BACKGROUND

HISTORY
INDIGENOUS VICTORIA

Australia's first inhabitants made the journey from Southeast Asia between 70,000 years and 40,000 years ago. For the Wurundjeri people who lived in the catchment of the Yarra River, where Melbourne is today, the land and the people were created in the Dreaming by the spirit Bunjil – 'the great one, old head-man, eagle hawk' – who continues to watch over all from Tharangalk-bek, the home of the spirits in the sky.

The Victorian Aboriginal peoples lived in some 38 different dialect groups that spoke 10 separate languages, some were matrilineal, others patrilineal. These groups were further divided into clans and sub-clans, each with its own complex system of customs and laws, and each claiming custodianship of a distinct area of land. Despite this, the British considered the continent to be *terra nullius* – a land belonging to no one.

The Wurundjeri were a tribe of the Woi wurrung, one of five distinct language groups belonging to southern Victoria's Kulin Nation. They often traded and celebrated among the towering red gums, tea trees and ferns of the river's edge with their coastal counterparts the Boon wurrung, as well as other Kulin clans from the north and west.

As the flood-prone rivers and creeks broke their banks in winter, bark shelters would be built north in the ranges. Possums were hunted for their meat and skinned to make calf-length cloaks. Worn with fur against skin, the smooth outer hide was rubbed with waterproofing fat and embellished with totemic designs: graphic chevrons and diamonds or representations of emus and kangaroos. During the summer, camps were made along the Yarra, the Maribyrnong and the Merri Creek. Food – game, grubs, seafood, native greens and roots – was plentiful. Wurundjeri men and women were compelled to marry out of the tribe, requiring complex forms of diplomacy. Ceremonies and bouts of ritual combat were frequent.

In 1835, when British entrepreneur John Batman arrived from Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), he travelled through 'beautiful land…rather sandy, but the sand black and rich, covered with kangaroo grass about ten inches high and as green as a field of wheat'. He noted stone dams for catching fish built across creeks, trees that bore the deep scars of bark harvesting and women bearing wooden water containers and woven bags holding stone tools. Indigenous people's profound spiritual relationship with the land and intimate knowledge of story, ceremony and season would be irrevocably damaged within a few shorts years.

As European settlement fanned out through Victoria, and the city of Melbourne transmogrified from pastoral outpost to a heaving, gold-flushed metropolis in scarcely 30 years, the cumulative effects of dispossession, alcohol and increasing acts of organised violence resulted in a shocking decline in Victoria's indigenous population. Estimates suggest that before the Europeans arrived, Victoria's Aboriginal population was between 60,000 and 100,000; by the late 1840s it had dropped to 15,000 and by 1860, scarcely 2000 Aboriginal people had survived.

TIMELINE

70,000-35,000 BC	1803	1834
The first humans colonise southeastern Australia; the people of the Kulin Nation live in the catchment of the Yarra River, and various other tribes, speaking 38 languages, are spread throughout Victoria.	Victoria's first European settlement is founded at Sorrento. It is an unmitigated disaster, with no available fresh water to be found; the settlers abandon the site after six months and set sail for Van Diemen's Land.	Portland pioneer Edward Henty, his family and a flock of sheep arrive from Van Diemen's Land, marking the first permanent European settlement in the Victoria.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE

Before European settlement, around 40 languages were spoken in the area now called Victoria. Indigenous Australians at the time could speak around five languages, with tribal diplomats speaking far more.

Within a few years of European settlement, Melbourne's Aboriginal population was decimated. The original inhabitants were dispossessed of their land; large numbers were killed or died from introduced diseases. People were also forced to live in government settlements, prohibiting their traditional way of life. As a result, the transmission of traditional Aboriginal culture, including language, from one generation to the next was profoundly disrupted. Today, no full speakers of any Victorian Aboriginal language remain, and none are used as the main means of communication in any community.

