

THRILL RIDE

Upgraded pump track
a BMX hit

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INTRODUCING ENGAGED

Helping older residents
stay active and social

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HIT FOR SIX

Toorak Park reopens
to sport clubs

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Stonnington news



Streets ahead

Toorak Village shines following streetscape upgrade — page 3





A word from the Mayor

This is my first column as Mayor since being elected in November 2023, a role that I am thrilled and honoured to be undertaking. I look forward to continuing to work hard for all residents, focusing on delivering priority projects, aligning services and supporting local businesses.

It has been a busy and rewarding start to 2024 for Council, with the completion of infrastructure and amenities that make Stonnington an even greater place to live, work, visit and play.

The Toorak Village streetscape works, finished after nine months of construction and extensive community consultation, have greatly improved the look and feel of this significant precinct, especially the pedestrian areas between Wallace Avenue and Grange Road.

I encourage everyone to visit the historic Village precinct to support our wonderful traders and to see the new footpaths, street furniture and trees.

Over at Windsor Siding Reserve, the new BMX pump track is being put to great use by local riders, with construction on the track, part of Council's Windsor Siding Reserve Masterplan, now complete.

Opening two new pocket parks in Bangs and Mount streets, Prahran, rounds out our latest delivery of new park space, providing spaces for all residents to play and relax. I hope everyone enjoys our new and improved spaces.

Stonnington is a wonderful kaleidoscope of people, places, architecture, nature and vibrancy, and we continue to showcase this through our community events. Of course, we will never stop aiming to do more.

One event I am looking forward to is Pets in the Park, which will be returning to Central Park on Sunday, March 24. Stonnington is home to more than 12,000 registered pets and this much-loved annual event, now in its 22nd year, celebrates our fabulous furry friends while promoting responsible pet ownership and animal welfare. I hope to meet you and your pet there!

Our aged community is something I care about deeply. This edition of Stonnington News incorporates – for the first time – a wrap-up of events and activities to help our older persons stay active and socially connected in Stonnington. For our older persons, we must ensure we keep them connected at every possible opportunity.

Check it out on pages six and seven, including a fabulous profile on our Beama Streamers group!

Boosting our local economy are new and established businesses, and we

profile a new business – The South Levain patisserie in Malvern East – and a renowned High Street icon – Najaf Rugs and Textiles in Prahran. Like so many, these businesses add to the colour and character of our beautiful precincts.

On a personal note, I was delighted to see The South Levain make great use of a previously run-down shopfront in Malvern East, and Najaf Rugs and Textiles continues to embrace the traditional multiculturalism of a refined skill – handmade Afghan rugs.

Stepping into both businesses is like stepping into another world and it reflects the immense diversity in Stonnington we should all be proud of.

Our Business Concierge service is designed to support our local business precincts and traders. If you are a small business, please contact the business concierge team to see how they might be able to support your business needs.

As a Council, we work hard to provide the vital services, including roads, footpaths, parks, cleaning, libraries, pools, sporting venues and precincts, and a host of other things.

Enjoy the transition from summer to the autumn months.

Until next time,

Cr Joe Gianfriddo
Mayor
City of Stonnington



Have your say on our draft Budget

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the first stage of our 2024-25 Budget consultation. More than 240 people shared their ideas and our online engagement tool received more than 1515 votes.

From the 15 themes suggested for community feedback, the top five priority areas identified by you were:

- » **parks and open space – 78 per cent**
- » **urban development, streetscapes and amenity – 75 per cent**
- » **roads, drains and street maintenance – 72 per cent**
- » **transport, active transport and traffic – 72 per cent**
- » **waste services – 54 per cent.**

We also asked participants for a budget idea or aspiration for Stonnington and the top themes were:

- » **increased and improved bike paths, safer footpaths and roads**
- » **improved accessibility, mobility and diversity**
- » **improved town heritage protection and open space**
- » **focus on community safety**
- » **improved street cleaning and graffiti removal.**

With those results top of mind, the 2024-25 Budget is now being drafted.

We'll be sharing that draft with the community in April, and a second round of consultation will be open from 23 April to 20 May.

You'll be able to have your say at Connect Stonnington connectstonnington.vic.gov.au/budget-2024-25



Turn down the temperature with a free home energy kit

Windsor resident Cameron Tirendi (pictured) is reducing his energy bills and emissions with a couple of household tweaks.

Borrowing a free Towards Zero Home Energy Kit from his local Stonnington library, Cameron was able to reduce temperatures for his hot water and fridge, and identify drafts contributing to energy loss.

Each kit contains a thermal imaging camera, power meter and thermometer.

They also come with a step-by-step guide to eight home energy and water tests, which identify ways to improve your home's overall efficiency.

"There's a lot of information, which is great," Cameron said.

"I did the simple tests, like the hot water temperature and the fridge tests.

"There are good tips on heating and cooling, as well."

Cameron said he was able to implement a lot of changes straight away.

"The kit was easy to use. It helps reduce your energy costs and usage.

