemic. We have been forced to take time out from busy lives and all-consuming activities. We have had the time to reflect on what is important in life. For me there has been calm and introspection. Daily walks through our magnificent gardens remind me of the great

planning foresight our forebears had, laying out wide treelined boulevards and placing parks and gardens so close to the city. How important it is to ensure current and future planning proposals reflect this earlier wisdom.

In this magazine you will find wonderful examples of how people in our community have turned the lockdown into positives for themselves and our community.

How quiet have our streets been! On those occasions requiring vehicle travel, how much easier has it been. The traffic noise on the roads and in the air has been wonderfully reduced. It is a reminder that steps can be taken to limit such impacts on us as a community.

The emphasis on staying at home, has meant remote Zoom/Skype interaction with family, friends and colleagues has blossomed. It has reminded us of the need for good internet connection. The NBN is rolling out in East Melbourne. Some users have expressed the desire and preparedness to pay for very fast connection. This is ongoing and changing so we shall provide more information through the members' monthly update email.

The Lord Mayor organised two Zoom meetings with inner Melbourne resident groups presidents. These were good forums to update each other on our Covid-19 specific activities.

Our committee continues to serve our community well. I thank them for their tireless efforts particularly those helping to produce this magazine at short notice.

I encourage everyone to remain safe, retain the calm from the time-out and move forward appreciating how blessed we are to be in this wonderful location and community.

## East Melbourne Group - What we're working on right now

As we slowly awaken to a new world, we are focussing on the 'big issues' that are going to make the greatest positive impact on our East Melbourne and Jolimont community:

- Working towards a mandatory height limit of 12m to protect the integrity of our heritage precinct
- Aircraft Noise
- Yarra Park car parking
- 204-208 Albert Street is proceeding to VCAT on the 9th November. The EMG is working with residents to prepare and fund opposition to the development. (Go to [www.myvatr.com/204albertst](http://www.myvatr.com/204albertst))
- Treasury Square, Wellington Parade South - we are lobbying the Planning Minister to review the planning process for this site (refer page X)
- Improve vehicle access for Jolimont residents to their homes during major events.
- A community event at Darling Gardens on Friday 23rd October, the eve of the 100th Cox Plate Race Meeting.
- EMG Members Christmas Picnic Bishopscourt with carols on Saturday 12th December.
- Extending the free tram zone to East Melbourne
- Lobbying the COM to enable community use of the former Pavillion Cafe in the Fitzroy Gardens

Now more than ever, to maintain the privileges and the unique characteristics we enjoy in East Melbourne, please support the East Melbourne Group, especially financially for as little as \$55, by becoming Members.

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### PRINTED BY

Print Graphics/Print Green  
[www.printgraphics.com.au](http://www.printgraphics.com.au)

### ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

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### COVER IMAGE

'Covid Tree' photographed by Susan Henderson

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The EMG gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from the City of Melbourne



## East Melbourne Group

Working together to keep 3002 the way you like it

### Why become a member?

- 1 To help preserve all you love about East Melbourne and Jolimont
- 2 To support the work of EMG to connect the community
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Membership fees are very reasonable at just \$55 single, \$110 household and \$33 concession





# The health of our Nation begins in our street

By: Susan Henderson

*As we collected articles for this Covid-19 Edition of the 3002 magazine we thought we were making an historic record of how we managed the pandemic as a community and as a nation.*

We were looking for stories of how individual lives had changed to manage our rapidly changing circumstances; how social habits had morphed to distancing and isolation to keep each other safe; how working and learning from home became part of our lives; how businesses had kept themselves afloat and contributed to support the community by adapting to the new circumstances. Above all, we were looking for examples of the how we worked together as neighbours, a community, a suburb, a state, and a nation.

As we go to print with this edition, we find ourselves once again in lockdown. Community transmission is high and we need to work together once again. However, this time we know that if we work together, we can stop or at least reduce the spread. We have learned from our first experience and made new habits and connections to help each other. Those who are safer staying home can do so in the knowledge that there is a strong body of volunteers waiting to help them. (See the EMERG articles for details.)

Given the recommendation that we use face masks where appropriate, we can unite to make cloth face masks for our community. It will probably be a requirement for quite a long time even after lockdown ends. They can also be passed on to other nations with even greater need than us. EMG will assist with coordinating a group with the approved patterns and fabric. If you would like to be involved please email us at [admin@emg.org.au](mailto:admin@emg.org.au)

We would especially like to thank our advertisers who have supported our community magazine despite the financial stress and uncertainty they are facing. Many of these small businesses, museums, and other local businesses want to thank the community for their support both generally and during these difficult times.

We also want to thank contributors who have written articles while in lockdown and at short notice. Your support is invaluable. Articles that do not appear in the magazine due to space issues are posted on our web site at [emg.org.au](http://emg.org.au)

If you have any other suggestions or ideas that may help or would like to be involved in any way, please contact [admin@emg.org.au](mailto:admin@emg.org.au)



July 2020

# Covid-19 Update

by Sue Barker

My diary records that this is Covid-19 week 16. Sixteen weeks ago, we were advised that there were Covid-19 cases in Australia, but that we could continue as normal because of the low incidence. What a lot has changed since then.

When the number of cases rose, Dr Norman Swan and Prof Brendon Murphy became our clear, authoritative communicators about Covid-19, and we have all been fortunate to have leadership based on best medical advice. When we adopted the new social distancing (including work from home and home schooling) and hand sanitizing behaviours, the prevalence of Covid-19 reduced.

In the last 16 days the number of new daily cases has been in double digit figures in Victoria, after a previous good suppression of spread. For the last 4 days the number of new daily cases is about 65-77/day. At the end of March 2020, the number of daily new cases in Victoria was similar. [covidlive.com.au/report/daily-cases/vic](https://covidlive.com.au/report/daily-cases/vic)

We now know a lot more about this serious infection. It is clear that the whole community needs to co-operate to control this pandemic.

Sixteen weeks ago, we were struggling to have enough test kits for Covid-19 but we now have a good supply. This capacity for reliable fast testing means that 'hot-spots' can be more tightly defined, so that firmer restrictions can be implemented in localized areas. There are 10 Victorian Postcode areas under tighter restrictions from 2nd July. In those Postcodes free

Covid-19 testing for all residents is encouraged, and asymptomatic residents do not need to self-isolate.

When restrictions are changed, there is a delay of 1-2 weeks until this is reflected in a changed number of Covid-19 cases, because the incubation period is 5-7 days.

East Melbourne residents need to remain diligent about Covid-19 safe behaviour. Follow advice about avoiding high risk areas. Maintaining Covid-19 restrictions—work from home, limited numbers at gatherings, limited outings to dine or to shop – has involved many unwelcome changes. I think we are all pleased that our library is back (in Covid-19-safe form).

Globally the pandemic is moving through developing countries in South America, India and in Africa, and because of the weak health systems is likely to be devastating. There will be high death rates, then disrupted economies, and potential for social disruption. This global impact will affect Australia in many ways and will break many hearts.

Australians should be proud of our management of Covid-19, which will include the hot-spot flair-ups we are currently experiencing in Victoria. We hope that our community's no-nonsense acceptance and follow-through of expert advice for the long course will protect us from the grief being experienced in other parts of the world.

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# EMERG Buddies

By: Susan Henderson

*Our March East Melbourne Group committee meeting was our first ever Zoom meeting. We were on the cusp of Australia's transition from free movement to serious Covid-19 lockdown.*

At that meeting we decided that we needed to find ways to stay connected as a community and look after our more vulnerable residents. We were witnessing the horror show playing out daily in China and then Europe on our televisions.

We knew that this virus was going to create a lot of isolation and loneliness and we needed to help those vulnerable people in our community. A group of volunteers to 'buddy up' and provide emotional support, shopping services, assistance with medical appointments was needed. We called out for volunteers, pairing them with those who needed assistance, created a protocol of how to interact safely and started a monthly newsletter.

## So began EMERG: East Melbourne Emergency Response Group

East Melbourne residents have shown the true value of community and how to act in a crisis. The response was both immediate and heartening. Over the next few weeks there were over 50 people on our volunteer list and many other young people had taken the initiative themselves and letterbox dropped personal notes offering help to those in need.

As we all know, we live in a community of independent and confident folk. But this was something different. Many people

gratefully accepted the offer of a Buddy, and many more said they would manage as long as they could and then ask for a Buddy when things got worse.

In mid-June and we were opening up again, having seemingly dodged the bullet of Covid-19 running rampant in our country. By mid-July we are again back in lockdown with daily cases in the hundreds. The anxiety has returned. We don't know how bad it will get and we are thankful that we have volunteers to call on for those people who are anxious and isolated in their homes. THANK YOU EVERYONE!

One positive that has come from this initiative has been the opportunity to connect with younger members of our community. We hope to stay connected with you, we value your contribution to East Melbourne and we look forward to seeing you at our social get-togethers we hope to have in Darling Gardens and Bishops court later this year.



## Our volunteers list of honour

From Kevin, aged 80 to Victoria, 18 and Georgiana, 12.

There were also many unknown individual offers placed in letter boxes, thank you!