However, many Aboriginal people continue to carefully preserve elements of their linguistic heritage, and words from the traditional Woi wurrung language still echo through the modern city. Melbourne's riverside park Birrarung Marr means 'river of mists', and 'bunyip' is a mythical swamp-dwelling creature, a word commonly used in Australian English. In many communities there's rising interest in traditional languages and culture, and efforts are underway to preserve and maintain the knowledge that remains. The Victorian Aboriginal Corporation of Language (VACL; www.vaclang.org.au) and the Koori Heritage Trust (www.koorieheritagetrust.com) are important sources in the retention of indigenous language and culture, researching and documenting oral histories and vocabulary.

From the earliest days, the colonial authorities evicted Aboriginal people from their traditional homes. By the early 1860s, the Board for the Protection of Aborigines had begun to gather together surviving Aborigines in reserves run by Christian missionaries at Ebenezer, Framlingham, Lake Condah, Lake Tyers, Ramahyuck and Coranderrk. These reserves developed into self-sufficient farming communities and gave their residents a measure of 'independence' (along with twice-daily prayers and new boots at Christmas), but at the same time inflicted irrevocable damage.

Spurred on by the rise of eugenicist thinking and underpinned by economic concerns, the Aborigines Protection Act of 1886 stipulated that only 'full-blooded' Aborigines or 'half-castes' older than 34 years of age could remain in the reserves; others had to leave and 'assimilate into the community'. The act destroyed families and eventually the reserves themselves. By 1923, only Lake Tyers, with just over 200 residents, and Framlingham, with only a handful of people, remained.

By the early 1900s further legislation designed to segregate and 'protect' Aborigines was passed. It restricted their right to own property and seek employment. The Aboriginals' Ordinance of 1918 allowed the removal of children from Aboriginal mothers if it was suspected that the father was non-Aboriginal, which was often the case. Children were still removed from their families until as recently as the late 1960s. In early 2008, the newly elected Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, made a formal apology to the people known as the Stolen Generations, who suffered under the institutionalised racism of these nation-wide policies.

Despite this brutal and sad history, Aboriginal life in Victoria has endured. Around 25,000 people in Victoria have an indigenous heritage, including around 15,000 in Melbourne and 5000 in the Shepparton region. They continue to live, practice and renew their culture to this day.

MAPPING THE FUTURE

1803: it wasn't an auspicious start. With a missed mail ship communiqué and a notoriously supercilious British government calling the shots, Surveyor-General Charles Grimes' recommendations that the best place to found a southern French-foiling settlement would be by the

INDIGENOUS MELBOURNE

Here are three places where you can connect with Melbourne's indigenous culture:

Koori Heritage Trust Cultural Centre (www.koorie heritagetrust.com) Take a Walkin' Birrarung tour (p354) along the Yarra and explore the vibrant natural and cultural landscape beneath the modern city.

Bunjilaka, Melbourne Museum (p77) See and experience cultural heritage items interpreted by Aboriginal voices.

Royal Botanic Garden's Aboriginal Heritage Walks (p82) Share in the wealth of local plant lore and see the landscape through the eyes of an Aboriginal guide.

banks of the 'Freshwater River' (aka the Yarra) went unheeded. The alternative, Sorrento, was an unmitigated disaster from the get-go. As Lt David Collins pointed out to his superiors, you can't survive long without drinkable water. (For one extremely tenacious convict escapee, William Buckley, it wasn't all bad: he was on the run until John Batman turned up a few decades later.)

Australia's European history had begun with intermittent coastal exploration by Dutch seamen some centuries before. In 1770, Captain James Cook formally 'discovered' Australia and in 1788, the first colony was established at Sydney Cove in New South Wales (NSW). After the failed Sorrento colony it was 20-odd years before explorers made their way overland to Port Phillip, and another 10 before a settlement was founded on the south-west coast at Portland. Also in the early 1830s, NSW's surveyor-general, Major Thomas Mitchell, crossed the Murray River (then called the Hume) near Swan Hill and travelled southwest. He was delighted to find the rich volcanic plains of the Western District. His glowing reports of such fertile country included him dubbing the area 'Australia Felix' (fortunate Australia) and encouraged pastoralists to venture into Victoria with large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle.