"I know I am contributing to a sustainable future, one adjustment at a time."

The kits are an initiative of Stonnington's Climate Emergency Action Plan as Council continues its commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2030.



Scan the QR code to find out more.



Reconciliation Acknowledgement Statement

We acknowledge we are on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the East Kulin Nations and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge their living connection to Country, relationship with the land and all living things extending back tens of thousands of years.

Information and events in this publication are current at the time of printing. Subsequent changes may occur.

Cover image: Toorak Village sparkles at twilight, following completed streetscape works.



Back to its best

Toorak Village is as elegant as ever following the completion of Council's streetscape improvement project.

Visitors are enjoying the new pedestrian areas on both sides of Toorak Road between Wallace Avenue and Grange Road, with works including new concrete footpaths with brass trim, new granite cobblestone and bluestone kerbs.

Construction commenced in April 2023 and was completed in December – in time for traders and visitors to enjoy the improved pedestrian access over the summer months.

Upgrades to revitalise the precinct also included restoring heritage lighting, new street furniture, trees, landscaping and greenery.

Stonnington's City Projects Manager, Jason Sigar, said the works were undertaken following an extensive three-stage community engagement program.

"The upgrade is paramount for our community, revitalising and enhancing

the overall urban environment of one of our key shopping precincts," Jason said.

"The footpath is a unique design to Toorak Village, comprising sandblasted concrete panels with brass trim, granite cobblestones and bluestone kerbing.

"This transformation improves the visual appeal and also fosters a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, creating a vibrant and welcoming community space for residents and visitors alike."

North Ward Cr Marcia Griffin thanked traders and shoppers for their patience while the works were completed.

"As a very local resident, I walk to Toorak Village frequently and I know how it is cherished by residents," she said.

"That is why I advocated tirelessly for the renovation and rejuvenation of the Village. We look forward to the return of the sculptures and, as the trees mature, we will have a beautiful Village that will attract more businesses and customers."

Cr Kate Hely said Stonnington residents should get ready to "fall in love" with Toorak Village all over again.

"Toorak Village used to be the talk of the town, with buses full of people coming from far and wide just to soak up its sophisticated vibe but, over time, it lost a bit of its sparkle," Cr Hely said.

"But now private developers have invested in swanky architecture and Council has seriously spruced up the streets. Now Toorak Village is set to make a major comeback as a modern and chic shopping destination."

Cr Matthew Koce said Toorak Village has "never looked so good".

"We live in a wonderful area but there is always more that can be done to make it even better," he said. "As a Stonnington Councillor and resident, I know our shopping precincts make an enormous contribution to local amenity and liveability. To help keep Toorak Village at the forefront as one Melbourne's most-loved, vibrant and iconic destinations, Stonnington Council has helped lead a major makeover that includes new footpaths, street furniture, landscaping, office buildings and shops."

Nadia from home décor store Jade + Amber said the Village's "beautiful businesses" were ready to welcome Stonnington residents.

"We need to get the message to everybody there are beautiful businesses in the Village that need to be seen," she said.

➔ **"We need to get the message to everybody there are beautiful businesses in the Village that need to be seen."**

Meet the traders



SALLY WRIGHT FLOWER STUDIO
On the Jackson St side of the Village, the Sally Wright Flower Studio is a must to visit for special occasions – just make sure you get in early.

"The people who shop here love us, they just need to come more often," owner Sally said. "We have a queue out the door every Mother's Day."



TRAFFIC
"It's men's gifts with a quirky edge to it," said shop manager Don.
"Traffic is not your conventional store. We sell things from number plates through to art pieces, paintings and antique toys."



JADE + AMBER
Nadia is on a mission to establish a "Paris end" of the precinct, with her store offering French art and home décor you would struggle to find elsewhere.
"If I didn't have uniqueness, I wouldn't have made it. Why would people come to the Village when they can buy the same thing in Armadale, or at Melbourne Central or online?" she said.




YUCA
Brunch café Yuca opened its doors in 2023 and offers a more creative take than the standard avo on toast.
"We offer a variety of things every season and we want to introduce people into different cultures of food as well. We feel everyone is used to the same options. We offer a different take on most things," said head chef Sam Terranova, who co-owns Yuca with partner Raju Ghimire.

WHAT'S ON

MARCH & APRIL

International Women's Day Mini-Expo


 **7 March**
1pm to 4pm


 Grattan Gardens Community Centre

Celebrate International Women's Day by exploring the range of services and activities on display. Speak to representatives from a range of programs that support women to be their best.

Free. Community transport available. Call 8290 1460.

Chair-based yoga


 **11 March**
12pm

 Harold Holt Swim Centre Health Club
1409 – 1413 High Street, Glen Iris

Experience all the benefits of physical and mental fitness in a safe and accessible way with a trained therapist in a specialised chair-based yoga class.

Seniors: \$18.70 Pensioner: \$12.50. Inquiries: 8290 1437.