Aisling Yeo	Jacqueline Allman	Murray Hohnen
Asja Jaksic	Jacqui Jeavons	Perry Wood, Madeline Scanlon
Carla Grist	Joanne O'Callaghan	Peter Hendrickson
Caroline Daniell	Joe Griffin	Pranav Kappoor
Charlotte Landy	Joe Sofra	Pravina Kumar
Cherie Cork	Judy Hogg	Prudence Blackshaw
Chris Hermann	June Jang	Richard Smith
Clare McCan	Katrina Shaw	Rosie Silk
Debbie Chan	Kimberley Smith	Ruth Roshan
Delia Symons	Krystyn Hendrickson	Sarah Code
Edward Williams & Georgia Honan	Lara Doubell	Simon and Natalie Vander Sluys
Fiona Sofra	Lauren Hillier	Tanya Azar
Fran Lalor	Libby Kitchingman	Tanya Herschberg
Gabrielle Colman	Lizzie Crosby	Tess Anderson
Georgiana Streeton-Cook	Louise Cummins	Thomas Schipper
Greg Bisinella	Margi Olsen	Valentine Lejeune
Hawkes Family	Michelle Gordon	Victoria Streeton-Cook
	Myrna Bull, Moira Rayner	Zulema Calderon (and husband)

# Some of our Buddy stories

## Robyn, Alan Seale and Jacqui Allman

### Robyn

Early in the Covid-19 Pandemic we went shopping for essentials and found the experience somewhat unnerving. We felt quite exposed, being in the high- risk category for the pandemic and finding the centre as busy as ever. So we were delighted when the EMG took the initiative to invite younger residents to volunteer and help people like us to 'stay at home'.

And so we met Jacqui Allman who works in the Arts, a field hard hit by the lockdown. Jacqui graciously shopped for us, carrying the goods back to East Melbourne on her bike! We are very grateful for what Jacqui has done for us and impressed that so many other young local residents have provided other senior residents with badly needed peace of mind.

### Jacqui

My name is Jacqui. I moved to East Melbourne in November after touring with various arts organisations and festivals for two years. Due to the restrictions on mass gatherings, I have found myself out of work. I thought rather than sitting still, I'd try to help the local community. That's when I saw the notice at the General Store.

I've loved having chats with Robyn over the fence, mainly about how chilly the weather is getting now! The program has helped welcome me to the neighbourhood and get to know the East Melbourne community.





## Marie Fels and Kimberley Smith

### Marie

In response to Sue Henderson's enquiry about the buddy system, for inclusion in the East Melbourne Group newsletter, I told her how much we appreciated Kimberley Smith's help, and that we'd got to know her a little, and discovered that she worked in a government department planning for the economic recovery.

Over a socially distanced drink, we introduced Kimberley to our neighbour Phil Ruthven AM, founder of the Ruthven Institute, who is a futurist. In the course of a discussion about Victoria's economic recovery, Phil mentioned in passing, his Trump-related pat on the back for providing detailed information on the US respirator and PPE industries.

This is what happened - an East Melbourne connection on a major issue:

IBISWorld founder Phil Ruthven is an East Melbourne resident, and has been for three decades. The White House has been a client of IBISWorld's Wall Street office for some years. The White House sent out an urgent request to management consultants for information about the US ventilator and PPE

industry which was required to enable it to formulate its Covid-19 policy response. Only IBISWorld was able to provide the required information. The IBISWorld Wall Street office received the most appreciative and glowing letter of thanks it has ever received. The Australian Financial Review reported on this on 24th March, 2020.

### Kimberley

When the pandemic hit home there was so much uncertainty and stress. I saw Sue's post on Facebook about a Buddy system, and I thought it was a wonderful initiative and a great way to do something small to alleviate some of that stress.

It's been so lovely to get to know Marie and Bob (and their gorgeous dog Polly). Marie has had a fascinating career as an ethno-historian (and she's still going!) and Bob completed the same course that I'm currently undertaking.

When we were legally able to, Marie and Bob kindly invited me over and we had a lovely chat with their neighbour Phil.

It's nice that the pandemic hasn't turned out as badly as it could have here. This has been a great way to get to know the neighbours and find some commonalities. I'll continue to say hello as I walk past to get my morning coffee.



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## Jennifer and Robert Rattray and Pravina Kumar

### Jennifer

We returned from a trip to the Antarctic in March, no disease on board but refused disembarkation in Chile and from various other ports. We were very grateful to the Falkland Islands for allowing us entry to catch a charter flight home.

A surreal world awaited us. After time in hotel quarantine we were allowed to go home to isolate. We were dependent on family to supply us with provisions at first, until we were linked with our East Melbourne Buddy, Pravina, who was kind enough to make several shopping trips for us.

We also met George, her cute little dog. Now we are freer to go out, and fortunately Pravina has found a new job. We do hope to see more of them from time to time. Quarantine had its silver lining!

### Pravina

One of the best things about living in East Melbourne is the community. It's something I've come to appreciate even more since we have been in lockdown. Visits to the park with my dog, George, and chats with neighbours have meant more to me.

It was during one of these chats, with my neighbour Aisling, that I found out about the volunteer program to help people who were self-isolating after returning from overseas.

Helping Jenny and Rob with their groceries gave me a sense of purpose and made me feel useful during a difficult time. We've kept in touch as restrictions have eased, too - there is definitely a puppy playdate on the cards.



## Marlene Mackintosh and Jacqui Jeavons

### Marlene

When lockdown began, I was a little apprehensive about how I would manage. My family was worried about me. It was great for us all when I was introduced to a volunteer Buddy. Jacqui, an architect working from home, is an absolute delight and it has been wonderful to get to know her and her husband Nigel.

She has kept in touch through regular phone calls and helped me with shopping. Now as things free up a little, I have enjoyed being able to introduce her to local friends and look forward to staying in touch through local events post Covid-19.

### Jacqui

My experience of being a buddy has been wonderful. Being a non-essential worker, I was feeling quite unsettled at the start of lock down and trying to think of ways I could assist others. With my elderly grandparents in mind I was touched to see the ad for local Buddies at the General Store one day. I thought it was a fantastic initiative and happily reached out to be involved.

Getting to know Marlene has been a joy. She is a very kind, insightful and caring lady. Now that restrictions have relaxed, I bump into Marlene at the George most mornings on my walk. It is humbling to see how active Marlene is in the community. She is always surrounded by many local friends and she eagerly introduces me too.

Being involved in the Buddy group and observing Marlene's daily social activities have been reminders of how important (and easy!) it is to be active in the local community.





## Shirley Sankey and Ruth Roshan

### Shirley

At the beginning of lockdown, I found myself in hospital for 10 days then in respite care for two weeks. On my return home I was very grateful to be connected to my volunteer Buddy Ruth. She was a wonderful help to me during those strange weeks of isolation and uncertainty about my health. She took my blood pressure, kept records for my doctor, stayed in touch by telephone and helped me in many ways. Ruth has many talents, including being a mandolin player and composer and I am grateful for her kindness during these unsettling times.

### Ruth

What a pleasure it has been to get to know Shirley. She is full of stories and perpetually joyful; I have been so lucky to have been chosen as her Buddy. Spending lock down in a beautiful suburb like East Melbourne I have noticed how the community has had the opportunity to strengthen ties. We residents are truly blessed.

# East Melbourne General Store

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- Nursery coming soon.

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Ann and Delia

## Ann Fairhall and Delia Symons

### Ann

For the past twenty-five years I have lived in East Melbourne, ten of those years on my own. All was well at Number 51.

Until suddenly it was not.

When the pandemic struck I suddenly became aware that my world had shrunk. And this despite the loving care of our daughter and her husband, who live on the other side of town. This at the same time as son Simon and family were confined to Queensland, with my ailing seventy-five-year-old brother in NSW and numerous other

extended family members scattered over country Victoria and in Tasmania.

Having survived a visit to Coles I told myself I could manage, and I did until one afternoon I received what I assumed to be one of those nuisance phone calls. Knowing that I am going deaf I have had to teach myself to listen carefully, so rather than hanging up I kept listening.

And so began what has turned out to be far more than just a delivery of bread, milk and the occasional bottle of orange juice. I would like to think I have a new friend, Delia. She is much younger than I, but willing to share her time with me. I now know about the pros-and-cons of working from home, sharing her walks around the parks of East Melbourne, and revisiting my childhood bicycle rides. And what of my plans for the future? I am thinking of reducing my request for milk from two litres to one litre, to increase the number of visits from Delia! So now all is well at no. 51!

### Delia

I am very grateful for the EMERG buddy system and I thank Susan for having done a particularly good job in pairing me up with my Buddy.

It has been an absolute joy sharing the experience of isolation with my new friend. While the East Melbourne community in general has been wonderful during this time, it was lovely knowing that I had the support of a Buddy. The experience has also made me realise the value of intergenerational conversations and that there is a real art to good conversation. Ann was always incredibly gracious in asking how I was feeling, as well as sharing her own perspective and the very latest in global news.

Thank you, EMERG for making the wellbeing of people in this beautiful neighbourhood a priority!



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## A RESIDENT

## The Dogwalker

By Dorothy Toniolo

It took a while to accept the seriousness of the pandemic - the 'mild flap' the newspapers were reporting in February became a 'transformative experience' in March with the declaration of a Victorian State of Emergency and travel, work and social distancing restrictions.

Friends and relatives decamped to holiday homes, coffee shops closed, neighbours began calculating distances and stopping for shouted greetings with the width of an empty road providing reassurance.

The grounds of the MCG, too, became an arena for this temporary state of shock. The pre-work rush of dog hour slowed and extended over the whole morning; people spread out over the grassed areas; looked away and held their breath if they had to pass someone on the pathways, kept their dogs close and kept walking.