BOLD AS BEARBRASS

'Modern' Melbourne's story also begins in the 1830s. Australian-born John Batman, an arriviste grazier from Van Diemen's Land, sailed into Port Phillip Bay in mid-1835 with an illegal contract of sale. (Britain's colonial claims of *terra nullis* relied on the fiction that the original inhabitants did not own the land on which they lived, and hence could not sell it.) He sought out some local chiefs and on a tributary of the Yarra – it's been speculated that it was the Merri Creek, in today's Northcote – found some 'fine-looking' men, with whom he exchanged blankets, scissors, mirrors and handkerchiefs for a half million acres of land surrounding Port Phillip.

Despite the fact that the Sydney Aborigines accompanying Batman couldn't speak a word of the local language and vice versa, Batman brokered the deal and signatures were gathered from the local chiefs (all suspiciously called Jika-Jika and with remarkably similar penmanship). He noted a low rocky falls several miles up the Yarra where the Queen St Bridge is today. Upstream fresh water made it a perfect place for, as Batman described it, 'a village'. Batman then returned to Tasmania to ramp up the Port Phillip Association.

It's at this point in the historical narrative that things get as turbid as the Yarra itself. Before he managed to return to the new settlement, which he called Bearbrass (along with 'Yarra', another cocksure misappropriation of the local dialect), John Pascoe Fawkner, a Launceston publican, got wind of the spectacular opportunity at hand. He promptly sent off a small contingent of settlers aboard the schooner *Enterprize* who upon arrival got to building huts and establishing a garden.

1835	1837	1838	1851	1854	1854–88
John Batman meets with a group of Aborigines and trades a casket of blankets, mirrors, scissors, handkerchiefs and other assorted bibelots for around 240,000 hectares of land.	The military surveyor Robert Hoddle draws up plans for the city of Melbourne, laying out a geometric grid of broad streets in a rectangular pattern on the northern side of the Yarra River.	*The Melbourne Advertiser*, Melbourne's first newspaper, rolls off the presses.	Victoria separates from the colony of NSW; gold is discovered in central Victoria and the world's richest gold rush is on.	Gold miners rebel over unfair licenses and other harsh conditions, raising the Southern Cross flag at the Eureka Stockade. Brutally suppressed by soldiers and police, their actions become a core part of Australia's nation-building mythology.	Railway from Flinders St to Port Melbourne opens (1854); water supply turned on (1857); telephone exchange opens (1888).

On Batman's return, there were words, and later furious bidding wars over allotments of land. Regarded in many varying ways by historians, Fawkner's place in history was sealed by the fact he outlived the syphilitic Batman by several decades. Whatever the interpersonal politics between the wannabe founders, the settlement grew quickly; around a year later, almost 200 brave souls (and some tens of thousands of sheep) had thrown their lot in with the two Johnnies.

New South Wales wasn't happy. Governor Bourke dispatched Captain William Lonsdale in 1836 and dispelled any notion of ownership by the Port Phillip Association. This was crown land; surveyors were sent for to draw up plans for a city. Robert Hoddle, Surveyor in Charge, arrived with the Governor in March 1837, and began to reign in both his unruly staff (they had absconded up river to get drunk or shoot kangaroos one too many times) and the Antipodean topography. For Hoddle, it was all about straight lines. Hoddle's grid, demarcated by the Yarra and what was once a 'hillock' where Southern Cross Station now lies, is Melbourne's defining feature. Land sales commenced almost immediately; surveying continued with little Romantic notion of exploration or discovery. It was, by all accounts, a real-estate feeding frenzy. The British were well served by their *terra nullis* concept; returns on investment were fabulous. The rouseabout 'Bearbrass' was upgraded to 'Melbourne', after the serving British Prime Minister. Various kings, queens and assorted contemporary bigwigs (including Governor Bourke himself) got the nod when naming streets. By 1840 the place, with 10,000 occasionally upstanding citizens, was looking decidedly like a city.

The earliest provincial towns were established along Victoria's coast, around the original settlement of Portland, to the southwest, and Port Albert to the southeast. Early inland towns rose up around self-sufficient communities of sheep stations, which at this stage were still the main source of Victoria's increasing fortunes.