Tai Chi at Prahran Square


 **12 March**
9am

 Prahran Square, Cato Street, Prahran

These free weekly classes, led by an instructor from Tai Chi Australia, are suitable for people of all levels. Classes are also held Fridays at 9am via Zoom. Tuesday class will be cancelled if it rains.

Phone 8290 1333 to book or email engaged@stonnington.vic.gov.au

GLAMOUR The Show


 **16 March**
7pm

 Chapel Off Chapel

For one night only, GLAMOUR The Show returns with a talented new cast of world-class Burlesque artists.



Exhumed: the 'best' of Bradley Storer


 **17 March**
6pm

 Chapel Off Chapel

Dark, alternative contemporary cabaret.



Let's get quizzical


 **21 March**
5.30pm

 Prahran Square Library

Test your knowledge of music and movies at our free trivia night.



Pets in the Park

 **24 March**
11am to 3pm

 Central Park

The City of Stonnington's much loved Pets in the Park event returns for its 22nd year.

Our annual celebration of all things pets is the purrfect day out for you and your animal friends, with presentations, demonstrations, competitions, activities, information and market stalls that are sure to tickle your tail feathers (or scales!).

Small Business Bus

 **26 March**
10am to 4pm

 Prahran Market


Free assistance for anyone looking to start or grow a small business in Stonnington.

Free but bookings essential.

Find out more about this and many other events for business owners at: stonnington.vic.gov.au/business



Lightspeed – Satellite Art Exhibition opening night

 **18 April**
6pm

 Menzies Malvern, 1306 High Street, Malvern

This exclusive exhibition by Australian artist Antoinette Ferwerda is inspired by brutalist architecture and 1930s art deco. Meet the artist. Canapes and light refreshments provided.

Bookings: crystall.mousios@keyton.com.au or 0447 293 702.

Malvern Men's Probus Club

 **23 April**
10am

 163 Wattletree Road, Malvern

Guest speaker Benji Brundin, author of *Hunting Fear*, will share his story of exploration through 10 Australian deserts.

Inquiries and bookings: Don Jones 0411 744 542.


MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL

 At Chapel Off Chapel

 For bookings and information: chapeloffchapel.com.au




Cricket is a funny game

 **13 April**

Love cricket, music and laughter? Don't miss award-nominated musical comedian Stew Walker's hilarious homage to the world's funniest sport.



I always knew I had it in me

 **16 – 21 April**

Outrageously high-octane, cheeky and irreverent, Scotland's much-loved "kilty" pleasure unleashes another corker of a show.



➤ Brothers Ollie and Will put the new Windsor Siding BMX track through its paces.

New BMX track pumping

The brand-new BMX pump track at Windsor Siding Reserve has been hailed as a blessing, creating an inner-city sanctum for Stonnington thrillseekers.

The pump track has replaced the old gravel surface, which had begun to erode into the stormwater system. The previous track also contained no grass or plants.

The BMX upgrade is part of Council’s Windsor Siding Reserve Masterplan, with works including demolishing the old track, reconfiguring and building the new track, landscaping and gardening works.

The new layout and smooth bitumen surface is more accessible to users of all ages and skill levels.

Simon Hastwell said the track was a big hit with his young family.

“We’re only two blocks away, so it’s so good to have,” Simon said.

“When I heard about the pump track, I was worried it would be subpar. But it’s built really well for the space that was there.”

Simon’s son Ollie agreed.

“It’s super fun, because when the skate park gets too windy, we ride the bikes down to the pump track and have a fun session down there without getting blown away,” he said.

“You can go super fast on it. It’s the best. It has the right space between pumps.

“If we didn’t have one, we’d have to drive for an hour. It’s so fun and it’s very necessary for us.”

Simon said the new track, combined with the renovated Prahran Skate Park – just weeks away from opening – would create an “inner-city” hub for Stonnington residents and visitors.

“If you want to get into BMXing, the next track is miles away. This is central, a bit more metropolitan, so everyone’s got a hub,” Simon said.

➤ Find out more about the Windsor Siding Reserve Masterplan: <https://bit.ly/WindsorBMX>

All creatures great and small

Imagine Rod Laver Arena packed to capacity with pets. That’s almost how many dogs and cats call the City of Stonnington home, with more than 12,000 furry friends registered with Council.

Stonnington residents are more likely to be dog people, with more than 9000 canines registered compared to just over 3000 cats.

But which breeds are most popular?

Cavoodles are kings in Stonnington, claiming the no.1 mantle to lead the pack ahead of labradors.

Golden retrievers round out the podium in third place, while spoodles earn an honourable mention in fourth.

Border collies, often seen running rings around Stonnington’s many parks, reserves and ovals, come in fifth.

