

THE ROTUNDA



NORTH FITZROY'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Hitting it for six
Page 7



The story of Brooks Crescent
Page 4-5

North Fitzroy or Fitzroy North?
Page 3



EDITORIAL

Welcome to *The Rotunda's* first ever bumper issue. It's good to be back.

The past month or two has been littered with disasters – earthquakes, outbreaks, hailstorms, Melbourne winning the premiership – and throughout the chaos of it all, you didn't even have a new issue of *The Rotunda* to console yourselves with.

I can tell what you're thinking: "What sort of heartless newspaper are you? You never text, you never call. We're done".

Well, we're sorry. Life got in the way! Sometimes you've got to prioritise the essentials: university, work, the third season of *Succession*. But we want to make it up to you, so this is our biggest ever edition. Thanks to that Instagram trend from a couple of weeks ago ("take a picture of your pet and we'll plant a tree"), *The Rotunda* can cut down a few more without our conscience taking a hit – so this edition has four extra pages!

The incredible story of Brooks Crescent continues our series on our neighbourhood's vigorous local activists; We have a feature on the Edinburgh Cricket Club; Street Style; Local Enthusiasms; an excerpt from a new book featuring dead bodies in the Edi Gardens; a crossword; the latest column from Ludo (our resident canine)...This issue has it all.

As always, *The Rotunda* is so grateful to the loyal volunteers who continue to carry out delivery month after month – it couldn't happen without you. For anyone wanting to contribute or advertise, email Charlie at northfitzroyrotunda@gmail.com. There is no better place to advertise your local business. And to anyone who has donated, thank you so much. For this to continue, we need the community's support. If you like it, don't hesitate to donate via the website (northfitzroyrotunda.com).

OK then, the formalities are over. Off you go.

We respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

northfitzroyrotunda.com
@the.rotunda

'Fitzy Bowl' set for revamp



An artist's impression of the soon-to-be upgraded skate park. Photo courtesy of Yarra City Council.

Perhaps describing Edinburgh Gardens as a skateboarding Mecca is slightly overzealous, but its status as a go-to spot for countless skaters can't be denied. The three locations at which they congregate are the driveway in front of the war memorial (near the grandstand), the old ticket box on the corner of Brunswick and Freeman (known as Fitzy Plaza) and, last but not least, the official skate park – otherwise known as Fitzy Bowl.

The skate park and its perpetually graffitied bowl – nestled in Alfred Crescent, next to the playground at the northern end of the park – has been a fixture of Edinburgh Gardens since it was built in 1991. Change, however,

is on the horizon – earlier this year, Yarra City Council announced it was to double in size to create a "welcoming, inclusive and more accessible skate park".

The Council says that the Fitzy Bowl is one of the area's more challenging skate parks and has "very few options for beginner skaters". Indeed, numerous noteworthy skateboarders have frequented it in the past, including Shane O'Neill, who recently represented Australia at the Tokyo Olympics.

While the existing skate bowl (and the miniature bowl next to it) will remain in place, works will soon commence on a

revamp catering to "skaters, BMXers, roller skaters, and scooter riders of all ages and abilities". The emphasis is on making the skate park feel welcome to everyone, particularly children.

Jules Sheldon, who's skated at Fitzy Bowl for 18 years, believes that "an expansion of the demographics that use the bowl is extremely important". He stresses that he's in no way opposed to the refurbishment, even if the design is lacking in imagination.

"I don't think there's anything special about it. Instead of making it into something ground-breaking, which should be the goal of every skatepark, it's ended up being quite mediocre."

But he acknowledges it was a compromise, and that while there's unsurprisingly been "some cynicism" from the bowl's regulars, they have nothing to worry about: "The actual bowl itself, and the culture around it, I don't think will change."

"It will expand the users, which is nothing but a good thing."

Indeed, the existing bowl won't be altered or removed. Instead, the park is set to become much larger and will include quarter pipes, rails and ledges – as well as more seating for spectators.

The Council say the proposed changes have been made in consultation with an independent "external design and engagement group" who consulted on the changes with regular users of the skate park. This group of 12 regulars were aged between 17 and 45.

Whether its redevelopment is met with scepticism or enthusiasm, this iconic fixture of Edinburgh Gardens is set to enter a new era.

KOZMINSKY
170 YEARS

A Celebration of Jewels
1851 – 2021

A FABULOUS KOZMINSKY
AQUAMARINE & DIAMOND
RING | \$39,500

—

KOZMINSKY STUDIO
LV 2, 349 Collins St, VIC

By Appointment
Monday – Friday, 10am – 5pm
& Saturday, 10am – 3pm

EXPLORE OUR 2021 CATALOGUE AT
2021.KOZMINSKY.COM



LETTERS



Dear Editor,

I love the worm and regularly walk by it to pay my respects.

After all the hard work worms do to preserve the earth, their tireless activity to provide food for the earth, which helps make the park... a park. And let's not forget that they are the recyclers and we're a Green Council right? Right!

Makes sense then that we should honour The Worm.

The last humanistic monument on the plinth that I remember was "Little Johnny Howard". (Where's Little Johnny now?)

A good reminder in in this nuclear age of how we humans should treat the world.

Louise from Brunswick Street

Editor: Louise is referring to *If the Boots Don't Fit* (right), a statue of a dwarfish John Howard dressed as a soldier created by artist Greg Taylor. It was placed on the plinth in Spring 2004 as part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival and was stationed outside Parliament House for a day. Research indicates its current whereabouts are outside Greg Taylor's studio. Perhaps the statue's short stay in Edinburgh Gardens was for the best; there are no doubt many North Fitzrovians who would hold a literal worm in much higher regard.

Dear Editor,

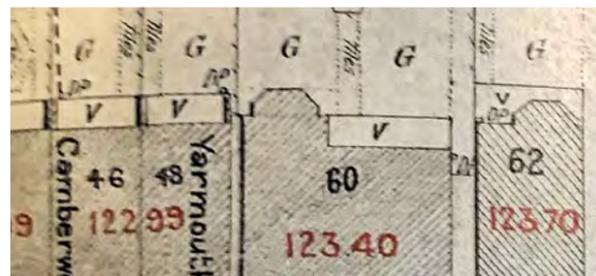
As a resident of North Fitzroy, I'd like to ask which bit of the recent actions of the Fitzroy Community School represents the idea of "community"?

The resulting 60 positive COVID-19 cases associated with the outbreak at F.C.S added to the increasing metropolitan numbers and Melbourne went into lockdown for much longer. Families, who actually abided by the law, found themselves in a home-schooling situation for many more weeks.

I find the attitude of "entitlement" expressed by the principal totally unacceptable. We know face-to-face learning is more desirable for a kid, but as my son asked, "What are the consequences on a child of a "death" in a family?" Apparently, these privileged families feel they can act as they wish and not be held responsible under the health regulations. Is it that they think they are of a demographic that will magically avoid catching the wretched Delta virus? OOPS wrong!!!

The Principal indicated to the press that none at the school were very sick. I hope that was the case. But that feeling is probably because I DO care about others.

Marg from May Street



Dear Editor,

I have a minor conundrum that might elicit a response from another reader better informed on the history of our suburb than I am.

I live in Bennett Street and have often puzzled over what happened to the fifties on the even-numbered side of our street.

The properties number through the even forties and then jump straight from 48 to 60, completely eliding the even fifties. The same is not true of the odd numbers on the other side of the street.

What might explain this curiosity? As evident from the accompanying photo of an MMBW plan from 1901-03, this has been the case for a very long time. Any clues?

Yours inquiringly,

Ian Harper from Bennett Street, North Fitzroy

Editor: Well, I thought Halloween was last month, but I'm clearly mistaken. This is certainly mysterious – the curious case of phantom houses. Can any inquisitive reader find the solution to this riddle? Email northfitzroyrotunda@gmail.com.

Dear Editor,

I can't help but notice you never use 'Fitzroy North' but instead elect to use 'North Fitzroy'. Why is that? I like to think it's a sociological experiment intent on causing a ruckus!

Kind regards,

Mark from Birkenhead Street

Editor: I think it's time we settle this once and for all.

Send your letters to: northfitzroyrotunda@gmail.com

Fitzroy High soon to open new campus

The neighbourhood's new high school, 'Wurun Senior Campus', which will accommodate students from both Fitzroy High and Collingwood College, is slowly rising from the old gasworks site on Queens Parade.

The campus will have capacity for 650 students and will predominantly cater for Year 11 and 12 students. Year 10 students from both schools studying VCE, VET or VCAL subjects will also attend the Wurun Senior Campus. Its principle will be Chris Millard, officially known as the 'assistant principal' to Collingwood College principal Sam Luck and Fitzroy High principal Linda Mitchell.