GOLDEN YEARS

In 1840, a local landowner described the fledgling city as 'a goldfield without the gold'. Indeed, with a steady stream of immigrants and confidence-building prosperity, there had been growing calls for separation from convict-ridden, rowdy New South Wales. By the end of 1850, the newly minted colony of Victoria had got its go-it-alone wish. This quickly seemed like a cruel stroke of fate; gold was discovered near Bathurst in New South Wales in early 1851. Pastoral riches or not, there was every chance that without a viable labour force (many had already succumbed to the siren call CALIFORN-I-A!) the colony would wither and die.

Melbourne jewellers had for some time been doing a clandestine trade with shepherds who came to town with small, illegally got nuggets secreted in their kerchiefs. Wary of the consequences of a gold rush on civic order, but with few other options, the city's leading men declared that gold must indeed be found. A committee was formed, a reward was offered. Slim pickings were first discovered in the Pyrenees and Warrandyte, then a cluey Californian veteran looked north in Clunes. Just over a ridge, in what was to become Ballarat, was the proverbial end of the rainbow. It wasn't long before miners were hauling 60lbs of the magic mineral into Geelong at a time, and the rush was well and truly on.

The news spread around the world and brought hopefuls from Britain, Ireland, China, Germany, Italy, the US and the Caribbean. By August 1852, 15,000 new arrivals docked in Melbourne each month. Crews jumped ship and hotfooted it to the diggings, stranding ships at anchor. Chaos reigned. Even if only for a night or two, everyone needed a place to stay, and, when there was no room at the inn, stables were let for exorbitant amounts. Wives and children were often

THE EUREKA REBELLION

As the easily won gold began to run out, Victorian diggers despaired of every striking it rich, and the inequality between themselves and the privileged few who held the land that they worked stoked a fire of dissent.

Men joined together in teams and worked cold, wet, deep shafts. Every miner, whether or not gold was found, had to pay a licence of 30 shillings a month. The tax was collected by young, sometimes thuggish, policemen who had the power to chain to a tree those who wouldn't, or couldn't, pay until their case was heard.

In September 1854 Governor Hotham ordered that the hated licence hunts be carried out twice a week. A month later a miner was murdered near the Ballarat Hotel after an argument with the owner, James Bentley. When Bentley was found not guilty by a magistrate (who just happened to be his business associate), miners rioted and burned his hotel down. Though Bentley was retried and found guilty, the rioting miners were also jailed, which enraged the diggers.

The Ballarat Reform League was born and called for the abolition of licence fees, the introduction of miners' rights to vote and greater opportunity to purchase land.

On 29 November about 800 miners tossed their licences into a bonfire during a mass meeting and then built a stockade at Eureka, led by an Irishman called Peter Lalor, where they prepared to fight for their rights. A veteran of Italy's independence struggle, Raffaello Carboni, called on the crowd, 'irrespective of nationality, religion and colour', to salute the Southern Cross as the 'refuge of all the oppressed from all the countries on earth'.

On 3 December the government ordered the troopers to attack the stockade. There were only 150 diggers within the makeshift barricades and the fight lasted a short but devastating 20 minutes, leaving 25 miners and four troopers dead.

Though the rebellion was short-lived the miners won the sympathy and support of Victorians. The government deemed it wise to acquit the leaders of the charge of high treason. It's interesting to note that only four of the miners were Australian-born; the others hailed from Ireland, Britain, Italy, Corsica, Greece, Germany, Russia, Holland, France, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, the US, Canada and the West Indies.