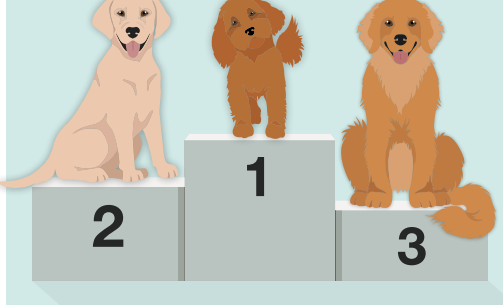
If you’ve named your best friend Charlie or Coco, you are in good company – those are the two most used pet names in the municipality. Daisy, Archie and Ruby also feature prominently.

The best name in Stonnington might belong to a mini schnauzer, who is ironically named Arnold Schwarzenegger. Legend has it he once barked, “I’ll be back!”


In the cat community, we have royalty – Princess Skittles is out there somewhere, perhaps waiting for a charming prince to meow on by or biding her time until she becomes queen.

While our pet data is fun, it also serves a crucial purpose.

Of the lost pets picked up by animal management officers in 2023 – and there were more than 100 of them – about 80 per cent were returned home, thanks to up-to-date registration information provided by owners.



For more information go to stonnington.vic.gov.au/services/pets



And don’t forget, our annual Pets in the Park event is on for the 22nd year on Sunday, March 24 at Central Park, Malvern East from 11 am–3pm.

Bring your best mate along for an unforgettable day of presentations, demonstrations, competitions, activities, information and market stalls.



Get to know your new bin colours

Help reduce landfill, recycle more and put food waste to work in Stonnington.

Follow this simple guide to help us help the environment.

Scan the QR code for more household recycling tips





Recycling bin

Hard plastic and glass bottles, containers, jars, cans, foil and cardboard.

Keep items loose so they can be turned into new products.



Food and garden waste bin

Food scraps and garden clippings.

These are turned into compost.



Garbage bin

Household rubbish, soft plastics, nappies, polystyrene, coffee cups and damaged clothing.

Reduce your waste by opting for reusable products.

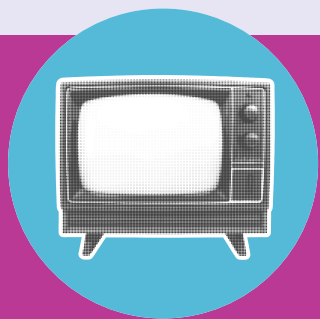
Introducing... Stonnington Engaged



Are you an older resident living in Stonnington? Our Engaged programs and events are for you!

Engaged offers people aged 55 years or older, people with disabilities, and carers a variety of activities and opportunities to stay active and socially connected in our community.

For the first time, Stonnington News is running a dedicated section of Engaged events to help our older residents connect with others and find new pursuits.



Films and friendship: Beama Streamers' open invite

It's Friday afternoon and the Beama Streamer film buffs begin filing into Malvern Library with biscuits, tea and a fervour for friendship.

The free film viewing program runs weekly, featuring a classic feature film or documentary.

It also offers a clear sense of camaraderie with host Kevin ensuring everyone feels welcome.

During a recent Beama Streamer session, attendees were treated to the 1946 classic *It's a Wonderful Life*, with regular participant Laurice charged with the all-important job of bringing the biscuits.

"It's free, you have biscuits and tea and you make friends," Laurice said.

Many come weekly throughout the year. "We love it. We come more for the friendship than the films," one Beama Streamer said.

Host Kevin said seeing people come together and form relationships made the experience rewarding.

"For me personally, it's among the most fulfilling things I've done during my time working in libraries," he said.

Beama Streamers runs every Friday at Malvern Library 1pm to 3.30pm. Bookings aren't required.



Get active with free yoga

Mondays 9.30am to 10.30am on Zoom

Fridays 9.30 am to 10.30am at Victoria Gardens, 361-381 High Street, Prahran, until the end of March and then indoors at Prahran RSL, 301 High Street, Prahran, until September.

For all fitness levels. An instructor will guide you through practices to encourage flexibility and strength. Movements are adapted to suit ability and needs.

For more information, call 8290 1421 or go to bit.ly/YogaPrahran



Considering a mobility scooter? Learn more

Wednesday 20 March 10am to 11am

Community Room, 25 King Street, Prahran

Is a mobility scooter right for you? This information session will help to answer your questions including how to choose the right device and safe use of a scooter.

To register contact Rosemary on 0437 635 143 or transportplanning@stonnington.vic.gov.au



Walk and Talk Buddies

Mondays and Thursdays 10am

Meet new friends on enjoyable walks through various locations within Stonnington. Monday's walk is great for those who want a gentle, leisurely walk. Thursday's walk is great if you want a moderate-to-brisk walk.

Locations change each week.

For bookings, call 8290 1333 or visit stonnington.vic.gov.au/engaged



Meet U There - social lunches

Join us for a fun and inclusive cafe experience where you can socialise and forge new friendships. Lunch is at your own cost and the group meets from **11.30am to 1pm**.