The new thoughts and routines established to fill the long days of isolation transformed my focus. I began to really feel the fragility of life, to appreciate the care we showed for each other, to enjoy deeply the beauty of nature, to revere the warmth of human bonds.

But the curve of new infections flattened and by the middle of the next month was in steep decline. And the MCG was one of the first places where I noticed the re-emergence.

People had sorted out their work routines and accepted that health is not a given. The days were shorter and cooler, the leaves crunched underfoot and people everywhere were congregating in socially-distant but gregarious groups, chatting whilst dogs excitedly rediscovered the joys of canine competition and just plain gambolling.

A month later again, and now huge crowds are gathering to push for social change, even while maintaining social distancing and wearing masks.

Are these demonstrations a public reflection of widespread personal transformation? How many people are asking 'Where to from here?'



EVERVET

East Melbourne

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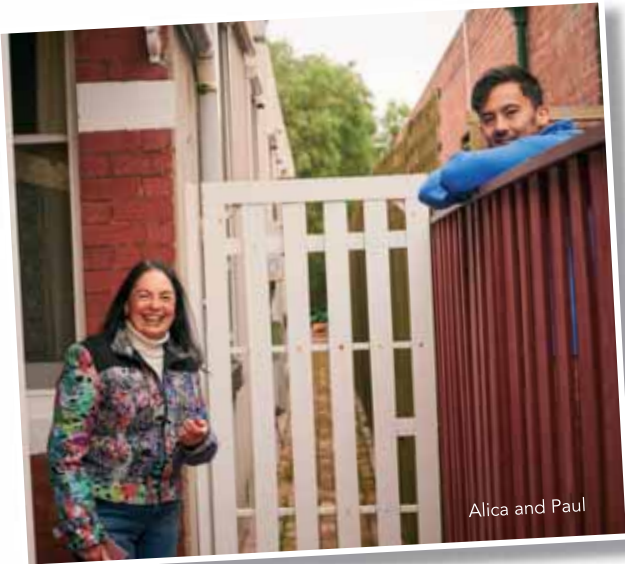
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# Covid Magic

By Alicia Rodriguez Orona



Alicia and Paul

It came up from a very unexpected place; the need to be present. It translated into a sudden inclination to bake, after not doing that for more than a decade to prevent eating the whole cake. Yes, you read correctly: the whole cake. To be fair, not all of it at once. Into the need to dance for half an hour in the kitchen every day to commercial radio music, to keep fit and the weight down, because just walking was not enough. Into minutely documenting in my head the good-bye of autumn in the gardens.

The baking became the path to a gorgeous friendship with a young neighbour, who was already helping me with shopping through his weekly Vic Market forays. I share my culinary achievements with him now. He has shown great appreciation for my efforts, which we exchange across the fence. If he is out at the front and he hears me there, he now climbs the fence to say hello. All of this happened because he works from home now, and I spend a lot more time at home, baking.

I have always liked dancing. I think it all started with my paternal grandmother, a delightful blue-eyed Andalusian who

used to sing while doing the daily tasks, and now and then punctuated them with dancing. While in lockdown, I was trying to work out a routine, apart from my freelance work, and was missing a physical activity to discharge energy and be transported. The radio waves came to my aid. A commercial radio station, which I tend to have as background during the day, now

has a half hour music workout at lunch time, to ensure that you have your 30 minutes of exercise while at home. So, every day, at 12 noon, I have a dance date with the radio station. Lots of fun.

And then, autumn, with its charm and colour brushes at the ready. This year, thanks to Covid, I have had the privilege of checking its commitment to the task on a daily basis, at the Fitzroy Gardens and in the streets of East Melbourne. It's moving, it's truly magical, and a song for the soul. Trees that appear illuminated with their own light in the afternoon sun, flames of orange and red against an impossible blue sky, and the one at that house, doing its duty by dropping star-shaped leaves on the pavement to enchant the passers-by.

Yes, 2020 is a roller-coaster. Or perhaps an ocean, with indomitable waves and peaceful lulls, but there are hope and love and there are beautiful moments for all of us in all of this. We may choose to be present; to cherish one another. We will all be carrying unexpected gifts to the other side of Covid. May all of them be borne out of gratitude and a happy heart.



# The Burglary

By Tim Holland

I was recently the subject of an aggravated burglary while at home in Simpson Street and afterwards it was suggested that I might like to do a piece for the magazine. In considering the request I was concerned to ensure that I did not unnecessarily cause alarm to other residents of the suburb, but I thought that my experience could provide some useful pointers to others in improving home security. On balance there are positive lessons to be taken away, so here it is. Many reading this may shake their heads at our susceptibility as described below, but I have been surprised at the number of people that I have related this to who have security circumstances similar to ours.

Basically what happened was that I was sitting out the back of the house with our newly arrived golden retriever puppy, Jimi, at around 3pm on a mild Monday afternoon. The wire security door was snibbed but when I got up and walked past the hallway I was surprised to find someone exiting with two loaded bags and bulging pockets. I challenged him and he jettisoned some of his haul as the two of us struggled down Simpson Street and onto Albert Street. In the course of a struggle I

managed to incur a fractured thumb, unfortunately.

What the burglar did was use an implement to penetrate the wire screen and manipulate the snib. Although the door was sturdy the screen was only flywire and this was a vulnerability that was exploited. That might have been OK but it turned out that the snib was not secure enough and was relatively easily undone.

What was needed was a proper deadlock on the wire door. In addition, we will be putting in a higher grade mesh on the door; after all, it's pleasant to be able to look out onto Powlett Reserve and the playing of tennis while feeling secure from interlopers.

We also suffered the theft of valuable jewellery and heirlooms of significant emotional value; Bron was the main loser here, although my father's WW2 service medals which are of zero monetary value also went (if anyone sees the 1939-45 Star et al for J.C. Holland VX54815, let me know). These items were in drawers; every drawer and cupboard was upended and stripped out and strewn around the main bedroom. The lesson here is:

putting your valuables in a sock at the back of the bottom drawer is no match for the modern thief. Having a small secure bolted-down safe installed by a trusted person in a discreet place would seem to be a far better option that would be a good investment in peace of mind.

Our daylight interloper didn't avail himself of the doorbell, but someone did the following night at 10.10pm – a shonky looking individual in shorts and tee shirt when it was 8°C degrees, and who had apparently rung the doorbells of others in our row looking for an empty home. Only the week before we had installed a new standard doorbell, but we are now about to put in one which has a camera which records those at the front door, and can transmit the image to a mobile phone. Bunnings has a range of these.

A strategic sensor camera or two on the property would also be useful. A senior operational policeman whom I know said that from his experience and from speaking to criminals, one of the best deterrents was a good CCTV, and one that was visible to wannabe burglars; we are putting them at the back looking down the lane and also at the front.

As I said at the start, this piece is meant to give comfort to others in the area in terms of taking some relatively easy steps to enhance security. It is also worth bearing in mind that I understand that burglars are generally keen to avoid contact with homeowners they happen to encounter, so residents probably shouldn't worry too much about suffering injury.



## Bayside

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# Life as an East Melbourne Octogenarian in the shadow of Covid-19

By Jennifer Stanisich

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What a surreal place we have been living in recently, with one disaster after another in Australia. Drought, bushfires, hurricanes, floods have been happening one after another, or at the same time. Now we have the horrors of Covid 19, an extremely virulent and potentially fatal virus with no vaccine.

My husband Darryl and I are in the group most vulnerable to the virus and also with the largest number of fatalities, those over 70. At the start of the outbreak we stocked up responsibly on emergency food and prescription medicines and cancelled visits to the pool and gym, podiatrist, hairdresser, and eye and dental check-ups.

We became more and more aware of how lucky we were to be living in East Melbourne. The EMG-initiated East Melbourne Emergency Response Group, comprising volunteer 'support buddies' was a wonderful initiative, and we appreciated having somebody to support us if needed. While we were in strict isolation our buddy Lauren regularly bought and delivered fresh food to us. Luckily we have not had any emergencies requiring her assistance.

The East Melbourne General Store was the only shop we entered, until the number of new cases dropped dramatically. We continued to walk around East Melbourne, using the grassy median strip to avoid pedestrians on the footpath. Then to the General Store for the paper, take-away coffee and whatever else we needed out of the wide range, waiting outside until the shop had cleared and we could enter. Distancing became a chore, then a way



of life. The good range of local take-away food in East Melbourne offered an occasional break from cooking but we did miss eating with family and friends.

Our front veranda was a marvellous way to keep up some sort of social contact, with our narrow garden enforcing social distancing. We caught up with neighbours and friends, talked to strangers. The footpaths quickly became busier, including lots of younger people we had not seen before, who also often waved or greeted us.

A few times we had drinks with friends, either side of our closed front window. Our friends sat at a table on the veranda, we sat at another table inside the house. I did check, and it was allowed. We

even managed a surprise 80th birthday party for a friend unable to share it with his family and friends, by taking four individual take away meals and our own crockery and cutlery to his home.

The surprise was that both Darryl and I found we were enjoying having the time to do things we hadn't had the time to do previously. The whole house was given a good spring clean. Personal and family histories were tackled. I even sat down again to play the piano (I am very rusty!).

With the easing of restrictions we have at last had a few people into our home and enjoyed again sitting at a table with our friends and family. We hope this will continue.