The campus will be one of 100 new schools the Victorian government has committed to opening between 2019 and 2026. The Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) says Wurun Senior Campus will "focus on building 21st century skills".

Wurun means 'river white gum' and the campus is on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people. The name was approved by the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The VSBA says the campus

will feature an "embedded Indigenous narrative" that includes native plantings with Woi wurrung language naming at the courtyard entry; a 25-metre concourse mural depicting a linear narrative of the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung people's history and culture and a "colour palette informed by the manna gum".

The six-storey building is characterised by plenty of glass and stepped terraces and balconies which will eventually include native plants. The campus will also boast a performing arts precinct with an amphitheatre, a technology design lab and basketball courts.

The VSBA says the campus will offer a 'futures-thinking' curriculum that will allow students to prepare for jobs that don't yet exist.

But the campus, too, doesn't yet exist in full and will need to be completed before it is scheduled to take students some time in 2022.

The gasworks were first erected in 1861, and the Wurun campus is part of the state government's plans to rejuvenate the space, which – up until the construction



A rendering of how the campus will look. Photo courtesy of the Victorian School Building Authority.

of the school began in 2018 – could have accurately been described as a post-industrial wasteland.

The state government plans on transforming the site into an "urban village" that includes the school campus, "new housing, and open space".

Their plan proposes that the 3.9 hectare

area will hold 1200 new apartments, 20% of which will be affordable housing. The buildings will "reflect the local character", and the site design will "establish a central community heart linking together diverse public spaces with places to play".

The construction of the new campus is the first step in this ambitious plan to transform the urban environment.

North Fitzroy or Fitzroy North?

That is the question

By Charlie Gill

Let me begin by responding to Mark's suggestion that *The Rotunda's* use of 'North Fitzroy' is "a sociological experiment intent on causing a ruckus": I wish. Using a newspaper to set people against each other and slowly psychologically torment the populace sounds incredibly fun, and just another day at *Newscorp*. (Line redacted in case they buy us out.) Unfortunately, here at *The Rotunda* the situation is far more boring.

The primary reason *The Rotunda* uses 'North Fitzroy' is because that phrasing is all I (the editor) have ever really known. The significant majority of people I know say 'North Fitzroy'. I graduated from primary school in 2013 and can confidently say that in those days, if you said 'Fitzroy North', we'd look at you in befuddlement before laughing you out of the schoolyard. It would be like overhearing someone say they're spending the holidays in Zealand New or going to the canteen to buy a roll sausage - they must've fallen pretty hard off the monkey bars.

Granted, things have changed recently. 'Fitzroy North' has increased in popularity, and it is the suburb's official name - the post office is Fitzroy North LPO, and even the school recently switched from North Fitzroy P.S to Fitzroy North P.S. Apparently, this has backfired. A local Mum informed

The Rotunda that the school's new acronym has absolutely delighted the students, who can now refer to their place of education as Effin' P.S, and there's nothing any adult can do about it.

So, what's behind this mysterious shift? One Instagram user suggested its origins go all the way to the top: "My late father who lived in the area was adamant 'North Fitzroy' is correct, and that 'Fitzroy North' is an invention of Australia Post to make sorting mail easier (he never said how he knew this). He did go on to say that 'North Fitzroy' is more appropriate in any event because it suggests a suburb with its own identity rather than one that is merely an appendage of Fitzroy."

I think that last point is pertinent. North Fitzroy and Fitzroy (A.K.A North Fitzroy South) have been very distinct suburbs for decades now. Crossing Alexandra Parade is like entering a swirling tornado that spits you out into a strange new land ("Ludo, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore"). Despite this, more and more are saying 'Fitzroy North', so *The Rotunda* conducted a small (admittedly haphazard) Instagram survey. The data it produced was very interesting.

The question was: Which do you say, and how long have you lived in the area? There were 65 (give or take) responses. It found



that the average Fitzroy Norther had lived in the area for 4.5 years. The average North Fitzroyer had lived in the area for 20.5 years. Of the 18 who'd moved here within the last five years, only two said 'North Fitzroy'. (The Tramway Hotel, who voted 'North Fitzroy' and asserted that they'd "been here 148 years" was not included in the average). Either way, those unambiguous figures indicate a clear trend.

The passion of respondents varied. Some didn't care much - one psycho even said he changed based on his mood. A woman revealed that she and her partner say it differently, which is presumably why they aren't married yet. A teacher at F.N.P.S (also a former student) explained they were forced to fall in line when the school changed their name (its leadership seemingly developing Stalinist tendencies). A vehement teenager even declared the Fitzroy Northers to be "fake residents."

Clearly, that is a bridge too far, and *The Rotunda* does not seek to emphatically declare a correct wording nor shame anyone for which they use. Readers will notice that in certain articles, contributors have used 'Fitzroy North', and this hasn't been changed. Fitzroy North Primary School is referred to as such because that is its legal name.

But *The Rotunda* cannot bring itself to call the suburb of North Fitzroy anything other than just that. It may be called something else officially, but does that actually mean so much? 'North Fitzroy' flows off the tongue far more easily. It effectively signals a distinction from Fitzroy. Most importantly, North Fitzroy has been known as North Fitzroy for a long time now.

So that's why *The Rotunda* uses 'North Fitzroy'. Even if does make it a bit harder to sort mail.

STREET STYLE



As *The Rotunda* was exiting Wild Things, we saw two actual Wild Things strolling down the street, hand in hand, exploring their new neighbourhood. Welcome!

NAMES:
Jaçlyn Keoh and River Roberts.

WHERE HAVE YOU JUST MOVED FROM?
River: Southside (Elwood). The Northside's way more fun!

That's what we like to hear.

WHO ARE YOU WEARING?
River: Wild Things onesies. It's Jaçlyn's birthday today so we're celebrating in style by dressing up as Wild Things to go to Wild Things.

Oh, wow, happy birthday!

THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE HOOD?
Eclectic, stylish, approachable.

WITH COFFEE, WHICH IS MOST IMPORTANT: THE BEAN, THE BARISTA OR THE VIBE?
River: The barista. I used to be a barista so I have to say that. Anyway, the barista should make the vibe.

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR COFFEE?
Jaçlyn: Uncle Drew's in Clifton Hill.

River: I still haven't found my Chai yet. I used to get it at Monk Bodhi Dharma on the Southside.

ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT STATE OF MIND
River: Melan - hold the choly.

WHEN AND WHERE WERE YOU HAPPIEST?
River: Island hopping and scuba diving in West Papua about 5 years ago.

IF YOU COULD INTRODUCE ONE THING TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
River: A micro-forest.

WHAT DO YOU DO?
Jaçlyn: I'm studying Chinese Medicine. I'm going to Indonesia as soon as I can to start a multimodality. A clinic for alternative therapy practitioners to practice their craft... alternative energies. There are lots of expats who want Western style alternative therapies there... I just suddenly felt like I could do it!

River: I've been designing urban farms in New York City.

INTERESTING! WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
River: Working on how to grow and provide the best fresh food where people actually live. We created high-end herb farms for Michelin star restaurants and farmed in shipping containers, in basements, rooftops, carparks and on construction sites for local neighbourhoods. We taught people how to farm...

AMAZING! WHO PAID YOU?
Mostly the communities.

DID YOU STUDY HORTICULTURE?
No, I decide what I want to do and then I do it and if I need a particular knowledge or skill I find people who have it.

THAT'S AN INTERESTING PHILOSOPHY.
I find the most exciting work is bringing ideas to life. Rather than spending time and money on 'education', just find awesome people to collaborate with. A current example I'm exploring is what would happen if you invited a cruise ship builder and greenhouse designer to collaborate?

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE WWW:
Really love longnow.org and teamhuman.fm.

ANYTHING ELSE?
My mother lost the use of her hand when she had a stroke. There were lots of people in her ward who also had that issue, so we took in a bunch of sock puppets for them.

BROOKS CRESCENT:



Photo: Alan Jordan. Accession no: H2010.105/511

Photos sourced from Alan Jordan's collection in the State Library of Victoria.

How North Fitzroy residents came together to defeat Goliath

By Charlie Gill

This is the second instalment in The Rotunda's ongoing series of articles highlighting the community activism of North Fitzroy residents throughout its history. The story of Brunswick Street Oval (as told in the September issue); the freeway planned to cut through Alexandra Parade; the state government's efforts to close Fitzroy High School and the Fitzroy Pool... Over the last five decades, the efforts of activists have completely shaped what North Fitzroy is today.