Tuesdays: Malvern Central dining area, Level 4, Malvern Central

Wednesdays: Fourth Chapter Cafe, 385 High Street, Prahran

Thursdays: Prahran Market, Food Court, 163 Commercial Road, South Yarra

Fridays: Reverie Café, 31 Izett Street, Prahran

Register by calling 8290 3337 or email engaged@stonnington.vic.gov.au

For further information on Engaged programs or to make a booking, call Customer Service on 8290 1333 or email engaged@stonnington.vic.gov.au

Keep up to date by subscribing to our digital monthly Stonnington Engaged newsletter at stonnington.vic.gov.au/subscribe

Visit stonnington.vic.gov.au/Services/Aged-care/Engaged-programs-and-events

Scan the QR Code for more





The Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra

New Horizons Concert

Sunday 14 April 2.30pm
Chapel Off Chapel,
12 Little Chapel Street, Prahran

Featuring emerging musicians, the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra includes professional and amateur musicians. Tickets are \$35 (\$30 concession) and are available through Chapel Off Chapel, online at chapeloffchapel.com.au or by phoning 8290 7000.

Engaged has a limited number of complimentary tickets to this concert. To express your interest in receiving one please phone 8290 1333.



JOCARE

Caring for neighbours
and digital help

Tuesdays from 9.30am
St Joseph's Office, 47 Stanhope Street,
Malvern

Wednesdays from 9.30am
Phoenix Park Neighbourhood House,
22 Rob Roy Road, Malvern East

Wednesdays from 1pm till 3pm
Grattan Gardens Community Centre,
40 Grattan Street, Prahran.

JoCare volunteers are available to help you learn to access digital technology. Each participant is able to access a free tablet with internet capabilities for four weeks' training and a three-month loan.

If you would like to build confidence with digital devices, call **0468 732 999** or email digital@jocare.org.au.



Community Bus Service

Our community bus service provides accessible transport Monday to Friday to enable Stonnington residents aged over 55 and people living with disability to stay independent and to participate in community life.

The buses are fitted with hoists and handrails, and shopping jeeps and walking frames are welcome.

The bus provides regular transport to and from markets, shopping centres, libraries, community centres and Meet U There social lunch locations.


Costs range from free to \$1.80 per trip. Call **8290 3349** or visit the Stonnington website and search Community Transport.

Prahran Place Neighbourhood Centre

 Grattan Gardens Community Centre,
40 Grattan Street, Prahran

 prahranplace.org.au

Prahran Place offers a wide range of activities that are designed to create a sense of community. It's your place to learn, create and connect in Stonnington. Each term is different.

 Call **9510 7052** for cost information.

Zumba Gold

Fridays 9.15am to 10am

This easy-to-follow class based on Latin dance moves will help you stay fit while having fun. Great for all ages.

Watercolour painting

Mondays 6pm to 8pm

Join this relaxing class to learn a range of techniques to create beautiful paintings.

Chatty Café

Wednesdays 10.30am to 11.30am

Join us for a cuppa and light morning tea while enjoying a chat. It's free and everyone is welcome.

Phoenix Park Neighbourhood House art program

 Phoenix Park Community Centre,
22 Rob Roy Road, Malvern East

Enrol in the Phoenix Park Neighbourhood House Art Program today and embark on a journey towards holistic wellbeing through the power of art.

Art discovery

Mondays during school term
10am to 12pm

Experiment with old and new art techniques, mixed media and interesting combinations of traditional and non-traditional materials, such as acrylic paint, watercolour, oils, pastel and charcoal. BYO materials.

Watercolour introduction

Tuesdays 6.30pm to 8.30pm

Learn the basics of watercolour painting in this introductory program that is ideal for beginners or those who have basic skills. This is a six-week course. BYO materials.

Acrylic painting

Thursdays during school term,
12.30 to 2.30pm

Explore your creativity from sketching through to colour mixing and application. Learn to compose artwork and create individual pieces in your own style.



For more information on any of our classes, please call 9530 4397 or visit our website phoenixparknh.org.au

Grattan Gardens Community Centre

 40 Grattan Street, Prahran

Healthy mind and body

Thursdays 2pm

These free sessions incorporate laughter and cheer, a body workout and a wind down with relaxation and mindfulness. Join us in person at Grattan Gardens Community Centre at 2pm on the first and third Thursday of the month and stream the classes online via Zoom every other Thursday.

Community singing

Tuesdays 1.30pm to 2.30pm

Perfect for those who love singing and going on a guided musical adventure starting with a gentle vocal warm-up and progressing to group songs. You'll learn songs reflecting the seasons from the roaring 20s through to the sizzling 60s and 70s. All adults and skill levels welcome to join this free event.

Fit Club

Wednesdays 9.30am and 10.30am

Free exercise classes designed to enhance physical fitness, including strength, mobility, balance and cardiovascular fitness. Suitable for active people.

Art and wellbeing

Mondays 9.30am

In these free workshops, participants will practice and develop meditation techniques, learn to develop greater observation, explore ideas and learn lantern making.



For further information on events at Grattan Gardens, call 8290 1333 or email engaged@stonnington.vic.gov.au

Emerging stars shine on stage

A new crop of theatre stars has been unearthed in Stonnington thanks to a program developing young talent.