The licence fee was abolished and replaced by a Miners' Right, which cost one pound a year. This gave them the right to search for gold; to fence in, cultivate and build a dwelling on a piece of land; and to vote for members of the Legislative Assembly. The rebel miner, Peter Lalor, became a member of parliament some years later. As the then Premier Steve Bracks was to remark at the stockade's 150th anniversary, 'Eureka was a catalyst for the rapid evolution of democratic government in this country and it remains a national symbol of the right of the people to have a say in how they are governed…This means Eureka is not just a story, it is a responsibility and a calling to ensure we stay true to the Stockade's democratic principles and build on its multicultural heritage – because Eureka was thoroughly multicultural.'

dumped in town while husbands continued on to the diggings. Governor LaTrobe despaired of his grand civic vision as shanties and eventually a complete tent village sprung up. Canvas Town, on the south side of the Yarra, housed over 8000 people. Catherine Spence, a journalist and social reformer, visited Melbourne at the height of the hysteria and primly observed 'this convulsion has unfixed everything. Religion is neglected, education despised…everyone is engrossed with the simple object of making money in a very short time.' Over 90% of Australia's £100 million gold haul in the 1850s was found in Victoria. The 20 million ounces found between 1851 and 1860 represented a third of the world's total. That said, relatively few 'diggers' struck it lucky. For a sense of what a gold-mining township was like, tourists visit Sovereign Hill (p249). Adults might find the gold-rush re-creation a bit corny, but kids love it.

The licensing system favoured large holdings, policing was harsh and scratching a living for many proved so difficult that dissent became as common as hope had been a few years before. For some, 1852 was indeed a golden year, but by 1854, simmering tensions exploded in Ballarat.

1856	1880	1901	1905-10	1923	1930
Stonemasons lead the fight for an eight-hour day (and the need to improve their 'social and moral condition'); by 1860, it became established practice across Victoria, a world first.	The International Exhibition is held at the Royal Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne's Carlton. Over a million visitors come to see the fruits of Empire.	Australia's collection of colonies become a nation. The Federation's first parliament is held at the Royal Exhibition Buildings.	The new Flinders St Station built (1905-10); Mebourne Cup declared a public holiday (1910)	Vegemite, a savoury yeast-based sandwich spread, and Australia's most enduring culinary peccadillo, is invented in Melbourne.	Phar Lap, Australia's greatest race horse, wins the Melbourne Cup and a place in the nation's folklore.

OUR NED

Victorian bushranger Ned Kelly (1855–80) became a national legend when he and his gang donned homemade armour in an attempt to deflect the bullets of several dozen members of the constabulary. Kelly's story has a Robin Hood–like quality, as well as the whiff of an Irish rebel song. His passionate, articulate letters, handed to hostages while he was robbing banks, paint a vivid picture of the harsh injustice of his time. These, as well as his ability to evade capture for so long, led to public outrage when he was sentenced to death and finally hanged at the Old Melbourne Gaol (p56) in 1880. The enduring popularity of the Kelly legend is evident in a mass of historical and fictional accounts that continue to be written to this day. His life has also inspired a long string of films, from the world's first feature film *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906), to two more recent versions, both called simply *Ned Kelly,* starring Mick Jagger (1970) and the late Heath Ledger (2003). Sidney Nolan's series of portraits featuring Kelly in his armour are some of Australia's most recognisable artworks.

Miners burnt their mining licenses and a bloody conflict broke out against British officials at the Eureka Stockade. Under the banner of the Southern Cross, a motley, proudly multinational crew called for democratic reform and universal manhood suffrage, an ultimately quixotic act, but one that changed the face of Australian politics for good. (For details, see the boxed text, p23.)

Brotherhood, sadly, had its limits. The 40,000 miners who arrived from southern China to try their luck on 'the new gold mountain' were often a target of individual violence and, later, systemic prejudice. Regardless, the Chinese community stayed and has continued to have a strong and enduring presence in the city of Melbourne and throughout regional Victoria.

BOOM & CRASH

Gold brought undreamt-of riches and a seemingly endless supply of labour to Melbourne. Melbourne became 'Marvellous Melbourne', one of the world's most beautiful Victorian-era cities, known for its elegance, as well as its extravagance. Grand expressions of its confidence include the University of Melbourne, Parliament House (p56), the State Library (p57) and the Victorian Mint (cnr William & LaTrobe Sts). Magnificent public parks and gardens were planted. By the 1880s, the city had become Australia's financial, industrial and cultural hub. The 'Paris of the Antipodes' claim was invoked; the city *was* flush with stylish arcades (as well as the odd flaneur, we're sure). The city spread eastwards and northwards over the surrounding flat grasslands, and southwards along Port Phillip. A public transport system of cable trams and railways spread into the growing suburbs.