# Have you been on a Bear Hunt recently?..... I have.

By Dianne Clifford

*You might have noticed the recent appearance of Teddy Bears in the windows of houses throughout East Melbourne.*

This is not a local phenomenon, but a global movement to bring some joy and adventure to young children restricted to their homes during the current State of Emergency, and allowed outside only for the purpose of exercise.

The "Bear Hunt" movement started overseas in February and rapidly spread through the social media platform Facebook. Soon, individuals and communities embraced the idea. It was a way to bring a feeling of safety and togetherness to the youngest members of a local community where individuals and families were now having to spend most of their days in isolation, separated from friends and family. For young children, this can be particularly unsettling as they do not understand the reasons, miss their friends and extended family and are picking up feelings of anxiety and fear in their world.

The bears began to pop up in East Melbourne in March and have been seen in quite a few homes since then. The variety is extensive. There are bears wearing their best pearls and fur coats, ready for a night at the Opera. There are large, squishy, cuddly bears just begging to be picked up and hugged; bears in raincoats and flying jackets; some the bears are represented by colourful drawings and others are with groups of friends from the toybox. It's become a bit of an adventure trail as children and their families - and some not so young children, just young at heart - also enjoy finding the teddy bears in the windows.

Not all households have a teddy bear that they could put on display and we've seen some improvisation on recent walks. Butterflies, Santa Claus, dolls, and even some garden ornaments have been re-positioned so that they look out through the fence to provide a friendly "hello" to our youngest East Melbourne residents.

It is a lovely community effort to make exercising a little more interesting and bring a smile to our little ones and indeed a connection to all who are fortunate to live, work and walk through our delightful suburb.



## Home Schooling

# Teaching from home

By Natalie Vander Sluys

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### Teaching in isolation – looking for silver linings every day

When I returned to work in late January as a primary teacher at a girls' school, the focus had been on news of the terrible bushfires. At the first staff meeting, our principal updated us on the 'Novel Coronavirus'.

Of my class, half were new to the school. Of that half, five students arrived from overseas in January. They immediately had to self-isolate, so I did not meet them until mid-February.

By mid-March, the landscape of our lives was uncertain and fearful. I tried to keep things as normal as possible, but our class was shrinking each week.

As I write this, my class and I should have been at school for 80 days. I have not taught my class for 48 days, so I've seen them more online than face-to-face. It is less than ideal.

Thanks to great leadership and a dynamic IT department, the school successfully transitioned teachers to delivering classes as online lessons using Zoom. I taught every day from my office, which was once a formal dining room. Trying to teach over the internet has its challenges.

Whilst it is easy to put content online and present this, this is not true teaching. Teaching is an organic, visual process. As soon as your class bustles through the door, you can gauge their mood, their news and readiness to learn. Nothing compares to teaching face-to-face.

### Benefits from working from home:

I have lived in Jolimont for almost two years and there were noticeable changes during the lockdown. We were forced to be still! No planes, helicopters, cars, sirens nor the incessant city hum. This really struck me. Quietness can be deafening, but I loved it. I have really noticed the birds calling, cooing, screeching, garbling. I've noticed the ravens and Indian mynas who discuss how to scavenge the dog biscuits left in the backyard, because I've had time to observe their behaviour!



During a crisis, people talk and band together. The leaflets in the letterboxes have been welcome invitations to support local businesses. During Learning at a Distance, walking up to my local eatery Bedggood on Fridays was a treat for my household.

We are so spoiled with beautiful gardens, rivers and parks for meandering, sitting or exercising. Before Covid-19, what had been a harried 'Hi' or nod, has now become a smile or a chat. The sense of community has definitely been heightened.

My virtual classroom has also been my exercise space. Instead of driving out to Shoppingtown Doncaster to slog it out at Phiit Studio which uses an undercover carpark, the company quickly moved to exercise at home also delivered via Zoom. Surprisingly, it is just as intense as being onsite. Lucky that only four square metres are needed for both!

The eleven weeks at home have given me time for introspection and re-evaluation. It's been amazing for community connection. I love teaching, but a strong community also grows within a suburb of motivated and curious learners.

*We are so spoiled with beautiful gardens, rivers and parks for meandering, sitting or exercising. Before Covid-19, what had been a harried 'Hi' or nod, has now become a smile or a chat. The sense of community has definitely been heightened.*



# Home Schooling

## Learning from home

By Fiona Sofra



Natalie, Marcus, Josie, Emilon and Simon

One of the big changes for families brought about by the pandemic was that schooling moved from the classroom to the bedroom/living room/dining room... Burchett lane is home to five families of school age children who shared their experience with us, together with families from Hotham St and Jolimont Terrace. As with many aspects of isolation and social distancing, both parents and kids have generally identified many bright spots as well as significant challenges.

Many schools were already online, using platforms such as Zoom or in-house platforms, so students did not find the technology the challenge many adults would have. Teachers ran classes on screen, getting a peek at home life at times whether they wanted it or not. Uncharacteristically, signs appeared on bedroom doors for QUIET, and noisy pets were banned from entering!! There was the odd story of students getting caught out chatting to friends on their phones during class because they had forgotten to mute their microphones on the Zoom classes! No doubt many other similar stories that were kept from parents. In fact, the older students (and certainly the parents) gained a deeper respect for teachers during this time. All students also began to see their teachers as more 'normal' (and even awesome! in one case), for example by getting to see their teacher's partner making coffee during maths or their cat demanding food before recess.

Three hours of normal classes a day was the norm for primary students, while the middle/senior schools generally followed normal weekly timetables. VCE students had the strange experience of completing tests while aiming their laptop cameras at their work so that teachers could see them working.

In the streets and lanes of East Melbourne children became more visible with the cancellation of weekend sport and after-school activities. Community spirit thrived as children formed friendships with neighbours down alleyways, over fences and in parks and gardens. As expected, lack of contact with friends and participation in sports were missed the most, but senior students also really missed the face-face and on-request time with their teachers.

For boarders, the loss of the comradery and structure of the boarding house was difficult. Whilst there was no end date to home school, final year students faced a unique sense of loss. In addition to the stress about 'what does this mean for my future', they felt deprived of many of the rites of passage that are intrinsic to the Yr 12 experience. For them, the return to school was particularly exciting.

All students listed the best aspects of home-learning as later wake up times, freedom to wear casual clothes and flexibility. More time to share in meal preparation (and eating!) was appreciated by kids and parents alike!

*While parents and students alike acknowledge that there are significant advantages of learning from home, all welcomed the return to the friends, familiarity, and fun of 'regular' school.*

*Parents...let's hope this enthusiasm lasts, but let's keep the stress-free mornings and relaxed dinners!*



Gabrielle on Technology free day



## Arts Section

### Home Alone

# TJC in the time of Covid-19

By Louis Le Vaillant

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The Green Drawing Room' as part of AN INTERIOR LIFE | William Johnston and his Collection as part of our ongoing 'traditional' series image | adam luttick | luts photography | melbourne vic

As we entered mid-March 2020, The Johnston Collection closed its front door and Fairhall's gate topped with its pineapple finial, a Georgian symbol of welcome, was locked. At that time the early effects of the Covid-19 pandemic were just beginning to impact on all aspects of life.

AN INTERIOR LIFE, our annual 'William Johnston and his Collection' exhibition, had opened in mid-February. It was delighting audiences and our lecture program and members events were underway for the year ahead.

With the advice from governments to public museums, galleries and libraries to help ensure the reduction of the spread of the coronavirus, we decided to close TJC to the public temporarily. To have the collection shut to all our visitors was an unprecedented decision in a very uncertain period.

The unplanned closure presented some real challenges. We cancelled tours, lectures and a program of events that had been scheduled and worked out what to do next. This meant taking up the challenge and drastically changing the way we did things and rapidly adapting how our visitors could access TJC in new ways.

While we have been shut many of our essential functions and services continued behind the scenes. Staff ensured that we continued to care for the precious collection and to keep our visitors engaged online with what we do, even if from afar. Over the next few weeks we were able to create online events for our visitors and members of The Friends, a support group of TJC.

We were fortunate to be able to encourage visitors to stay connected and engage with TJC by accessing our website and digital resources. With the assistance of the OPENING DOORS fund and The Friends, a 3-D virtual visit of the current exhibition, called TJC 360°, was very quickly created and published on our website.

This interval also gave us the opportunity to put our shop online so that all the delightful wares are now available to the public and, as a self-funded museum, generate some desperately needed income from shop sale profits to go towards supporting TJC.

William Johnston wanted his museum, collection and gift to the people of Victoria to be open for all to visit and enjoy. It has been an odd feeling being at TJC without the sound of voices from our visitors, friends, and supporters. Every program we create is for one purpose only, our visitors.

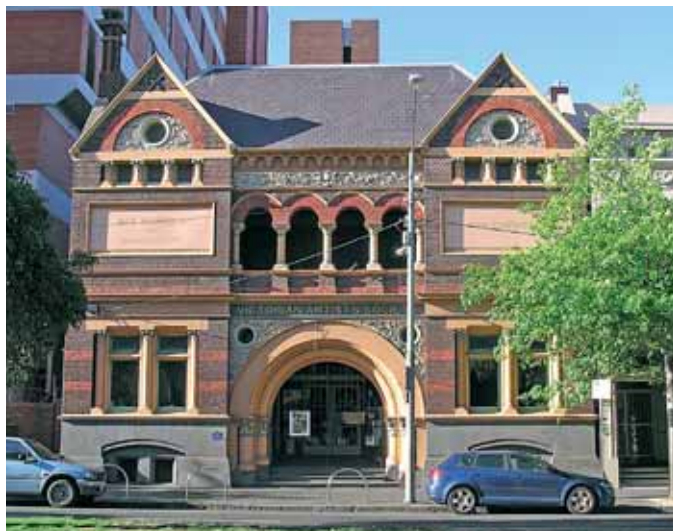
We look forward to welcoming you back to TJC soon to enjoy our exhibitions for real and all our activities in person. In the meantime, please visit our Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter which regularly feature highlights from our Collection and past exhibitions. Your ongoing support means a lot to us at this time.