Imagine a hi-tech satellite was placed in our night sky with its eye trained on North Fitzroy, recording its movements over time. It would capture an urban environment incessantly shifting in its seat: pause at Winter 2020 and you'll see an eerily quiet Edinburgh Gardens, fast-forward to Spring 2021 and you'll see a contrastingly busy one. But should you rewind 50 or so years – and divert your gaze ever-so-slightly westward – you'll bear witness to arguably the most consequential event in North Fitzroy history.

In the backstreets of North Fitzroy lies a tiny bit of parkland named Brookes Crescent (then spelt Brooks Crescent), in the middle of an area bordered by Nicholson Street, Rae Street, Church Street and Reid Street. In 1969, an ordinary-looking letter from the government was delivered to every residence on the block. It carried extraordinary news: The Housing Commission was assuming control of every home in the area – no ifs, buts or maybes.

Conscious of Brooks Crescent's significant Italian population, the Commission was

considerate enough to include a translation but not competent enough to make it comprehensible. "Fare buon viso a Cattivo Sorte" it said, translating as: "Smile to your bad luck".

To the residents, the monumental decision may have seemed sudden. But this letter first began writing itself many decades earlier when the government adopted a policy of 'slum reclamation' in the 1930s. In the first half of the twentieth century, pockets of inner-city Melbourne were defined by their poor housing and living conditions, viewed by many as unfit for human habitation. The Housing Commission embarked on a plan to clear the blocks of these slums and erect high-rise public housing towers in their place.

"The Housing Commission was seizing control of every home in the area – no, ifs, buts or maybes."

This is the origin of the Atherton Gardens estate in Fitzroy, where everything in-between Brunswick Street, Gertrude Street, Napier Street and King William Street was demolished in the mid-1960s. The estate has since become one of the suburb's most recognisable landmarks with huge cultural significance (last year, residents prepared a bid to have the estate listed on the Victorian Heritage Register). But its construction came at a cost: the pain of working-class residents in the Fitzroy 'Narrows' who were forced to watch their community be bulldozed.

Those bulldozers were ominously making their way up Brunswick Street. In 1967,

the Commission approved plans to clear the block in North Fitzroy and in 1969 they sent that infamous letter. So begins the story of Brooks Crescent: the struggle of North Fitzroy residents to keep their homes in the face of a powerful Commission determined to bury them.

At first, the battle lines were not fully drawn out – the Commission was, of course, simply wanting to construct cheap flats for people who needed them. In the transcription of *Social Justice Walk of North Fitzroy* (a walk organised by the Fitzroy History Society in 2002), civil engineer and key organiser Barry Pullen (who later became the State Minister for Housing) explains the thinking of some at the time:

"We thought that maybe some of the houses weren't too good. People also felt that the Commission wasn't so bad in that there was a need for affordable housing and that maybe, in providing more modern dwellings, they were doing good for people."

But a survey of the houses' occupants in August 1969 elucidated some important information.

Around 60% of the residents were working-class migrants, who "appreciated the quality of the dwellings long before the Australian middle class did", as Barry says.

In his inaugural speech to the Victorian parliament, he describes how "the very people who were meant to be assisted by the Commission were the sorts of people who were living in those houses at the time".

This was not a case of NIMBYism. The residents who lived on the designated block weren't protesting development *in* their backyard, they were protesting development *on* it. The Commission had decided their houses – "occupied by people were trying to make them into decent homes" – were headed for oblivion.

But it was always going to be difficult to thwart the Housing Commission, which had begun using dodgy tactics before the reclamation was even announced. As a young man, Methodist minister-cum-Deputy Prime Minister Brian Howe became involved in the struggle, having recently returned from Chicago. Brian, who lived in North Fitzroy from 1969 to 1996, told *The Rotunda* that "there was something fundamentally dishonest about the way they operated".

"A lot of the housing that they were calling a slum wasn't in appalling shape. They were eminently fixable."

Barry explains that the Commission had been buying homes "by private treaty" that "often fell into neglect, as they weren't tenanted, and they were demolished".

Resultingly, a broad coalition of young professionals, migrants, long-time residents and factory owners banded together to defeat the Commission. Various individuals

“A BLOODY FIGHT”

became known for their effort and passion, such as panel beater Jack Strochi, resident Daisy Croft and shoe factory manager Norman Yarr.

Jack Strochi was a war-hero from Italy who constructed a crucifix with barbed wire, adorned with the words “they are crucifying us in Brooks Crescent” (pictured below). Meanwhile, there was no one who embodied the fight more than seventy-something Daisy Croft (with her shotgun). She refused to sell out to the Commission. A woman’s home is her castle.

Doncaster resident Norman Yarr, who worked at Porter’s shoe factory in the area, was essential to what Brian calls “a symbiotic relationship” between the factories and the residents. After the Commission ignored a proposal for an alternative plan, Norman convinced factory owners to work together with the residents to take the Commission to court.

Their first trip to court was in 1971. The judge ruled that the Commission hadn’t adequately explained why every house had to be destroyed, so a hearing was scheduled, giving the Commission time to present a better argument.

But that wouldn’t be for another couple of years. In the meantime, the Commission continued buying houses, neglecting them and destroying them. The union put a ban on demolition, but workers ignoring the strike stealthily entered Brooks Crescent at the break of dawn. Some would rise in the early hours and try to scare off the workers as they started demolition on the houses.

Norman and Barry had created an inventory of each home in Brooks Crescent that revealed the Commission’s dishonesty. Houses that the Commission said had peeling paint and faulty weatherboards were, in actuality, brick houses. In the period after the first hearing, the Commission relentlessly weakened both the roofs of homes and the spirits of those who lived around them. The area was in a greater decline than it had been when the judge ruled the injunction, and thus the chances of victory were decreased. Subsequently,

none of this information would ever go to court. The second court hearing rolled around, but as Barry says, “the residents risked losing everything” (forced to pay for their own legal fees and the Commission’s). In September 1973 they withdrew their case.

But all was not lost. As Barry says, “they had been a David beaten by a Goliath with all the resources”, and it was only a lack of funds that had forced them to withdraw. Meanwhile, public awareness continued to grow and in December of 1973, the residents and activists were invited to form a deputation to Premier Dick Hamer. A compromise was forged – the Fitzroy Council and Housing Commission would work together to repair and rebuild the area. There would be no high-rise. The Commission, no doubt, were certainly not smiling about their bad luck.

“A community needs a sort of shit fight every few years. Just to remind them where they’re from.”

It was a long and arduous campaign, but the residents had won. As Brian Stagoll, organiser of the Social Justice Walk of North Fitzroy puts it: “I have a view that a community needs a sort of shit fight every few years. Just to remind them where they’re from.”

“Nothing occurs without a bloody fight.”

The pride of Jack Strochi, the fortitude of “Aussie Battler” Daisy Croft, the smarts of Norman Yarr and the leadership of those such as Barry and Brian – together, these



Photo: Alan Jordan. Accession no: H2010.105/843b

individuals (among many others) forced a landmark decision with reverberations that would be felt throughout the entire country for decades. Paul Madden, a housing researcher involved in the campaign, told *The Rotunda* that Brooks Crescent was the “trailblazer” that led to “a pretty major turnaround in housing policy”. In the lead up to the 1973 state election, Premier Hamer put out a press release – slum clearance was over.

Meanwhile, Brian’s sphere of influence soon grew to encompass not just the back streets of North Fitzroy but the nation’s halls of power. As Minister of Housing, Minister for Social Security, Deputy P.M to both Bob Hawke and Paul Keating and senior member of the Labour Left, he pioneered reform in many areas.

“There were good motives for the slum reclamation policy in the 1930s, but in the ‘60s and ‘70s it was totally inappropriate,” he told *The Rotunda*. “I thought we needed a different model of public housing. Essentially if you concentrate low-income people in large estates, you tend to concentrate poverty, and you tend to isolate and marginalise people who are less advantaged.”

“I was working towards a concept of social housing, that was much more universal if you like, that gave people a choice to rent, in circumstances where the housing was a reasonable quality and was located in areas of people’s choice.”

Indeed, the majority of people living in the Brooks Crescent block today are in low-rise social housing – as of the 2016 census, 54% of households – which is by far the highest percentage in North Fitzroy and one of the highest in the entire City of Yarra.

“I was certainly much more driven by equity than ensuring we didn’t knock down old houses,” Brian says.