The Emerging Leaders Program, run by the Malvern Theatre Company, provided an intensive training week for performing arts prodigies earlier this year, developing their skills on-stage and in directing, tech crewing, prop designing and other vital roles.

The initiative was funded by Stonnington's Arts and Cultural Grants Program, with the aim of helping to identify the next generation of performers aged 16-24.

Malvern Theatre Company President Andrew Ferguson said that 15 of the 40 applicants were awarded scholarships and demonstrated head-turning potential.

"These are people who are serious about a role in performing arts. They expressed preferences as to the skills they'd like to develop. We had a broad range: directing, tech crewing, design, acting," Andrew said.

"They came with such skill, understanding and a willingness to work with us."



➤ Stonnington's budding theatre stars put their skills on show in a new summertime program. Pictures: Caleb Goldwaser.

The emerging leaders were tasked with staging winning short plays from a competition run by the theatre company in 2022 and put through their paces in various roles to learn about "the many aspects of live theatre".

"Often, these courses are just focused on acting or directing. Everybody needs to know about all aspects to improve whatever they have as their focus," Andrew said.

"They can say they've directed a play and been responsible for props. All the evidence will be up there for the public to see on our YouTube channel. That's important for these young people when they're applying for positions in the profession."

The theatre company is set to perform the classic play *The Glass Menagerie* from April 26 to May 11, its second show of the season.

➤ Find out more about Stonnington's Arts and Cultural Grants program: bit.ly/artandculturegrants

➔ "It affirms that community theatre, at a high level, can offer opportunities to aspiring professionals."



Malvern Theatre Company presents... *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams

- 📅 Friday 28 April to Saturday 11 May, matinee and evening shows.
- 🎫 Tickets \$27, including a complimentary program and coffee/tea during interval.
- ➡ For bookings and details of their upcoming productions visit malvernthatre.com.au or call 1300 131 552.
- 📍 Malvern Community Arts Centre, 29 Burke Road, Malvern East



Did you know? There's something for everyone at Harold Holt Swim Centre, which includes a 25-metre indoor pool, a 50-metre outdoor pool and a diving board. There's also swimming lessons for everyone, a gym, fitness classes, aqua aerobics, sauna, spa and plenty of fun in the sun for all ages!

Scan the QR code to find out more:



Stonnington spotlight: Peter a swimming school hit



Peter became a swim instructor at Stonnington's Harold Holt Swim Centre after semi-retiring from an illustrious marketing career. Now, he is adored by parents and kids alike, with one child naming a pet fish after him.

Peter speaks about how rewarding the job is, and why you should consider giving it a go.

Why become a swim instructor?
I have always loved swimming and I have been a Brighton Iceburger for 30 years. My children pointed out there was a shortage of swimming instructors, and this, coupled with the fact that the media reported issues with the number of adults who can't swim, convinced me to give it a go.

What do you enjoy most about swim teaching?
I enjoyed senior marketing roles over the years, but swim teaching has been the most rewarding thing I have done. You are playing a role in helping young children and adults grow in confidence and skills in swimming and water safety.

The team at Harold Holt have been great, notwithstanding that I'm old enough to be many of their fathers and even grandfathers!

And you are never too old to learn. The supervisors at the centre have been fantastic and certainly have had a positive impact on me enjoying my role.

What do you enjoy doing when not teaching?
My family, Robyn, Richard and Liz, and my three grandchildren, are the most important people in my life. My dog, Megz, is pretty special also. Golf has always been a passion of mine, I have been an active member of Yarra for 32 years. I still have my own marketing consultancy, which I enjoy doing.

What would you say to anyone thinking about becoming a swim teacher?
Do it. Swimming centres are crying out for new teachers, and you will find it very rewarding. Don't let age put you off. I'm 70 and my life experience has certainly helped me in my role.

And the experience I am having being a swimming teacher has made me feel years younger.

Stellar Stonnington gardeners display home masterpieces

For half a century, Tony Cardamone has been cultivating his glorious garden.

The Malvern East wonderland is enchanting and expansive, with its plants, trees and sculptures instilling a sense of tranquillity.

It's one of two Stonnington gardens selected by Open Gardens Victoria for public display on March 23–24.

Tony's garden was born from humble beginnings in the 1970s.

"I've been here 51 years. The only thing here was a big tree, and that's it. Everything else has been planted," Tony said.

By collecting, overplanting, "coping with the possums," and letting plant life develop over the decades, Tony hopes his backyard oasis shows others what they can achieve without arduous maintenance.

"I don't like trimming too much, I let things go. It's a bit of a wild-tamed garden," he said.

"By overplanting, you cut down on the weeds. And if something doesn't work, you plant something else.

"The temperature, on a hot day, can be a 3–4-degree difference. The garden's greenery makes you feel cooler."

Catherine Condell has also been selected for the Open Gardens Victoria exhibition.

Her Malvern garden boasts lilies, evergreen plants, sacred bamboo and the calming sound of running water.