AN INTERIOR LIFE | William Johnston and his Collection continues until 22 September.

Please visit [www.johnstoncollection.org](http://www.johnstoncollection.org)

# Reopening of the Victorian Artists Society

By Mark Russell



*With the easing of restrictions, the Victorian Artists Society is preparing to reopen to the public on June 19. Term 3 at our art school, beginning on 13 July, will boast 18 classes across several mediums, and our Winter Exhibition will run from 19 June to 12 July.*

The Victorian Artists Society (VAS) began 2020 with a special event celebrating our 150th Anniversary. This was to be a big year for VAS, with the publication of a commemorative book and several major exhibitions and events planned throughout the year. In 2019 we completed a major restoration project, bringing new life and updated facilities to our heritage listed building.

On 10 March we held our annual Contemporary Exhibition. This event also marked the launch of our 150th anniversary celebrations opened by Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria and Mr Anthony Howard AM QC, attracting more than 200 guests.

As the Coronavirus threat escalated, we closely monitored government recommendations and implemented several

health and safety policies. Unfortunately our sudden closure on 17 March resulted in the collapse of revenue, with the cancellation of classes and exhibitions representing a huge challenge to the society. With great disappointment we found the year of promising prospects and rewards disrupted.

Fortunately our staff working from home were able to access JobKeeper payments, enabling us to stay afloat after cutting expenses. This period also enabled the development of online capabilities, including the creation of an online gallery which was received by members with overwhelming support.

This online gallery will be a permanent feature of our website, allowing VAS members to showcase and sell their artwork outside of our standard calendar of exhibitions. It will also open additional benefits to our country and interstate members, who cannot always bring their art in to display on the walls of our galleries.

With many other exhibitions and events planned throughout the year, we look forward to welcoming you back into our galleries and rebuilding our business with special attention to member and public benefits.

In the meantime, please visit our website:

430 Albert Street, East Melbourne, 3002.

**P:** 03 9662 1484

**E:** [admin@victorianartistsociety.com.au](mailto:admin@victorianartistsociety.com.au)

**W:** [victorianartistsociety.com.au](http://victorianartistsociety.com.au)



## EM Library

# Missing us? We're missing you too!

By Linda Longley Team Leader East Melbourne Library

*The East Melbourne Community Garden is alive and doing well and bees' are still busy making honey!*

Following the Victorian Government announcement on the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, City of Melbourne Libraries are now offering a limited customer service.

You can now return loaned items to all branches via the external return chutes which are open 24/7. Please note that all current loans have been extended until 17 July 2020 so you don't need worry about accumulating fines.

### You can also

- Pick up reservations and request collection access facilitated by library staff.
- Access a computer, internet and printing.

Some services and activities will remain unavailable, including browsing, print newspapers, latest magazines, and study/seating areas for the time being.

All room bookings, study spaces, events and programs such as children's storytime sessions, conversation clubs and book clubs, remain suspended until further notice.

Online programs will continue, as will our eLibrary service including eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, online newspapers and learning resources.

To meet the Victorian Government guidelines for gatherings in indoor spaces, entry into each of our library branches will be limited, depending on the size of each location.

Strict hygiene and social distancing rules will be in place, including time limits on library visits with security and a concierge at the door to manage visitor numbers.

You will also be required to provide us with your first name and contact number to meet Victorian Government contact tracing requirements. This information will be destroyed after 28 days.

We very much look forward to welcoming everyone back to our libraries and we thank you in advance for your patience and cooperation as we all adapt to these new ways of operating.



## Roccella

Ciao East Melbourne!

We just wanted to say thank you for showing us the love during Melbourne's lockdown period.

We hope to see you soon.



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# Adapting to structural changes and life

## Small business in lockdown

Sue Henderson



Luke finished the screen very late at night

### Pyman's Pharmacy

The groundswell of ideas and help from so many people in our community was overwhelming from the very start of this year living with Covid.

From people from the Yarra Valley helping us source alcohol to make hand sanitiser when it couldn't be found anywhere. This "homebrew" was given to doctors' surgeries, theatres and of course to East Melbourne residents as widely as we could.

To the father of two of my assistants building from scratch a protective screen for our front counter and working into the small hours of the night... I'll never forget how his face fell when I said after all his hard work how I was looking forward to dismantling it to light a bonfire once it was all over.

And to the people sewing cloth face masks and surgical gowns as some doctors were unable to source these necessities for a short time & our wonderful retirees came to the rescue with some wonderfully bright & colourful creations.

The list of heart-warming actions from people is enormous... not the least being EMG's incredible efforts!



Adrinao and Nino

### Geppetto

After 39 years as a local restaurant and part of the fabric of East Melbourne we found ourselves having to change into a 'take-away' overnight to stay in business. Together with our loyal staff we set up a COVID safe system, prepared to cook East Melbourne's favourite dishes as take-home food and even set up our own in-house bottle shop. A few weeks into the lockdown Dad and I realised that our great community was going out of their way to support us. We are now looking forward to thanking them as restrictions lift. We are now ready to welcome our EM friends back inside Geppetto, so that they can dine in comfort and we can once again enjoy their company. vulnerable increased their visits as community service activities were cancelled. The intelligence and community-mindedness of East Melburnians has been a delight to be seen.

We look forward to things returning to normal, to having all our cafe chairs and tables full and bustling, shelves effortlessly stocked, and hands to soften from the unrelenting washing and more washing - but we hope some things don't go back. That the suburb continues to care for each other as they have, to stay local and slow down, because at the East Melbourne

## Small Business Section



Lisette

## East Melbourne General Store

The greatest challenge of Covid-19 has been securing stock. Panic buying saw an influx of tradies and passers-by descending on the store to stock up on essentials like pasta and toilet paper - but they were all refused. Stock shortages for baking and imported lines persist now into June.

The EMERG initiative was born from the community's deep desire to connect with each other and help. Each day in the store we received offers of assistance from loyal patrons eager to volunteer to help. We offered to provide deliveries and set up pay by phone purchasing - but it was not required. The success of the East Melbourne Emergency Response Group fulfilled this.

The role of the store went beyond servicing the grocery and booze requisites of the suburb, to also attend to the social needs of an increasingly isolated community. We put guests at ease, reminding them that they didn't have to buy anything to come in for a chat. Home office workers craved an excuse to leave the confines of their cell and the homeless and vulnerable increased their visits as community service activities were cancelled. The intelligence and community-mindedness of East Melburnians has been a delight to be seen.

We look forward to things returning to normal, to having all our cafe chairs and tables full and bustling, shelves effortlessly stocked, and hands to soften from the unrelenting washing and more washing - but we hope some things don't go back. That the suburb continues to care for each other as they have, to stay local and slow down, because at the East Melbourne General Store, that is just how we like it.



## George Street Café

Covid-19 brought sudden change for us all. Overnight we found ourselves the 'social distance' coffee and take-away breakfast and lunch spot for locals. Gone was the friendly banter of our EM folk as they enjoyed catching up with local news as we all respected the new rules. We were able to help our locals by setting up a supply of 'scarce' essentials such as flour and pasta to get over the panic buying shortages. The footpath outside became the local 'safe distance' meeting place for the many locals who are used to sharing a chat with their morning coffee. It will be great to welcome our local friends back inside our warm and cosy space as the restrictions lift.



## The Tippler

Whilst Covid-19 has thrown us several challenges it has provided us with a number of opportunities as well. On our trusty red e-bikes we've been delivering it all; soups, beers, fresh produce, wines, cocktails, cake, bread, biscuits, and of course Tippler takeaway meals! It has been a blast but it's so great to be back doing what we love and that's offering Tippler hospitality to our guests at the venue. In the downtime we have been really thinking what dining will be like and have refurbished the Mural Room upstairs to best suit the new regulations. It's now better than ever, new lighting and indoor plants provide privacy yet still allow for a dining atmosphere. With the Mirka Mora mural at one end and the large window overlooking Yarra Park, it's truly a wonderful space. We hope to see you soon and thank you for your support.



## Small Business Section



## Il Duca

When lockdown began, we prepared lots of our favourite recipes and froze them ready for people in lockdown to use at home. As time went by, we decided the best way to keep going was to use the time to refurbish the restaurant and give the place a super clean. This put us in a great position to restart from a pristine kitchen and dining room.

After the renovations were finished we started back with a take away menu and offered delivery where needed. We prepared a Mothers Day Special lunch ready for collection to help our families celebrate their Mum's special day.

Then, on Friday June 7th we opened for (social distanced) in-house dining for the first time. I was a little nervous to be 'back on the tools' but it was worth it to have our wonderful EM family back in the restaurant. We look forward to seeing many of you as we emerge from these strange times.