An article in *The Canberra Times* from 1995, after he resigned as Deputy Prime Minister, asserted that “no one has ever doubted his commitment to social justice” but that “the party was looking for a new face”. It ends with the following:

“He has the consolation of knowing that not many members of his party can claim to have made so much difference to the lives of people like those he once served in another capacity in Fitzroy.”



Daisy Croft, 1970. Photographer unknown.



Jack Strochi’s crucifix. Photo: Alan Jordan. Accession no: H2010.105/573d



Brian Howe c. 1969. Photo: Alan Jordan. Accession no: H2010.105/202b

A TASTE OF CITRUS

The unassuming restaurant imbuing North Fitzroy with zest kicks off our new series *Local Enthusiasms*

By Ikumi Cooray

Picture this: it's been a long day. You've been working from home and haven't left your desk for 6 hours – yet somehow, you've missed a delivery and a text arrives telling you to go pick it up. You get to Fitzroy North Post Office and the line is out the door. After a patient 20-minute wait soundtracked by Jimmy's thoughts on the most cost-effective postage methods, the package is finally in your hands.

You leave the post office and suddenly you're famished. You're standing on the corner of Brunswick and Scotchmer Street, spoiled for choice with various dining options in every direction. But you needn't go anywhere – on that very street corner, a glowing neon sign and the fragrant smell of South Asian spices capture your attention.

Since it opened in January 2019, the family-run Sri Lankan restaurant Citrus has become a welcome addition to the neighbourhood. As the daughter of Sri Lankan immigrants whose parents live well beyond the 5-kilometre radius of Fitzroy North, it has become a welcome addition to my life. I spoke to Citrus' manager, Ravi, about the family finding their feet in the inner north culinary market, their ever-changing menu and how they're surviving the pandemic.

No strangers to the neighbourhood, Ravi and his dad spent several years working at the café previously occupying this corner – a relationship that eventually led to them taking over the space. Momentum was slow in the first six months as the team trialed and tested different menus and offerings. While initially serving a Western/Eastern hybrid menu of burgers and fries alongside rice and curry, they quickly switched to

solely Sri Lankan food after noticing it was what customers kept coming back for.

The vibe at Citrus is homely and unpretentious. The atmosphere is relaxed, the food is affordable and most importantly, it is supremely delicious. On a pre-pandemic weekend it wasn't uncommon to see people lining up outside, patiently waiting to get a taste of the buffet-style dining service.

As modest as Citrus is, it's also very popular – having been mentioned in outlets like *The Age* and SBS, with *Broadsheet* singing its praises as one of Melbourne's "favourite buffet restaurants". And now, of course, coverage in Fitzroy North's most prestigious community newspaper.

“Every meal tastes like it was made especially for you by a loving parent.”

Ravi's mum sits at the helm in the kitchen and coordinates the daily menu, with a rotating line up of different types of rice, vegetable curries, meat curries and condiments. Ordering a takeaway 'rice and curry deal' usually won't land you the exact same meal twice. The menu is also accommodating to any dietary requirements with plenty of gluten free, vegan and vegetarian options available.

I have loved every element of every meal I've ever had at Citrus, but I do have a few honourable mentions: the tender and flavoursome chicken curry, the classic Sri Lankan staple dahl and of course pineapple chutney, the perfect slightly sweet, slightly sour condiment to round out a spicy plate.



I feel I must give a standalone shoutout to my favourite dish, a meal I adore and that I come back to time and time again. Kotthu to me is an amalgamation of everything that is good about Sri Lankan cuisine. It's essentially a combination of meat curry, roti, egg and vegetables, which are skillfully chopped, mixed and stir-fried on a hot cast-iron griddle. It's spicy and hearty, it'll fill you up, the flavour and texture combo are faultless, and it's patently evident that the chefs at Citrus have it down to a fine art.

Like most of hospitality, Citrus has been hit hard by the pandemic. Ravi mentions they've lost much of their large and loyal customer base from Sri Lankan-populated outer suburbs

like Dandenong, Epping and Bundoora. He attributes staying afloat to the love and support of the local community – conscious consumers who aren't just motivated by a tasty and affordable meal, but who also want to help and uplift small businesses.

There are very few things in life that I feel compelled to write in a local newspaper about, but I'm not exaggerating when I say the team at Citrus are doing God's work. At a time when international travel has been as out of reach as a trip to the outer south east suburbs, Citrus has been a source of comfort, warmth and familiarity. At Citrus, every meal tastes home cooked – like it was made especially for you by a loving parent.

The Rotunda goes international, sort of (not really)

Multiple instances within the past month have indicated *The Rotunda* is beginning to find an audience outside of North Fitzroy – at least at first they did. It seemed, at some points, that this humble newspaper's sphere of influence was spreading from North Fitzroy, beyond the latte belt of the inner north, past state boundaries and even traversing oceans.

The first indication came when *The Rotunda's* Instagram account (@the.rotunda) received a sudden influx of followers for no apparent reason. It seemed we had been mentioned in the Instagram stories of a bunch of accounts. What for? And why were they all Irish?

Why was Andrew Fitzsimons, a hairdresser from Dublin with nearly 600,000 Instagram followers – at one point Kourtney Kardashian's personal hairstylist – bringing attention to a small community newspaper from Melbourne? I mean, the rat-running story was good, but had it really struck a chord in Ireland?

No, it hadn't. In actuality, Dublin is home to The Rotunda Hospital, one of the oldest continuously operating maternity hospitals in the world. Someone he knows must have had a baby there – or something like that, we can't say for sure because he deleted the Instagram story promptly. Sadly, Kourtney Kardashian



Unsurprisingly, this newspaper has few readers in Johannesburg. Possibly even zero.

probably still doesn't know this newspaper exists.

The second indication came during delivery of *The Rotunda's* third issue in late September. Two volunteers were making their way down King Street in the suburb's north, and as one of them opened the gate of a non-descript home, a young man quickly opened the front door.

He approached the volunteer.

“Is that *The Rotunda*? Thanks, I love it. Could I also get one for my girlfriend? She reads it too, but she's in Joburg.”

The volunteer, surprised but delighted, promptly handed him another copy and wished him well. He returned to his fellow deliverer and excitedly told him the news: *The Rotunda* had seemingly cracked the South African market. The residents of Johannesburg, currently in the midst of widespread riots and looting,

were apparently comforting themselves by reading about North Fitzroy's pubs – or having their pre-existing distress compounded by anxiety over the future of Piedimonte's.

The fellow deliverer thought this was unlikely. “Are you sure he didn't say Coburg?”

The first deliverer thought for a moment.

“Hmmm. Yeah, he probably said Coburg.”

BATTLING FOR THE BURRA

Former test cricketer Suraj Randiv, Edinburgh Cricket Club's newest recruit, joins a club with a strong sense of community

By Charlie Gill

Off stump. Cow corner. Fine leg. Yorker. To many, this bizarre collection of phrases may seem complete gibberish, some strange form of slang with a penchant for surrealist imagery (diamond duck, nightwatchman, chin music, sticky dog). In a sense, that's exactly what it is: the secret language of cricket, understood by hundreds of millions across the globe.

The internationality of cricket is one of its greatest qualities. From Europe to Africa, Africa to Asia and Asia to Oceania, there are people who presumably understand what a 'sandshoe crusher' means, or its respective translation. (Admittedly when I checked with a cricketer, he'd never heard of it, but it's a real term). Resultingly, cricket can unite people from many walks of life, all brought together by a love for the game.

In North Fitzroy, that love is fostered and cherished at the Edinburgh Cricket Club ("The Mighty Burra"). Since 1978, E.C.C cricketers have donned their whites and walked onto Brunswick Street Oval; raising their bats to the famous grandstand and letting out wicket-induced cries of joy that can be heard from the village. They are a large club, having fielded 40 junior sides in 2019 (including four girls' teams) and nine senior sides (including one women's team, formed in 2000).

Despite the pandemic, all teams were able to play a season last year (albeit a shortened one) and are currently embarking on the 2021/2022 season. Their number one men's team are competing in the second division of the Eastern Cricket Association, though they'd like "to build a group capable of being competitive at the next level", according to President Stuart Whaley (also a talented batsman).

This pursuit of excellence will no doubt be made easier by the club's newest recruit, 36-year-old off spinner Suraj Randiv. Moving across from Dandenong Cricket Club, Suraj will be captain coach of the men's firsts. It would be reasonable to assume this new role is the most illustrious of his career (such is the prestige of Edinburgh). Unfortunately, it's probably just pipped by something else: 12 test match appearances for Sri Lanka (and 31 One Day Internationals).

"I needed to take an opportunity to develop my career as a coach," he told *The Rotunda*. "I don't know much (about the area)."