Regional cities, especially those near the goldfields, such as Ballarat, Bendigo and Beechworth also reaped the rewards of sudden prosperity, leaving a legacy of magnificent Victorian architecture. 'Selection Acts' enabled many settlers to take up small farm lots (selections). Although a seemingly reformist, democratic move, these farms were often too small to forge a real living from and life in the bush proved tough. Grinding poverty and the heavy hand of the law led to some young men turning to bushranging (see the boxed text 'Our Ned' on above).

In 1880, and again in 1888, Melbourne hosted an International Exhibition, pulling well over a million visitors. The Royal Exhibition Buildings were constructed for this event; Melbourne's soaring paean to Empire and the industrial revolution is one of the few 19th-century exhibition spaces of its kind still standing. Sadly this flamboyant boast to the world was to be Marvellous Melbourne's swan song.

CAPITAL *Kristin Otto*

In 1901 a collection of British colonies – now the states – formed into the Commonwealth of Australia. Melbourne was the political compromise for a temporary capital, while an official site was selected and built upon. Nobody planned on it taking 26 years.

'For the first time in the world's history there will be a nation for a continent and a continent for a nation', said the man who became the first prime minister. In the beginning, he could carry the records of the entire government in his Gladstone bag. Edmund Barton had been one of the founders of the new constitution, writing some of it in the Grand Hotel (now the Windsor, see p183). In the early days, he and Alfred Deakin (the second PM) might boil the billy while sitting up late in an upper room of Parliament House. Barton would occasionally kip there. The third prime minister, Chris Watson, was the first labour leader anywhere to run a country.

Australia was described as 'the social laboratory of the world' and led the way in giving the vote to women, declaring a minimum wage, providing pensions, and having a high standard of living. This nation was born with the 20th century, and in that capital period, the main streams of the modern city appeared: electricity, film, radio, aeroplanes and cars. The first feature film in the world – *The Story of the Kelly Gang* – was made in Melbourne in 1906. Helena Rubinstein began the billion-dollar cosmetics industry in Melbourne when she opened her first salon in the early 1900s.

As a nation, Australia sacrificially blooded itself in WWI, fighting as part of the British Empire. Anzac Day (p14) remains an important commemoration of the fact. John Monash, an Australian reserve soldier with a German-Jewish background, became one of the great generals of that war. His domestic engineering expertise can be seen in the Great Domed Reading Room of the State Library of Victoria, and Morell Bridge near the Botanic Gardens. He managed the electrification of the state, and was a director of Luna Park (p87). A university and freeway are both named after him.

The most fascinating artists and writers worked for Keith Murdoch's *Herald* newspaper group (the Flinders St building is now apartments and restaurants). Murdoch later had a son, Rupert. Walter Murdoch (Keith's uncle), wrote in *The Australian Citizen* of 1912, 'The more civilized a nation is, the greater the number of links by which members of that nation are connected.' This was very true of Melbourne, with its rich layers, and some would say, remains true of how Melbourne works today.

Extract from Capital: Melbourne When it was the Capital City of Australia 1901-27 © *Kristin Otto, 2008. Used by permission of Text Publishing.*

In 1889, after years of unsustainable speculation, the property market collapsed and the decades that followed were marked by severe economic depression.

FEDERATION & EARLY 20TH CENTURY

With Federation, on 1 January 1901, Victoria became a state of the new nation of Australia. Melbourne was the country's capital and the seat of federal government until its eventual move to Canberra in 1927 (see the box text, above). Despite this symbolic honour, Melbourne's fortunes didn't really rally until after WWI, and by then its 'first city' status had been long lost to Sydney.

Australia's loyalties and most of its legal ties to Britain remained firm. When WWI broke out, large numbers of troops from throughout Victoria went to fight in the trenches of France, Gallipoli and the Middle East. The enormity of Melbourne's losses from the 'great war', as well as those from subsequent wars, can still be felt at the Shrine of Remembrance in the Domain (p83).