And she hopes to show that low-maintenance gardens are achievable with a hint of creativity and persistence.


"A lot of houses are tending to see outdoor living, thinking they need a whole lot of living room furniture again outside," Catherine said.

"I don't have that here. I'm trying to keep it subtle so that plants and nature shine.

"I wanted an entertaining space but also a calming feel from inside the house. Looking out from any window, you can always see plants of some description."

Catherine and Tony will donate their share of proceeds from the non-profit exhibition to The Epilepsy Foundation and Fight Parkinson's Foundation.

Catherine will also display artwork from artist Meredith Stone that aims to create beauty from recycled clothing.



For more information:

Light and Shade open garden:
opengardensvictoria.org.au/Light-and-Shade-2024

Sculpture and Shade open garden:
opengardensvictoria.org.au/Sculpture-and-Shade-2024



Glorious gardens: Catherine and Tony's gardens are open to the public on 23–24 March.

Wings of Wonder wowing residents



Indigenous artist and Stonnington local Josh Deane is on a mission to offer residents an escape from city stress with his latest public artworks.

Josh, a Palawa man, was awarded a Council activation grant for *Wings of Wonder*, a work celebrating native birds displayed on pop-up cubes in Prahran Square and Rockley Gardens.

Open for viewing since February – when locals watched Josh paint – the pop-up immersive experience reminds us of the nature we cohabitate with in urban settings.

The array of birds on each artwork symbolises their own strong messages, Josh said.

"Melbourne keeps getting more concrete with bigger buildings, and all the birds displayed are local birds that live here with us.

"I want to create that moment where people understand we're sharing this space with them.

"It's important for us to respect humanity and all things that inhabit our city. Being Indigenous, it's important for me to coexist with nature."

Josh became immersed in art to escape family trauma. He treasures art's ability to transport both artist and observer into a realm of imagination.


"We're flooded with information all the time, and I feel art gives people an escape to connect either with themselves in a thought-provoking manner or with the artist," he said.

"Over the last two years, I've connected down here with other Indigenous mob and really been able to be proud of the Indigenous side of my family. I've also recognised the ability that art can have in connecting with people who have been through other traumas."

Josh's art activation will be on display until May.

Escape into wonder: Josh displays his artwork.

Stonnington's activation grants reflect Council's vision to be a vibrant, creative city.



Find out more:
bit.ly/artandculturegrants

From refugee to rugs: a success story

There's not much the mountains of Afghanistan and High Street Prahran have in common.

But both have been home to Najaf Mazari, who fled the war-torn country at the turn of the century in hope of a better life in Australia.

Initially planning to settle in Tasmania to continue his career as a shepherd – just like he was back in those Afghan mountains – Najaf ended up in Melbourne, without money and without English.

But there was one skill he did have – having learnt the art of rug-making through childhood, Najaf knew how to repair them.

So, he established himself on High Street, repairing rugs day and night by his shop window, attracting attention of passers-by.

Word eventually spread, and over the years the once-modest shop has grown to a handmade rug store renowned in the community – Najaf Rugs & Textiles.

The epitome of a refugee success story, Najaf has since embraced the ups and downs of life as a Stonnington businessman.

“A lot of tough times, but I personally love competition. If you do positive competition, it'll bring you up,” he said.

“I do a lot of repairing, and a lot of people don't have this skill. I have this knowledge from my childhood. My skill gave me the power to build the business.

“The shop, I keep more tradition, more tribal. A lot of businesses change to go modern. I was so lucky I didn't go fully modern, because modern is like Melbourne weather – so much changing.”

Najaf projects an easy-going, laid-back character who giggles, cracks jokes and keeps his kettle boiling, always offering tea to those who meet him.

But within lies a hard-working and competitive businessman, who values each struggle and success of plying his trade in Stonnington.


He points out he could've had an easier time setting up shop in Dandenong, home to a thriving Afghan community, but wanted to expose himself to different cultural perspectives and ideas.

“It's more multicultural here. I already have Afghan blood. If I live there in the community, I don't learn many things,” he said.


“I want to learn from others as well, the culture crossing. I tell Afghanis all the time, it's like you're still living in Afghanistan. Too close to each other, not getting different ideas. I have more friends (who aren't from Afghanistan).”

Becoming friends with Najaf is easy. Switching back to his affable tone, he said with a laugh: “Customers, if they come a second time, they'll 100 per cent be my friend.”



**Najaf Rugs & Textiles**
461 High Street, Prahran

Get to know Stonnington:
scan the QR code to learn about our shopping precincts



French baking says ‘Bonjour’

Stonnington residents planning to fly to France for the European summer can simply head down Chadstone Rd instead.

In Malvern East, you'll find The South Levain bakery, offering coffee, croissants and an array of pastry pleasures.

Head pâtissier Joanna, originally from Mauritius, learnt the art of French baking over a one-year stint in Paris.

With some help from Stonnington's business concierge desk, she was able to bring her breadmaking flair to Melbourne, opening The South Levain with her brother in December.