Suraj currently works as a bus driver for Transdev, and at one stage his depot was in North Fitzroy, so he's already familiar with Brunswick Street Oval.

"I used to go there and train myself. I had a relationship straight away with the ground, so it's good for me to get there."

Do passengers ever recognise him?

"A couple of times it's happened. Sri Lankans. They ask questions like 'When did you move here?' And the Indians as well, because they're the ones who follow cricket like crazy. They always remember cricketers."

Suraj says the main thing he'll bring to the team is his experience. He looks forward to working with Edinburgh's young talent, wanting to "produce some good cricketers for the community".

One such member of this brigade of young talent is Caitlin Jack, who just completed her Year 12 exams. A medium pace bowler, Caitlin's been playing cricket for the past six years. "I absolutely love the game – watching, playing, coaching, everything." She's competed for both the girls' and women's team and is currently recovering from a long-term back injury, caused by playing too much (otherwise known as an over-dose).

It's clear Caitlin has a lot of success ahead of her (whether that's a 99 batting average or a 99 ATAR), but she says her favourite memory so far is winning the premierships for the first time – "playing with those girls was so amazing". Aside from being a player and coach, she's also a board member.

"The club really wanted a younger voice, and another voice for the girls and women."

The women's program has grown exponentially in recent years. Since the creation of the inaugural junior girls' team four years ago, the club has added another three. Edinburgh recently announced that their senior women's side was merging with Northcote Cricket Club "to create a new high-performance pathway for female cricketers in Melbourne's inner-northern suburbs". They plan to be playing Premier Cricket by 2023.

COVID-19 has inevitably presented challenges for every community sports club in the country, but Stuart says they've been able to endure the blows inflicted by the pandemic.

"I won't pretend it's been easy, there's been an awful lot of work, but I think for what's been thrown at us we've come through really well."



Suraj Randiv – Edinburgh's newest recruit. Inset: Suraj playing for Sri Lanka.

Members made contributions to cover lost revenue and support players who were suffering from financial distress. Any concern over the club's bottom line was compounded by a sudden announcement in March this year – Yarra Council were planning to massively increase ground hire fees.

"It's a pretty significant threat," Stuart says. "It worked out to be about a \$20,000 per season increase for us, which is just not something we're in a position to take."

"I love cricket 'cos I get to do it with Dad."

Thankfully, those plans were eventually withdrawn. The increase in costs would've made it difficult for Edinburgh to continue important work it does in the community. For the last ten years, they've run a clinic for kids from the Atherton Gardens estate, and more recently have begun running programs for children with disabilities.

Clearly, the club has a significant community focus, and Caitlin lauds the club's "supportive environment" – something that Suraj is likely to appreciate. When asked about any cultural differences between the different places he's played cricket, he says that in India and Sri Lanka, "cricketers always follow the coach".

"What the coach says, they do that. Here it's totally different, you need to set an

environment for the player to learn, which I really like."

Some may be inclined to note that this gentle, understanding philosophy has not been embodied by the Australian men's team in recent years. Perhaps they could learn a thing or two from a brief trip down to the Edinburgh Gardens nets? (As to my knowledge, Caitlin is yet to be embroiled in any sort of sandpaper-gate type scandal).

When pushed for his favourite cricket memory, Stuart says he'll give me two, first recalling his eight-year-old daughter Lola's answer when asked why she loves cricket: "I love cricket 'cos I get to do it with Dad."

Yeah, that's really lovely, but what's his actual answer?

"A game 11 years ago. A semi-final, a long weekend, we'd been interrupted by rain... Last over, the scores were level with three balls left and they had two wickets in hand. I was captain of the team, and we got two run outs in two balls to tie the game, and we went through because we were higher on the ladder. Their supporters had already celebrated that they'd levelled...that's one that I don't think I'll forget."

Jokes aside, Edinburgh does seem the sort of club where an eight-year-old girl from the inner north can brush shoulders (figuratively speaking) with a man who took 43 test wickets for Sri Lanka. Though I'm not sure she's ready to face him in the nets, yet.



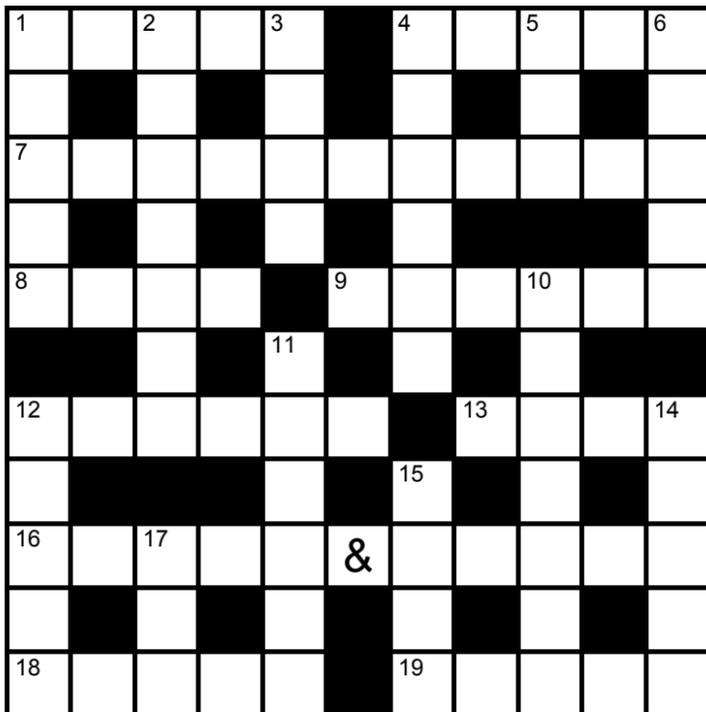
A young batter blocks a ball. Photo courtesy of the Edinburgh Cricket Club.



The 2017/2018 girls' team. Photo courtesy of the Edinburgh Cricket Club.

CROSSWORD by LR

#3



ACROSS

- 1 * Between Wedding and Kreutzberg (5)
- 4 Preen (5)
- 7 * Over the ditch (5,6)
- 8 Cabbage-based side dish (4)
- 9 * Select Cave, we hear, for lunch in Ed Gardens? (6)
- 12 * Autocratic ruler with inferior abilities and delusions of grandeur (3,3)
- 13 Money dispensers (4)

DOWN

- 1 Dish lists (5)
- 2 Topography; landscape (7)
- 3 Reverberate (4)
- 4 Chit-chat (6)
- 5 Eggs (3)

ACROSS

- 6 Doc (5)
- 10 14-down 19-across spread (7)
- 11 Not a soul (6)
- 12 Show gratitude (5)
- 14 Kind; charming (5)
- 15 Nong (4)
- 17 Spicy (3)

Note: * North Fitzroy cafes

Solution: northfitzroyrotunda.com/cheat

LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT

The North Fitzroy Co-op Childcare community would like to thank and acknowledge Alison Bradshaw for her past 13 years of service as she departs the centre. Alison has established a very special culture, environment and program at Co-op, which acts as an extension of the lives and homes of families. The Co-op community is incredibly grateful for her unwavering commitment to ensuring the unique needs of every child are met. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



VALE BERT NEWTON, THE BOY FROM NORTH FITZROY

Farewell showbiz legend and Fitzroy Football Club tragic Bert Newton, who died on October 30 aged 83. Bert was born and bred in North Fitzroy and educated at Marist Brothers on Holden Street (now the Deutsche Schule).



Follow *The Rotunda* on Instagram: [@the.rotunda](https://www.instagram.com/the.rotunda)



Locals rescue baby Tawny Frogmouth



People often mistake them for owls – but the cute, fluffy, bug-eyed and nocturnal birds that live in the Edinburgh Gardens are the native Tawny Frogmouths.

Like owls, they come out at night, flying around silently and stealthily. They eventually return to their homes in the trees, and their genius is that during the daylight hours their camouflage is provided by their grey feathers. These make them indistinguishable from tree branches and allow for a relaxing downtime.

They have much wider and larger beaks than owls but have smaller and clumsier feet. That might be how last month's incident occurred in the Gardens, right beneath a tree north of Alfred Crescent Oval.

Passers-by noticed a baby Tawny Frogmouth sitting forlornly on the large, supine dead tree branch near the goal post. It was wide awake but appeared to be frozen with terror after falling out of

its nest. Its anxious parents could just be seen in the tree but appeared unable to help.

Over the next two hours, the group of concerned citizens swelled to up to 20 people as they kept away inquisitive dogs and sought solutions on how to reunite it with its family.