Dom in Kitchen - "At last, back "on the tools". Nervous, but looking forward to it! "



## Roccella

Roccella, our all-day Italian concept, opened January 20 this year, five days before the first reported case of Covid-19, by four family partners, Francesco, Joe, Bernie, and Bruno in homage to the bakeries, delis, cafes and grocery shops our grandparents and parents set up after coming to Australia from Southern Italy seeking a better life. We were humbled by the support of our opening in the first nine weeks.

The lockdown period has led us to refocus our energies to our existing retail, takeaway and home delivery offerings through letterbox drops and emailing of our offers and takeaway menus. Several of our suppliers had also been adversely impacted, so through a collaboration, we were able to bolster up our wine offerings, desserts and gelati, ready-made meals and even boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables.

The East Melbourne community recognised our efforts and supported our business throughout this challenging time, an incredible morale booster for us and our team.

We finally opened our restaurant on June 1st, albeit with dining restrictions, with many of our community now enjoying our updated menu and dining space. We are grateful for the support of East Melbourne residents, your support, well wishes and continued engagement are much appreciated.





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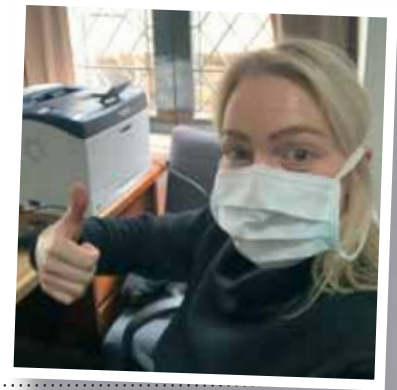
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# A Doctor Reflects

By Dr Terri Cluse MBBS, MRCGP



As a GP working in Melbourne, a global pandemic had only ever been something that I had read about in medical textbooks. I had designated it as 'things I hope we will never have to deal with'. I think it is fair to say that most of us could never imagine what would occur.

What was particularly memorable in the first few weeks was the uncertainty. The situation changed almost daily, every day the threat had been expanded, we had to change our practice, be hyper-vigilant and keep up to date constantly.

As a practice, we were faced with a logistical dilemma. How could we screen at-risk patients while maintaining the safety of other patients, our staff and ourselves? There was a lot of media attention about lack of PPE (personal protective equipment). Would this prove a problem for us? Working at a large practice with 20 GPs, four nurses, a mental health nurse, seeing 200+ patients a day with a large percentage of overseas students, we were most definitely in the front line. What was the most efficient way of dealing with things?

We had started to hear stories from friends and colleagues in Europe and the UK. Medical professionals were dying. We had quite a confronting meeting with an infectious disease consultant early on, who quite bluntly said 'You must put the PPE on correctly or you'll die like your colleagues in Europe'. Nothing like the brutal truth to make one pay attention.

So what did we do? First, we realised we needed to all be on board. The reception staff, nurses, doctors, management and cleaners all came together. We developed a strict protocol that we were all familiar with. Any patient who called the practice was screened over the phone. We started a hotline for any coronavirus-only enquiries. We hired two extra nurses to help with screening.

Now as anyone enters the practice, they are met by a nurse at the front door in PPE who asks relevant questions about symptoms and checks their temperature. Any person who fits

the criteria for screening is directed to an isolation room where they are met with another nurse in PPE for testing. The doctor is called to examine anyone unwell. We have a full time cleaner who repeatedly cleans the practice and high-touch areas throughout the day.

Additionally I became involved in the screening 'blitz', volunteering to screen university students in residential colleges.

As a profession, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) recognised the need for us all to be more dynamic and flexible. The government introduced funding for Telehealth consultations that has been embraced by the public.

Moving forward, what can we take away from this experience? I hope Telehealth is here to stay. People like convenience and if it means better health for all, let's keep it going. I am very pleased to see mental health being brought to our attention and receiving extra funding. It is something we must all talk about.

Finally, I think we can all be proud of our efforts both as a community and individually. As a whole, we did not panic, we stuck together, we were kind, we thought of each other and mostly did the right thing. I hope these are qualities we continue to practice in our lives.

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# Epworth Freemasons in Covid-19

By Susannah Hicks

*When the world was plunged into a Covid-19 way of life, Epworth HealthCare stepped up a gear to protect its patients, staff and doctors, while still delivering excellence in patient care.*

Epworth Freemasons quickly implemented visitor restrictions and set up screening points at its off-street entrances.

Epworth Freemasons Executive General Manager, Simon Benedict, said that he is immensely proud of the team, which demonstrated its agility as the pandemic took hold.

'Our team implemented significant changes, within a matter of hours. Our first priority was to protect our people and our community. We established a special taskforce to monitor our stocks of personal protective equipment, including masks and gowns, to guard against potential spread of Covid-19,' Mr Benedict said.

'Another big change to our hospital was the visitor restrictions. We worked within guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to limit the number of people we had moving through our wards.

'We know how important it is for many patients that they have familiar faces beside their bed, however in these extraordinary times, we had to limit the number of people coming in and how long they stayed.

'We extended our pre-admission screening to include specific Covid-19 questions and a number of Epworth nurses were seconded to the DHHS tracing team, to help the statewide effort.

'Our maternity unit instigated significant changes, allowing just a partner or support person to come in with the mother. In the early days, some were concerned that mums in our hospital and elsewhere would feel isolated without seeing wider family



and friends. However, we did find that it resulted in more quiet time for parents to recover from the birth, bond with their baby and learn from our experienced midwives.

'Restrictions meant that we had to suspend our childbirth education classes, so we took them online with video content and a two hour live video conference with our senior midwives. We saw a surge in the number of people accessing our highly regarded Mobile Midwife maternity videos on topics like changing a nappy and bathing and introduced a series of online sessions with expert advice and some fun with mums at home as part of our 'Iso-Mums' initiative.

'And in the middle of all of this, our redevelopment was finally complete and the time had come to open our new main hospital entrance at 109 Albert Street.

'We had been planning for fanfare and celebration to mark the start of a new era for our historic hospital, but instead we opened the doors at Albert Street as if it was any other day.

'As elective surgery returns to normal, and other restrictions are eased, we look forward to our future continuing to serve our local community through our GP clinic and other services as well as the wider Victorian community.

'Epworth continues to work alongside our private and public counterparts allocating theatre and ward space to keep Victorians safe and we will continue to keep capacity in our system for any second wave,' Mr Benedict said.



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Bernie's got talent!

# The unexpected joy of finding new talents during lockdown

By Lorraine Holtschke



Bernie came out one morning in Covid-19 lockdown and said he was going to paint a mural on the back of an original painting.

Bernie has never painted before, except at school but I had noticed he was a great sketcher of cartoons. What to paint was his biggest decision. Bernie flipped through books and magazines, got on the computer, looked at photos of scenery etc. He finally came up with scenes from his past life since marriage. Fortunately, we have a dear friend from Fish Creek who is an artist and had already painted a mural for Bernie.

Bianca became Bernie's mentor giving guidance to background colour, then the size of the scenes, but mostly mixing colours and where to get the paint and other requirements. After black leading sketches, off he went and never stopped until finished. It became obvious Bernie's

painting was depicting the book he finished writing last year. So, the painting is called The Book. It is a very busy painting, but a wonderful result full of colour and prompting lots of discussion.

Covid-19 was still hanging on and we were still locked up, so Bernie decided to paint a second work. A mate of his is an amateur artist so Bernie asked him to paint the last board at the same time. Full steam ahead. Bernie scrolled the internet for lovely photos of overseas and within Australia. Bernie and I chose our favourite destinations, gave his mate copies and off they went. All up another two magnificent boards have been painted in bright colours. Fenway Park in Boston which is the home of The Redsox baseball team in the USA is shown. Other scenes are

Tower Bridge in London, Berlin Cathedral in Berlin, Germany, townhouses and a canal of Amsterdam. This painting is called World Favourite Cities. His mate's painting is called Australian Icons and it features Ayers Rock, the Pinnacles, the Twelve Apostles, a North Queensland Beach Scene and Boab Trees in the Kimberley.

Last Thursday and Friday night we had two unveilings of the paintings with our special guest Bianca, her husband Willy and granddaughter Haley. We are proud of all the paintings, and from my point of view it was wonderful having Bernie home each day even if he spent the time outside painting in all kinds of weather. We both really enjoyed this expedition. Do hope all you readers get a chance to wander past and enjoy Bernie's paintings.



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## My Personal Covid-19 Story

# Glass half full

By Dom Benadino

*There are periods during our lives that we will never forget and this is certainly one such time.*

I have always been a glass half full person and I try to look at positives on most occasions. So rather than tell you the trials and tribulations of the Covid-19 pandemic I will outline what I have seen as the positives.

- I have honed my very bad tradie skills during this period. Firstly along with my partner Lino I painted the restaurant and re-decorated and then I used the many tools I can't resist buying at Bunnings whenever I'm there to build a few things and then make some badly needed repairs at home.
- It has given me time to read and watch movies and binge on some great series on Netflix.
- Those of you who have followed my daily walks on Facebook will know I have managed to walk in some of the most beautiful walking tracks that our amazing city has. If you would like to see pictures of them, go to the Il Duca Facebook page.
- About a year ago I also started to put down my memoirs of my time in the hospitality industry. It also gave me time to write about the life and times of my parents and how they came to immigrate to this wonderful country. Dad was a prisoner of war in Algeria for five years during the second World War and I have finally gotten to write his experiences all down. It's been a wonderful experience and hopefully will be a legacy for my kids and grandkids who are the ones it's written for.
- I have dinner with Mary every night which is something we haven't done since I was a young teacher in the 70's.
- Every day I thank my dad for making the decision to come to Australia so many years ago. Although I don't agree with all they have done I believe our leaders have done a wonderful job during this tough period.
- On a lighter note the layoff has given me a great excuse for my poor golfing skills. I just tell everyone I'm rusty. Unfortunately those I play with often know that my current form is actually the norm.