1956	1964	1967	1970	1983	1988
Melbourne hosts the summer Olympic Games, the first in which athletes mingle at the closing ceremony. Despite this mark of sporting bonhomie, the event is marked with political unrest, due to the Suez crisis and the Soviet invasion of Hungary.	The Beatles visit Melbourne, staying in the Southern Cross Hotel on Bourke St and create city-wide hysteria.	Prime Minister Harold Holt disappears while swimming at Cheviot Beach near Portsea; his body is never recovered.	Melbourne's Westgate Bridge collapses during construction, killing 35 workers.	The Ash Wednesday bushfires destroy over 2000 homes and kill 47 Victorians.	The Australian Tennis Open moves from Kooyong to the hard-court venues of Melbourne Park.

There was a renewed spirit of expansion and construction in Victoria in the 1920s, but this came to a grinding halt with the Great Depression, which hit Australia, and Melbourne in particular, extremely hard. In 1931 almost a third of breadwinners were unemployed and poverty was widespread. During the Depression the government implemented a number of major public works programs and workers were put on 'susso' – sustenance pay. Melbourne's Yarra Boulevard, St Kilda Rd and the Great Ocean Rd were all built by sustenance workers.

One shining light during these gloomy times was a plucky young chestnut gelding called Phar Lap, who won the hearts of the people with an unparalleled winning streak, including the famous Melbourne Cup in 1930. The horse died in mysterious circumstances in the USA two years later, and was mourned by a nation. More than 70 years later, Phar Lap remains one of the most popular exhibits in the Melbourne Museum.

When war broke out once again in 1939, Australian troops fought with the British in Europe and the Middle East. After the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the Japanese threat to Australia became very real. When Britain called for more Australian troops to fight in Europe, Prime Minister John Curtin refused; Australian soldiers were needed closer to home. With the outbreak of WWII, Melbourne became the hub of the nation's wartime efforts, and later the centre for US operations in the Pacific. It was boomtime again, though no time for celebration.

Ultimately, it was the US defeat of the Japanese in the Battle of the Coral Sea that saved Australia from invasion. This event was to mark the start of a profound shift from Australia's traditional allegiance to Britain towards the US.

MODERN MELBOURNE

Close to a million non-British immigrants arrived in Australia during the 20 years after the war; at first Jewish refugees from eastern and central Europe, then larger numbers from Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Lebanon. (With the demise of blatantly racist 'white Australia' immigration policies in the early 1970s, many migrants from Southeast Asia also sought refuge here.) Although the idea that Melbourne had ever been a purely Anglo-Celtic society is an anachronistic fantasy, the fact that a great proportion of migrants chose to live in Melbourne profoundly changed the city's cultural life. Melbourne's streets became vibrantly and irrevocably multicultural during this time and this diversity became an accepted, and treasured, way of life.

Melbourne's Victorian heritage was permanently altered by the postwar construction boom. The city hosted the Olympic Games in 1956 and hectares of historic buildings were bulldozed with abandon as the city prepared to impress visitors with its modernity. Construction continued apace in the 1960s under the Liberal premier Henry Bolte, culminating in the boom years of the 1980s.

REINVENTION

During the early 1970s a bourgeoning counterculture's experiments with radical theatre, drugs and rock 'n' roll rang out through the inner-city, particularly in the then predominantly Italian neighbourhood of Carlton. By the late 1970s, Melbourne's reputation as a conservative 'establishment' city was further challenged by the emergence of a frantically subversive art, music and fashion scene that launched bands like Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds onto the world stage. Like a hundred years before, land prices rose continuously throughout the '80s and the city boomed, with a thriving restaurant industry and luxury retail stores and enormous nightclubs

1988	2002	2006
John Cain's Labor government recommends the liberalising of liquor laws, heralding the era of the small bar.	Federation Square opens – only one year late to mark the centenary of Federation – amid controversy about its final design and cost ($440 million), but to public praise.	Melbourne hosts the Commonwealth Games.

springing up. Banks were queuing up to lend money to developers; even the worldwide stock market crash in 1987 didn't slow things down. Finally in 1990, the property market collapsed and Melbourne bore the full brunt of the recession.