First, the council was called, then a vet, then more knowledgeable North Fitzrovians were summoned to the park to consult. Expert help finally arrived in the shape of a volunteer from Wildlife Victoria, carrying a ladder and a cloth.

The young man approached the stock-still baby bird, threw the cloth over it, grasped the bird with both hands and then climbed the ladder to secure it in its nest and its parents' care. He also provided them with a small bowl of water, placed in the fork of the tree.

Another Edinburgh Gardens happy ending.

'PACK UP YOUR PICNICS': LUDO

North Fitzroy's most emotional dog turns his ire on humans

By Ludo

I must begin this column by acknowledging that loyal readers have probably only just recovered from the shock of last issue's iteration. I was in the throes of a deep and dark identity crisis sparked by my newfound fame, and everyone was in the firing line: my father, my owners, other dogs, various humans... It was an emotional mess that should have been heard by no one other than my psychiatrist. (A wise old cavoodle named Andre.)



And look - I've never had much of a problem with humans. You're responsible for a lot of great things, though you do make some perplexing decisions. Only an animal as endlessly complex as yourself could create something as beautiful and alluring as a tennis ball...then stash them away for the purposes of playing some bizarre sport.

"Is there anything more cruel than placing a tennis club directly next to a dog field?"

Is there an institution more evil than the Fitzroy Tennis Club? Is there anything more cruel than placing it directly next to the dog field? Imagine if someone took all the world's alcohol and started partying behind a massive wire fence directly in front of you? How would that make you feel?

I should calm down and emphasise that I really do like people. I sympathise with the human

Anyway, in the aftermath of my embarrassing diatribe, I resolved to start doing my job and report on dogs' issues. So without further ado: what the **** are so many humans doing on the Edinburgh Garden's dog-field? I joyously galloped into it the other day and was bemused to find that much of the space was taken up by hordes of unbothered picnickers. It was like I'd stumbled across some kind of Occupy Dog Field protest.



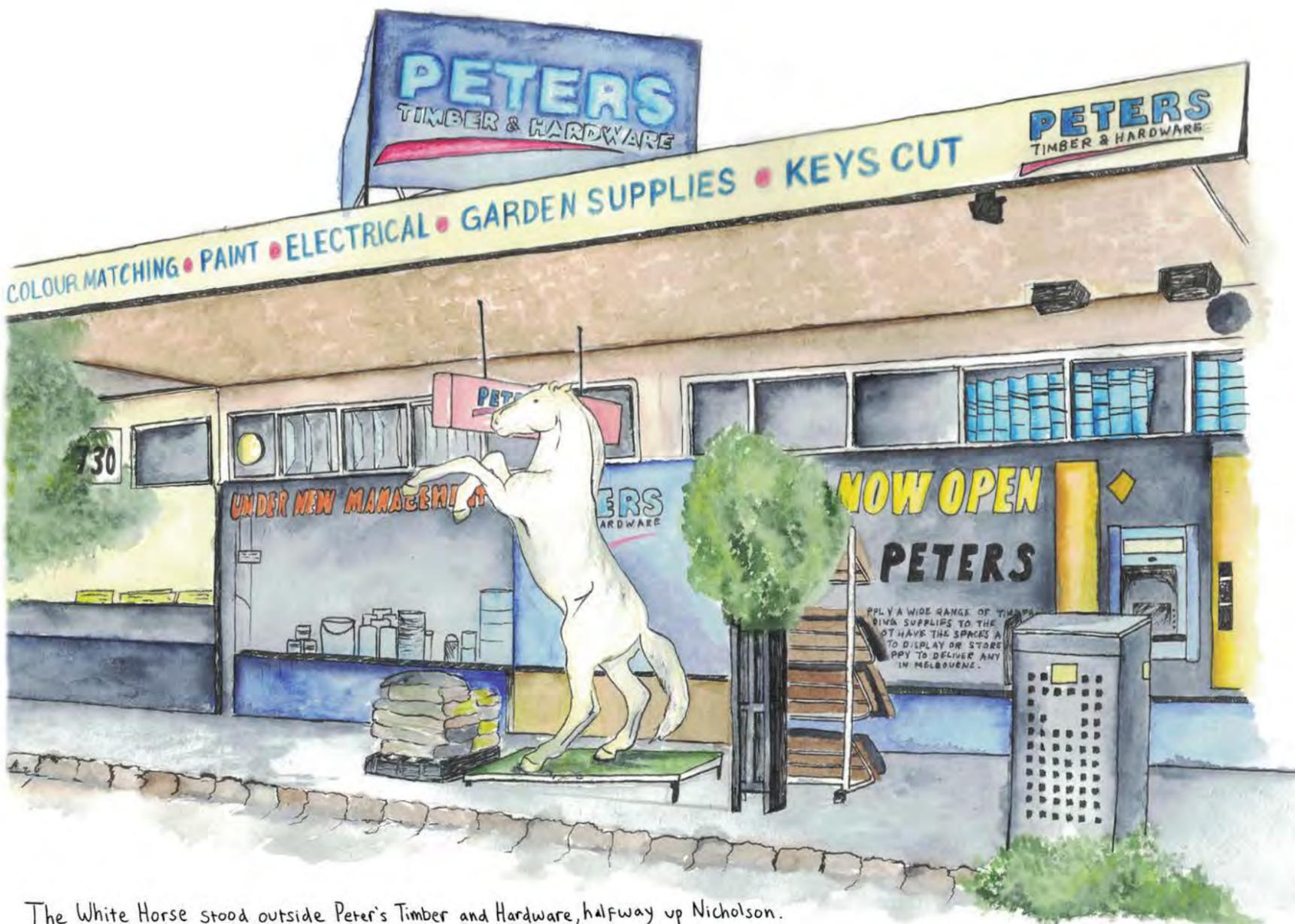
Ludo calls the city's urban planners "a bunch of depraved sadists".

experience. You've created a needlessly complicated world for yourselves to uphold. When you meet with friends, you're obligated to discuss politics, sex, justice, philosophy. When I meet with friends, we sniff each other's arses and start wrestling.

I have no idea who 'Trump' is. I'm unsure what a 'democracy' means. I have some concept of religion, but could not tell you the beliefs of atheists, Islamists or removalists.

And I have no desire to find out. (That being said, how about this nuclear missile situation? What a disaster. The French bulldogs haven't shown up to Edinburgh Gardens in weeks.)

Well - it appears I've been distracted once again. This column concerns canines. So, to reiterate, leave a bit of space for us!!! Alternatively: don't get upset when we raid your picnics. It's a dog-field. See you next month.



The White Horse stood outside Peter's Timber and Hardware, halfway up Nicholson. The store just closed down. The horse has disappeared.

Locals agonised over its meaning. Was it a sinister gift from a rival hardware store, seeking to enter enemy territory? Or was it a mystical being, a captured Pegasus with clipped wings? Maybe it was an absurdist statement. Maybe it was laughing at us as we came and went - dutiful servants to the economic machine.

In truth, we don't need to know where it came from, or what it meant. But it did mean something, and for that we are grateful.

Go on, White Horse. Gallop away to some faraway neverland. I just wish I got a chance to say goodbye.

Fitzroy Raw: tales from the 60s

Writer Tom Petsinis grew up in the 1960s on McKean Street, when North Fitzroy was filled with other immigrant families like his own.

In his new novel *Fitzroy Raw*, Petsinis draws on his own memories and actual events from that time to tell the story of Nick Mangos, who like him had immigrated from Macedonia.

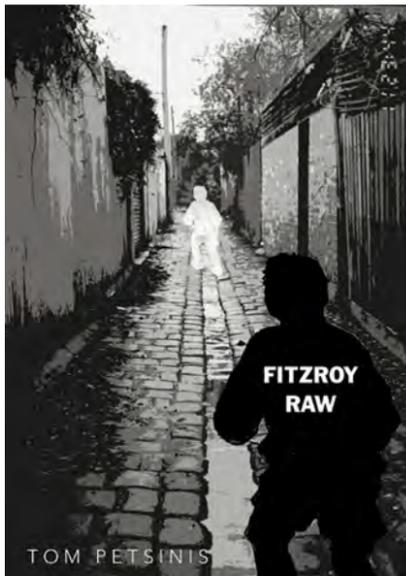
"It's a mixture of fiction and autobiography. There were events there that I experienced and other events that I've taken liberties with. But it is pretty much the world of Fitzroy and North Fitzroy in the 1960s, as I saw it," he tells *The Rotunda*.

One chapter is set on a hot summer's day in Edinburgh Gardens and is based on real events.