Joanna said the bakery was about more than just its bread – waking up at 2am each morning to turn dough into delight, her work is her way of life.

“I've always wanted to have my own business. Like everybody in hospitality, you just want to have your own thing, have your passions, using good ingredients,” Joanna said.

“When you work with bread, it's another feeling. You see the product come to life from flour, water and salt.

“It's like a story in the making. What I learnt in France is the science behind that. The bread, the way it behaves can depend on the weather.

“In 80 per cent of our dough product, we have sourdough starter. That's why we called it Levain (French for sourdough).”

The French influence isn't just in the name either, with one of the bakers – a good friend of Joanna's – coming all the way from France to help kickstart the business.

Joanna says she was pleasantly surprised by Stonnington's support in turning her baking dream to reality.

“Everyone complains about councils in Victoria. When I told them about my experience with Stonnington, they're like, ‘Really? You're lucky.’ It has been amazing with every department,” she said.

“For example, we needed a footpath to close to rebuild our roof. Normally, it takes two weeks to get the permit. I went there, I explained the situation and the person said, ‘Do your payment and you'll get the permit.’ I can't say anything bad about Stonnington.”

Stonnington Business Liaison Officer Gerard Smith, who worked closely with Joanna, encouraged other budding entrepreneurs to reach out when sowing the seeds for a new undertaking in the municipality.

“When Joanna reached out to Stonnington's business concierge service, we were pleased to be of assistance,” Gerard said.

“We understand that navigating Council requirements can be overwhelming when opening a new business, and our Business Concierge service aims to streamline and expedite that process by providing detailed advice on the specific requirements to open a business and connecting the customer with the relevant departments requiring approval.

“It was a pleasure assisting Joanna and her team, and we are thrilled that The South Levain is now a part of the Stonnington community.”

→ **“It was a pleasure assisting Joanna and her team, and we are thrilled that The South Levain is now a part of the Stonnington community.”**

**The South Levain**
81 Chadstone Road,
Malvern East
7am – 3.30pm, Tues – Sun

 Learn how to take your business to the next level with our free Business Concierge service:
stonnington.vic.gov.au/business

First phase of Toorak Park revamp complete

Toorak Park’s transformation is underway, with stage one of construction completed ahead of schedule earlier this year.

Finished works at the Armadale site include the enlarged and returned sports oval, lighting upgrade, new drainage irrigation and cricket wickets. The sports oval reopened in time for the summer sports season, one year after works commenced. In January, the first cricket match was played on the refurbished oval, surrounded by a new white picket fence.

“The cricket club – and the football clubs – love the white-picket fence,” Prahran Cricket Club Vice President Phil Williamson said. “It just changes the whole look and feel of the ground.”

The old grandstand has been demolished and a new slab poured. A tiered-seating pavilion is set to be completed later this year.

Other completed features include competition-graded lighting towers and low-spill, energy-efficient LED lights, which enable local sports clubs such as

Prahran Cricket Club, Old Xaverians, and Prahran Junior Football Club to hold night games.

Phil said the new pavilion would more people from all genders to participate in cricket and football.

“We’re now catering to men, women, and children, so it’s essential to have a facility that accommodates diversity.

“Cricket Victoria is already making inquiries about playing women’s Big Bash League at Toorak Park under lights, and we think the demand will grow.

“Everybody loves it and is excited about playing on the oval.”

Old Xaverians’ General Manager, James Woods, said away teams had been using portable changerooms, and the turf was being torn up by foot traffic.

“In winter, it gets used every day of the week,” he said. “The resurfacing and drainage system are top of the line



and the playing surface is in fantastic condition. The footy club is raring to go.”

Woods said 2024 presented a homecoming opportunity for Old Xavs, which returned to Toorak Park after their 100th-anniversary celebrations.

“From a club perspective it’s going to be very welcoming when the first game we play back, our supporters walk in and see a pristine oval with this fantastic new fence and can look over their shoulder to see how the construction is going.

“Residents can come down and see a high level of football in VAFA A grade at an amazing venue that’s only going to improve in the next 12 months.”

For construction updates visit: bit.ly/ToorakParkworks

Contact us

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- Stonnington Services and Visitor Hub
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Prahran Square, Prahran

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- stonnington.vic.gov.au
- Request a service online at stonnington.vic.gov.au/requestservice
- Report an issue on Snap Send Solve at snapsendsolve.com

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We speak your language

Mandarin	普通話	9280 0730
Cantonese	廣東話	9280 0731
Greek	Ελληνικά	9280 0732
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Polish	Polski	9280 0734
Russian	Русский	9280 0735
Indonesian	Bahasa Indonesia	9280 0737
Vietnamese	Tiếng Việt	9280 0748
All other languages		9280 0736

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EAST WARD

East Ward representing the communities of Glen Iris, Malvern and Malvern East

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stonnington.vic.gov.au/watch-council-live

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stonnington.vic.gov.au/PetsInThePark

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