- It has given Lino and me a chance to refocus and put things in place for a smooth comeback and hopefully we will come back bigger and stronger. We have some exciting plans ahead for our entertainment nights which will give some talented people a chance to perform and receive some income after struggling for the past few months.

Finally suffice to say that it has been tough financially but the most important thing in life is our health and safety and everything else can be fixed. The downside for us has been not being able to connect with our East Melbourne family which we both hold so dear. The friendship, support, love and happiness we get from this wonderful village of ours called East Melbourne is the thing that I miss the most and can't wait to return to and continue for many years.





## A prayer from the Vicar during the Covid-19 lockdown.

# Kindle - our hope O Lord.

By Reverend Grant Edgcumbe



*I have been very lucky in my life to travel overseas often and one of my first world problems has always been the number of books I wish to take with me. They are heavy, take up room and are cumbersome.*

Fortunately a kind person gave me a Kindle and showed me how to download every book I wanted so all I needed on the plane was this miraculous new device with all my ready material stored away. It was wonderful to begin with but I did miss the smell and feel of a real book and then an hour out of Bangkok just as I reached the denouement of the novel I was reading the battery went flat. It's great, but not the same.

Just before Palm Sunday this year we were notified that Holy Trinity, in fact all churches must close for public worship ushering in the dawn of 'Kindle' Christianity. Quickly we had to rally to find some way of sending services out electronically, so an iPad perched on a ladder aimed at the altar worked for the first week until the iPad jumped off the ladder and shattered in to pieces. Equipment was borrowed for the next week and our production values doubled and we have improved week by week. It has been traumatic trying to conquer the technology but it's marvellous stuff as even the people on the International Space Station can join our worship at Holy Trinity.

These last two Sundays we have been allowed to have controlled numbers of people back in church and I realise again that although 'Kindle' Christianity is fine nothing beats the real thing of real people gathered together supporting community and talking to each other.

The church is the people and our batteries will never go flat, we will never fall from the ladder and shatter; all during the lockdown we have been praying like mad for the people of this city and for everyone in East Melbourne. Stay safe, have a look for us on YouTube or better still come along and experience the 'real' thing.

## Lockdown at Shoreham

By Helen Wheelahan

You can take the girl out of the country but you can't take the country out of the girl, so when instructions came from "Mission Control" (our son in Ireland) that we were to "cocoon" at Shoreham on Westernport Bay, I was very happy to obey.

Shoreham has a population of about six hundred with only a post office and a CFA. So it's been easy to isolate. The nearby IGA opened early for seniors and we were able to have meat and vegetables delivered.

Our son's instructions were that we didn't need to go out for a walk. "Just walk around the kitchen." We blatantly disobeyed orders and went for some beautiful walks every day in the bush or on the beach. One crowded morning we saw three people on Shoreham beach!

We missed our mates in East Melbourne but were able to keep in touch by learning some new skills like Zoom.

I feel guilty that while others were home schooling and trying to work from home; or were isolating alone, I was enjoying being locked up in a beautiful location with my best friend of sixty years.

# Our Parks and Gardens

By Murray Hohnen

*'Yarra Park has never looked better in the 29 years that we have been walking our dogs there. It is wonderful to see the park being used as it should be with family picnics, ball games, kids on roller skates and people just enjoying the space.'*

An important ingredient of East Melbourne's agreeable lifestyle is the patchwork of parks and gardens within easy access of our homes. It is these very parks and gardens that have helped sustain us during the dreary Covid19 months presaged by the attendance at the East Melbourne Group's AGM of Lord Mayor, Sally Capp who shared with members her understanding of the Covid19 ramifications.

Fitzroy and Treasury Gardens, Powlett Reserve, Darling Square and even the linear park along the railway in Jolimont became social distancing hubs for locals wanting to do something away from home from the limited menu of what could be done. Denied access to gyms and more distant recreation activities, more and more people turned out to promenade, jog, work with personal fitness instructors and even enjoy a socially distanced coffee brewed by the resourceful folk at Keri Keri. Sadly, it was principally adults only as children and grandchildren kept their distance hoping to keep us (and them) safe. Dogs accustomed to a daily walk and quiet time while owners were at work found themselves being walked two and three times a day. Cartoons showed dogs begging not to be walked 'again'.

All the while the Council took the opportunity to get a lot of work done. Its brigade of surface cleaners gave the virus no park refuge. Its contractors removed elm trees that had reached their use-by dates and planted new ones. Plumbers and electricians worked to upgrade the irrigation systems and plant lines of new electric lamps along pathways. Gardeners laid out the new floral borders for spring.

And after the devastation of the fire season came the rain. Good long soaking rains that have revived the gardens and helped them look better than they have looked for years.

The hiatus in sporting events meant that Yarra Park has not been used as a car park and the park gradually shed many of the scars that parking inflicts. Instead of cars there were people. People doing the things the park was originally set aside for by our long-sighted civic forefathers. People on bikes, people with dogs, people walking, running and working out.

The many private gardens of East Melbourne also benefited from the rain and the opportunity that the lockdown provided for long term refurbishment. At Bishops Court, behind the long black fence on Clarendon Street, the volunteer gardeners had the grounds manicured and looking at their best for one of Victoria's Open Garden Scheme weekends. Sadly, the coronavirus showed the organisers no sympathy and the event, like so many others, was postponed (but not cancelled). It will come back better than ever, like so many things around our suburb.



## Property &amp; Planning

# Treasury Square: How not to plan a city

By Cr Rohan Leppert APIA Deputy Chair, Planning, City of Melbourne



Treasury Square - The blue area represents the site. Note the low rise of EM contrasted against the high rise of the city

What's wrong with this picture, as reported by The Age on 27 May?

*'Mirvac and Cbus Property were shortlisted out of 11 interested parties to develop the mixed-use project on Tuesday. [Public] submissions on planning controls for the site close on Friday.'*

This back-to-front process, where the State Government shortlists buyers of public land before it decides what the use and building envelope for the site should be, may yet become the textbook example of how not to plan a city.

As many East Melbourne residents now know, the State Government will sell its Treasury Square site, where Wellington Parade South meets Flinders Street, to the highest bidder. The land is currently held by VicTrack but will be sold in order to help pay for the State's ambitious major transport project agenda – a worthy aim if it didn't have such an embarrassing planning process attached.

The proposed key planning controls are Capital City Zone (which allows a range of uses) and Design and Development Overlay 10. The zone is no surprise, but the overlay was not designed for irregularly shaped blocks like Treasury Square. The overlay facilitates a podium-and-tower typology and has no height limit except as overshadowing rules dictate. The Planning Minister has, however, specifically exempted the site from Council's new 'sunlight to parks' rules, meaning that any new building will be free to overshadow the Birrarung Marr upper terrace.

The site is also the only site in the central city proposed to have no dedicated 'urban design in the central city' controls or policies applying to it, due to a spectacular oversight by the drafters of the planning scheme amendment.

This is an important strategic site that sits in front of an uninterrupted hard edge to the Hoddle Grid. Flinders Street is a famous heritage streetscape; think of the 'Herald' and 'Lindrum' signs atop the buildings. This site is far too important for an unpredictable building typology and no meaningful 'urban design' guidance. Any site of this prominence should have built form controls developed for the context it sits within (ideally, a master plan for the broader precinct). Then – and only then – should the site be considered for sale.

Instead, shortlisted buyers of the site have seen the proposed unfettered planning controls and are staying in the hunt. The shortlisting process is so advanced now that the State knows it can't restrict the planning controls too much without the shortlisted buyers walking. And so we have a sham process, where the State's inherent conflicts of interest as owner, seller and planning regulator of the land are utterly irreconcilable. What chance do we have now of a site-sensitive planning outcome when the buyers are identified before the planning controls are gazetted? It shouldn't be this way.

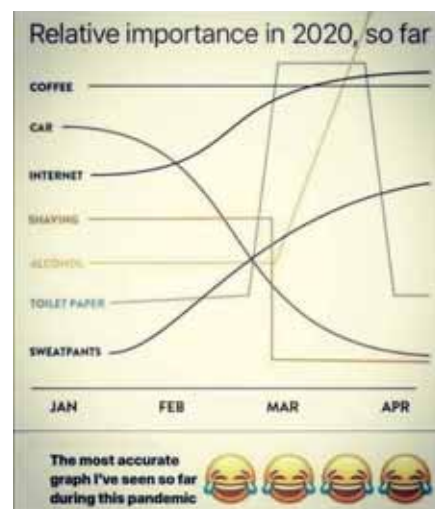
The precedent that this asset-sale-disguised-as-planning-process will set is grim, especially as we enter a recession and the State looks for ever more revenue measures. No matter one's ideological position on the sale of public land, surely we can agree on one thing: selling and developing public land next to the Hoddle Grid will change the cityscape forever.

I'm not afraid of change, but we only get to sell and plan this site once. The Government owes it to us, and future generations, to start this process again and do it properly. Plan first, then sell.