In the early 1960s a man's body parts were turning up around North Fitzroy.

"My mate's mum found the arm in the backyard, in the woodpile," says Petsinis. "She reached up for a bit of timber and grabbed an arm."

You can read about the summer that terrified Petsinis and his neighbourhood mates in the edited extract below, and buy *Fitzroy Raw* (published Tantanoola, \$29.95) at bookstores.



By late afternoon, seeing from his window boys gathering at the Busy Bee, Nick puts away the album and joins them. Little Chris, transistor pressed to his ear, says other body parts have been found in Fitzroy and Clifton Hill. Zlatko smiles and places the first three fingers of his right hand over his heart.

'Why not Collingwood?' asks Danny.

'Could mean the killer's from Collingwood,' says Nick.

'Yeah,' says Tony, 'probably a bloody Collingwood supporter.'

The police have made no progress in solving the crime, Chris reports, listening intently, and they won't say whether the parts are from the same body. The boys turn to one another with a look of alarm, thinking they have to endure another hot night with the killer wandering around their back lanes. But then, maybe to take their minds off body parts, big Paul, who's a good leg-spinner, suggests a game of cricket before tea.

When Dom cracks the ball into the Council Yard for six, Lance bolts after it, only to stop

abruptly at the edge of the long grass as though he's seen a snake. He races back to the pitch without the ball, looking shaken.

'Where's the bloody ball?' says Dom, eager to bat again.

'There's a man's head in the grass,' Lance gasps.

He is a known joker, so at first they think he's pulling their leg, trying to spook them, but when he swears on his mother's grave they pull out the stumps and follow him. On the way he keeps saying the sight isn't for the faint-hearted: the tongue's blue, hanging out of the mouth, and the eyes are white and half closed.

'If you want to pull out, do it now,' Lance says, 'but if you want to see it, just know one thing, you might live with nightmares the rest of your life. Grandpa fought the Germans twenty years ago and he still keeps Gran awake with nightmares of blown-up bodies and chopped-off heads.'

The group hesitates a moment, each measuring his own fear by the look in another's eyes. Sensing that some are afraid and might go back, Lance takes on the role of a platoon leader.

They follow, sprinting toward the long grass, screaming out their fear, only to stop dead in their tracks once in the Council Yard. Some draw back in shock, others look away, a few close their eyes. Nick stands his ground, having watched a relative slaughter a sheep in their gully trap one Easter. Black bush flies buzz around the head nestled in the grass, face up, as though a body buried up to its neck. Nick's both curious and sickened. The hair's oily and still brushed back Elvis-style, there's a kind of sleepy look in the whites of the eyes, the mouth gapes in a silent howl, while the tongue sticks out, mocking and dark. Lance takes the bat from Dom and, against calls for them to go, pushes the head. It rolls onto its side and blood trickles from the big nose, making some of the boys jump back in fear.

'We gotta call the cops,' says Danny.

'Hey, what if the head was dumped just before we got here,' says Lance.

'What if the killer's still in the Council Yard,' says Paul.

'Behind one of them mounds,' says Tony.

Spooked, they all leap to their feet, except Lenny. Just then Vlad appears at the Busy Bee. They call him over, hoping his wild, daring nature might come up with something. He's eating a bread roll with a thick pork sausage inside, another of his father's homemade products. When they tell him about the head he strolls over to where it lies and, still biting into his roll, parts the long grass with his foot.

'Poor bastard,' he says, 'lost his head for...'

'For a double cross,' says Lance.

'Or maybe for love,' says Tony.

Vlad instructs Lenny to run home and bring back whatever sack he can find. They boys look at each in disbelief at his daring. When Lenny returns with a spud sack, Vlad rolls the head inside using one of the bats.

'What are doing with it?' asks Lance.

'Boil it for breakfast,' laughs Vlad.

'No, serious.'

'Swear you won't tell anyone.'

'Not a soul,' says Tony.

He gets them to place the first three fingers of their right hand on their hearts. They all swear, some on God, others on the Bible, others on their mother's grave. He then gathers them around him, opens the sack, and calls on the head to haunt anyone who reveals his secret.

'There's a bloke on Brunswick Street, a taxi-something-or-another, who stuffs all kinds of animal heads. I reckon he'll pay a few quid for this catch.'

Knowing Vlad's wild nature, they aren't sure whether he's joking or not. Ordering them to go home before they're spotted here, he hurries off, taking the back way along the quiet end of Alfred Crescent.

After days of living like prisoners it's a relief to swing open the front and back door, to feel the fresh draught sweeping out the stale heat from the corridor, the living room, the kitchen, and, even more, to feel it driving out the week-long fear festering in him. Yes, they all feel better now, freer, not just for the cool change, but because the killer was arrested this morning. The killer isn't Louie's dad, he isn't a serial killer, as they feared, or a cold-blooded murderer, as the police said, he isn't even a man - it turns out the killer's a thirty-six-year-old woman, a mother of three small children.



Kids play in Fitzroy, 1965. Photo: Chris Lermanis.

The woman clobbered the man on the head with a hammer and then cut him up with a razor blade in the bathtub of their house. She has already taken police to the places where parts were disposed. An extensive search of the area didn't find the head, the last piece in the jig-saw puzzle. According to the latest news update, the Inspector in charge of the case is certain she dumped the head in the disused part of the Edinburgh Gardens, but he's unable to explain its disappearance, except to say that, having been there several days, it's more than likely feral cats roaming the park have made off with it.

THANK YOU

We at Wild Things send out a huge thank you to our beloved Fitzroy North community!

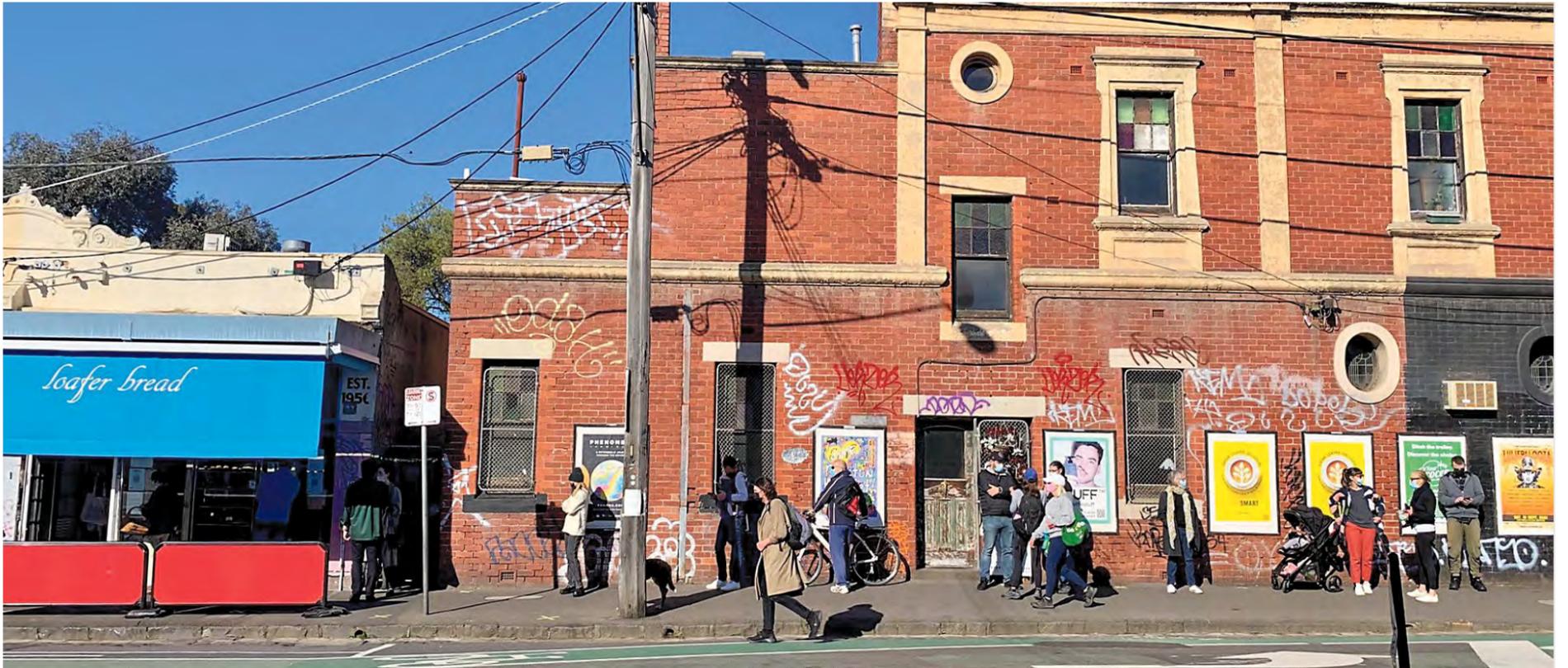
It's been uplifting to watch the community's passion for fresh, local & organic food blossom while we've all been spending more time in the kitchen. We're excited for everyone to show off their inner master chef skills with their nearest and dearest's again as the power of good food brings us back together around the same table.

We thank everyone for being continuous beacons of positivity when the world around us was so uncertain.

The kindness and the support we have received makes us proud and appreciate being a part of this vibrant community.

To our longstanding customers and the ones who discovered us during pandemic - we thank you!

Love Wild Things x



Using the bread from Loafer 'til there's none left over

By Jack and Dawn Norman

Fitzroy North is something of a foodie paradise. Some have even claimed that it is second only to San Sebastian in Spain for the range of delectable dining on offer. Over the next few issues, we hope to highlight some of the best of the F.N food scene. Not only will we share some old favourites, but hope to discover some new spots of foodie heaven right around our local corners.

We've decided to start off with the proverbial stuff of life – bread. We're a bit embarrassed that it took a friend from Clifton Hill (that other side of our zip code) to tell us about Loafer Bread. Located at the beating heart of SoHo (the corner of Scotchmer Street and St. George's Road), you can recognise Loafer most mornings by the line that stretches down the block.

During the wait, let your mouth water at the goodies on offer through the window: fruit danishes, savoury danishes, quiches, sandwiches. (If you want coffee, bring your own cup, or you will be out of luck.) But the reason we go to Loafer almost every week is the bread, even if a danish or two find their way into our tummy on the walk home.

We've been regular consumers of the delicious 'Overnight White' for years – a glorious sourdough with a lightness and chewiness that kept us coming back for

more. For too long, its glories made us blind to all other breads.

Then one day we decided to try the *miche*, a light rye that comes in a jolly, large round loaf. You can look forward to feeling wholesome and satisfied all at once, as you leave with it tucked into the pram or under your (already rather full) arm. The dark, deeply scored crust hides underneath it a surprising light, springy loaf with a wonderful crumb.

“As the crumb receded into the beginnings of dryness, new opportunities arose.”

Perhaps it was novelty, or mere gluttony, that made our eyes – always bigger than our stomachs when we enter Loafer – light up and our ears turn when asked “half or whole?” (\$7.30 for half, \$15.50 for whole). “Whole” was our response, on a sunny Monday before a week of rain. That left us with a whole lotta bread to get through.

The *miche* treated the two and a half of us gently at first – a generous slice or two elevated our soup from light lunch to

hearty feast, whilst another proved itself a delicious vehicle with which to finish off our eggplant parm. Many pieces were lost to our marmalade; nothing was wasted.

Yet we still found ourselves with about a third of a loaf on Friday. This large wedge of *miche*, while maintaining much of its original excellence, was not quite the bread it had been on Monday. But as the crumb receded into the beginnings of dryness, new opportunities arose. The liquid that was lost could be replaced with something oily and delicious.

We took what remained of our loaf and – essentially following *Serious Eats'* classic panzanella recipe – cut it into cubes, tossed them in a couple of tablespoons of olive oil and baked it until lightly golden. Meanwhile we salted just over a kilo of roughly chopped fresh tomatoes in a colander over a large bowl for about half an hour.

We took the tomato liquid and whisked in a generous teaspoon of Dijon mustard, two small shallots, one clove of garlic that we had finely diced, a couple of tablespoons of red wine vinegar and a good grind of pepper, before slowly drizzling in just over 100 millilitres of olive oil.

We then added the bread and tomatoes to the bowl and tossed them in the dressing before letting it sit for around 20 minutes,

adding as much basil as grows on one of those potted basil plants you can buy from a local supermarket (we venture into Northcote's Terra Madre for ours). We tossed it all together one more time, tasted it for seasoning, and enjoyed it with a bowl of asparagus soup on one side and a glass of red on the other.

The result? A soft and crunchy, salty and slightly sweet collection of bright summer colours. The perfect salad, if we do say so ourselves. Even our (nearly) two-year-old was asking for more!

To many North Fitzrovians, the very thought of old Loafer bread is an oxymoron. Who can resist eating the whole loaf right away? But having now transformed a stale *miche* into panzanella, we're counting it amongst our favourite Loafer creations.



Q&A with a local: Linda Wilshire

Linda Wilshire has been a teacher for over 30 years and has worked at Fitzroy North Primary School for over 20.

Biggest reward from being a teacher?
Watching students achieve and progress. Reaching their full potential.

Three most important qualities a teacher must have?
Passion for education, patience and a sense of humour.

Who is the current principal?
Dale Perichon. He's amazing.

Favourite subject to teach?
My favourite areas would be the humanities. But I'm a trained generalist teacher – so

whatever the subject area is, I try to make it fun for the kids.

Is there something specific to F.N.P.S that you think is especially good?
I think the school's been pretty good at catering for individual differences.

Having been a teacher for so long, what's the biggest change you've seen since you've started?
Definitely the development of digital technology. When I started teaching, in my twenties, there was maybe one computer shared between a cohort.

Do you think these technological advancements have been a good thing?
Definitely. It's the way of the world. It's part

and parcel of our everyday life, regardless of what occupation a person has.

Does it make it easier to connect with students or harder?
It can be challenging with students who might have a little bit of an addiction to digital technology, flicking their screens when they're meant to be doing something else.

But then, they used to do that with a pencil and paper too.

What change would you make to the Australian curriculum and the way schools are run, if you could?
Utilise the expertise of external professionals e.g. scientists, artists, etc.

How do you relax from teaching everyday?
I enjoy reading, playing Scrabble and socialising with my friends and family.

What football team do you support?
I don't follow the football.

My brother said that I shouldn't be able to live in Australia because I don't follow the football.

I might have to agree with him.
Technically, my team would be Geelong. The only time I watch football is the Grand Final, that's it. P.E is not my area.

What's your favourite book, and why?
Way too many to choose. It's like trying to choose a favourite child.

Are 10,000 steps enough?

All Australians should incorporate strength training into their weekly routine, but it is especially important for those over 40.

The recommendation of 10,000 steps a day is well known as the key to staying fit and healthy, however walking and aerobic activities are only part of the story.

The Australian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend at least 2.5 hours of moderate intensity physical activity per week as well as muscle strengthening activities at least 2 days per week. While many Australian adults participate in the recommended amount of physical activity, only 1/3 complete the recommended amount of muscle strengthening activities. This number gets even lower as we age, with only 11% of those aged over 55 participating in strength training twice per week.

“These numbers are hard to understand when we know the incredible benefits that strength training can have on an individual, especially as they age”, says Physiotherapist Jess Hiew. Jess is the Clinic Leader of Kieser in Fitzroy, which welcomes clients of all ages to their strength training programs and has seen first-

hand the benefits strength training can have on those aged over 40.

“We see clients everyday with back pain, knee pain and chronic conditions such as osteoporosis and arthritis which are currently on the rise in those aged over 40. Clients are surprised to hear that many of these conditions can not necessarily be managed with aerobic exercise alone.”

Muscle mass decreases approximately 3–8% per decade after the age of 30

“Many conditions can not necessarily be managed with aerobic exercise alone.”

and this rate of decline is even higher after the age of 60. This involuntary loss of muscle mass, strength, and function is a fundamental cause of and contributor to pain and injury as we age. However, these changes in muscle mass can be counteracted by strength training, which increases



Strength training at Kieser

muscle protein synthesis in both younger and older adults.

A common myth for those with osteoporosis is that strength training is unsafe and can lead to fractures. However, numerous studies have shown that progressive resistance training is actually one of the most effective forms of exercise for clients with osteoporosis due to the dynamic and rapid loading of bones which induces bone strains.

Kieser is a unique Physiotherapy and exercise facility, which changes the paradigm of the traditional fitness facility to welcome clients of all ages and provide older clients with a safe and supportive

environment in which to improve their strength and physical function. Our training facility is designed to support our clients, with a quiet, non-invasive environment that has a focus on physical performance, rather than physical aesthetics. With an average client age of 55, our members are able to train in a safe and supported environment surrounded by their peers.

Kieser has a clinic on Brunswick Street in Fitzroy North and are open for essential face to face care with a Physiotherapist during lockdown. To learn more about Kieser, call 9445 7900 or visit Kieser.com.au



Kieser Fitzroy team



Physio at Kieser