# Market Update

By Jacob Caine



incredibly challenging for landlords, tenants and property managers.

The silver lining of this cloud, however, is the irrepressible appeal of East Melbourne property to high-quality tenants. Restrictions on the way property inspections needed to be conducted saw me jumping into a leasing consultant's role and conducting hundreds, possibly a thousand, private inspections over the past few months. Despite the fear, anxiety, economic hardship, and genuinely epic opportunism out there in the community, enthusiasm for the beautiful East Melbourne apartments and houses we had available remained consistent. Indeed, one of the most frequent comments I received was, 'Well if we're going to isolate, there aren't many better places to do it than here in East Melbourne!'

Whilst we're not out of the woods yet, things are trending in the right direction, and we can all take solace in the fact that East Melbourne property remains redoubtable in the face of any challenge.

I'm going to assume we have all reached saturation point when it comes to analysis of the negative impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on, well, almost every aspect of our lives. So, rather than pile on that unpleasantness, let us instead endeavour to focus on the positives for the East Melbourne property market.

The median home prices in East Melbourne have remained stable throughout the pandemic for both houses and apartments. The median price for an East Melbourne house has, in fact,

risen from \$3,150,000 in February 2020 to \$3,250,000 as at the end of May 2020. The apartment median price has similarly enjoyed a modest increase since February when it sat at \$621,000, today that figure is \$640,000.

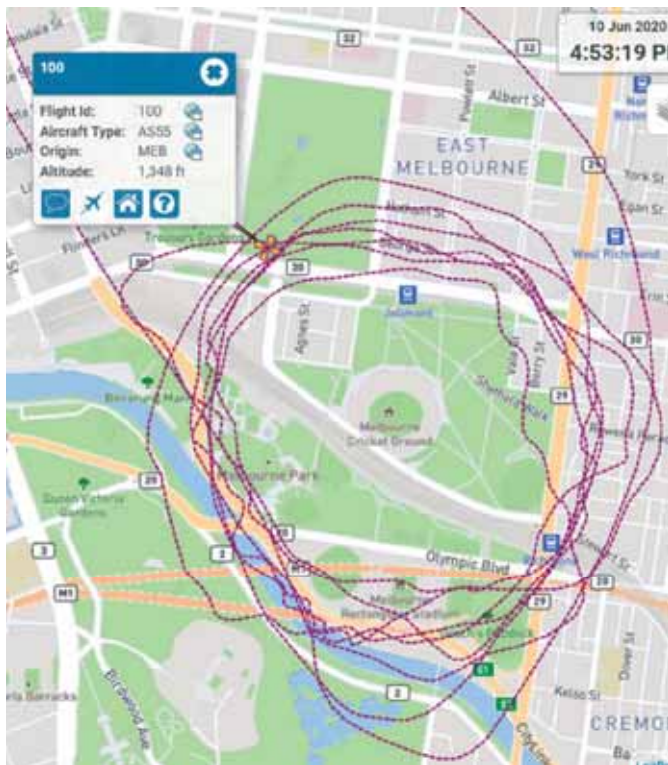
The rental market has, as anticipated, fared less well. Days on market and days vacant have ballooned, creating downward pressure on rents. The trend of renters moving back in with parents, downsizing/down-pricing, and huge segments of the tenant market having been stripped away by the closure of state and international borders have further stymied landlords' prospects of securing strong rental returns in 2020, and in all likelihood into 2021. Navigating the complexities of a rapidly changing legislative, economic and operational framework has made the past few months

# Progress on Aircraft issues

By Shelley Faubel

*While the travel restrictions resulting from Covid-19 have meant fewer large planes in the skies above us, there has been little relief from smaller planes and helicopters.*

The EMG has been told that, in these difficult times, people in our community are suffering even more from the impact of flights by light aircraft and helicopters over our homes. We have recorded instances of planes flying over our suburb doing up to 40 circuits. We have also been contacted by health workers, of which there are many in this area, reflecting the concentration of hospitals in our vicinity. Many of these workers, who are even more vital during the current crisis, work shifts and have told us that they are unable to sleep because of the air traffic intrusion.



Yesterday there was a helicopter, ex-Essendon, over our homes for a considerable period, doing multiple circuits for some considerable time - see details below. It was clearly focused on the MCG and it should have been easy to fly on the southern side of the MCG, where there are no homes, instead of constantly circling over residential areas. This is clearly not neighbourly flying and we would be keen to take this up with the operator

Our President, Ian Mitchell has written to a number of people seeking their assistance in addressing this issue, including the Lord Mayor, Health Minister Greg Hunt and the CEOs of Moorabbin and Essendon airports.

The good news is that we have had a positive response from the CEO of Essendon Fields, who understands our problem and was willing to speak to aircraft operators about it. As a result, there have been further discussions with Mr Collin Fort, The General Manager of Aviation at Essendon.

## Essendon Fields airport will assist us in a number of ways:

- They will contact all operators from Essendon, reminding them of the Fly Neighbourly Agreement. Operators will be prompted about the provision which asks them to plan flight paths which avoid residential areas where possible. They will be encouraged to fly over industrial areas, transport corridors such as freeways and the bay. (This used to be mandatory before regulations were relaxed.)
- Mr Fort also said that he wanted to convene a meeting of all stakeholders to discuss current issues, as the existing arrangements of groups and committees are fragmented. EMG made it clear that we want to address the problem in a co-operative way and we will be invited to be represented at this meeting.
- We have also been invited to communicate with Essendon about specifically intrusive flights (from that airport) and they will follow up with the operators.

While we still have some way to go and the Federal Authorities still seem to be intransigent, it is encouraging to have established this positive line of communication with one of the key stakeholders.

# Local Works

By Susan Henderson

*You may have noticed some areas on the median strip in Hotham St and Cathedral place that have died, in fact were poisoned.*

Council have decided that the trees there are not thriving because the soil is of too poor quality. They are preparing work to improve the soil quality before replanting new trees.

At the Fitzroy Gardens end of Hotham Street we now have a safer crossing arrangement. The grass median strip has been extended to include a separate pedestrian refuge and the footpath now has extended concrete curbs to limit the traffic to one lane. We have been lobbying for this for all streets leading across Clarendon Street to the Fitzroy Gardens and are pleased to report that the only one remaining is now George St.



## ELLEN SANDELL

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# EM Neighbour Network

By Susan Henderson

We last met on Friday 13th March just as WHO was calling Covid-19 a pandemic. We had read and seen reports of the catastrophe unfolding in China and across Europe. We replaced our planned speaker for the meeting with Dr Susan Hodson and Dr Priya Bhaskar who spent the morning educating and preparing us for the upcoming upheaval in our lives.

*At that meeting we agreed to suspend all exercise classes and meetings for the foreseeable future. We agreed to buddy-up in pairs to keep in touch by phone and check on each other.*

As we try to get our lives back to a new normal, it is good to reflect on how we managed this strange time in our history. We all know we are living in a wonderful community and are thankful for the kindness and support we have all shared.



**Please take your clothes out of the closet regularly, air them out and allow to stand in sunlight. Recent studies show that if clothes are kept in closets over lockdown, they shrink.**

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# Anzac Day

By Anon

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It felt strange to be standing on the pavement outside our house in the black, blackness before dawn. The harsh light of the street lamp was in contrast to the flickering glow from a candle set on the nature strip.

Silent figures emerged in the darkness up and down the noiseless street, their silhouettes outlined by the light of the candles they carried.

We waved a greeting, then, heads bowed, we stood for a few minutes united in an enveloping silence to remember conflict and loss.

From down the street, from a radio perhaps, I could faintly hear a military bugle sounding 'The Last Post'. No words or visual image can match the evocative sadness of those poignant notes.

Although apart, separated from family and friends by a pandemic virus, I felt tears welling in my eyes by the sadness of both the past and the present.

I blew out my candle to return to the comfort of my kitchen and a cup of tea.





# *In Memory of Friends*

## **John Barrie Wykes**

born 17 March 1929,  
died May 2020

John was a much loved and admired friend to many in East Melbourne. His great interest in new gadgets and inventions along with his wide knowledge of the art world made sure he was always great company. He made many contributions to our community, always willing to put his talents to good use. John was a quiet, self-contained gentleman with his lively intellect, his curiosity and his humour. He will be missed by us all.



## **Wynne McGrath**

We lost one of our cherished residents during this period of lockdown. Under normal circumstances our local Holy Trinity church would have been full to capacity to honour and farewell Wynne McGrath. She was a loving mother, grandmother, devoted partner to Danny and friend to many in our community. Wynne was friendly, vibrant, stylish, and loved a party. She worked tirelessly for her charity My Room at the Royal Children's Hospital. Even at her funeral she spoke not only to her beloved family, but to each and every one who attended or watched the live feed. She was inspirational.

Covid-19 funeral restrictions meant we could not all attend the funeral to farewell and honour Wynne nor offer our condolences in person to her beloved Danny and her family. However Wynne's daughter Shannon let us know the time that the service would be live streamed, and that for anyone who happened to be 'social distance exercising', Wynne would leave Holy Trinity to the sound of a piper and take a farewell trip along the nearby streets.

These streets were lined with people who wanted to honour and farewell Wynne, as she was driven past by Danny in a fabulous red conveyance. Her local friends broke into spontaneous applause as a way to show their affection and admiration for Wynne. She is sadly missed in our community.



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