Recovery was, this time, swift, and over the past decade the city of Melbourne has been transformed; its urban redevelopment has embraced the waters of the Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay as well as the city itself. The current state government has encouraged higher-density living and the city centre has an increasing residential population, including large numbers of international students. The vibrant mix of ethnicities in the community continues to grow, with many recent immigrants from African nations (Victoria has the country's largest Sudanese population) and the Middle East. Many immigrants, particularly those from East Africa, have also settled in regional communities throughout the state.

ARTS
VISUAL ARTS *Geraldine Barlow*

Melbourne has always been a city for artists. A dynamic and ever-changing network of artist-run spaces, experimental events and exhibitions gives the city an exciting production-house edge, and an excellent public infrastructure of major galleries and museums offers travellers visual culture of serious polish and scale.

Melbourne's first visual culture sprang from the traditions of the Kulin Nation tribes who lived from and belonged to the lands we now associate with the Yarra River, Port Phillip Bay, the Dandenong Ranges, the You Yangs and the country beyond. Both the National Gallery of Victoria Australia (NGVA; p50) and the Melbourne Museum (p77) exhibit works of art that predate European settlement, as well as work like that of William Barak and Tommy McCrae that captures the firsthand experience of indigenous life pre- and postcolonisation. The art and artefacts at the Melbourne Museum's Bunjilaka Aboriginal Centre (p77) provide a particularly vivid and intimate picture of Koorie (Victorian Aboriginal) culture.

The grand vistas painted by intrepid Europeans visiting the fledgling colony of Melbourne describe a very different Australian experience. These vast works offer early views of Australia as a colonial jewel. Bucolic pastures and abundant forests represent a land in the throes of colonisation and environmental upheaval, and offer intriguing catalogues of much that was on the precipice of being lost. Eugène von Guérard's works, such as *Mount Kosciusko* (1866, NGVA), seen from the Victorian border, capture the wondrous difference of the Australian landscape to the European eye and reward close study with the delight of their lavish attention to detail.

In the late 19th century a generation of Australian-born artists emerged who are fondly remembered for defining a truly Australian vision of the landscape and cities of the day. The artists of the Heidelberg school took the train down the newly laid railway lines to the

bush at Melbourne's fringe and camped together, sketching and working rapidly in oils to capture the bright light and dry elegance of the Australian bush. They created a heroic national iconography ranging from the shearing of sheep to visions of a wide brown land popularly celebrated as offering a chance to all. The most widely reproduced works of Heidelberg school artists such as Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton are majestic in scale and build grand narratives from the contemporary experience of Australians; other smaller works are surprisingly intimate and impressionistically rendered.

Lost (1886, NGVA) by Frederick McCubbin portrays a young girl lost in the bush. The sun shines brightly on the yellowed summer grass, while the repeated vertical staccato of

MUMA

If you have a particular interest in contemporary Australian art, then a trek out to Monash University Museum of Modern Art (MUMA; ☎ 9905 4217; www .monash.edu.au/muma; ground fl, Bldg 55, Monash University, Wellington Rd, Clayton; ☷ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 2-5pm Sat) is worth the effort. It has an inspired collection and promotes Australian work through regularly changing exhibitions and public programs known for their curatorial nous.

It's at least a half-hour journey to get there from the city. Catch a train to Huntingdale Station on the Dandenong, Cranbourne or Pakenham lines. From Huntingdale station, follow the signs to bus stop 630, which will take you to the door.

the gum trees divides the scene, creating a claustrophobic sense through infinite repetition. While portraying an archetypal anxiety, the loss of a child to the land was a particularly poignant concern at the turn of the century. Australians love the landscape, identify with it and take pride in its complexity — its harshness and mysteriousness, its abundance and distinctiveness — and yet it makes us uneasy also; we feel disquiet in the very land that defines us. The disjunction of new peoples arriving in a very old land, and the experience of loss in the landscape, is an abiding anxiety explored in works of art and literature such as the iconic novel and film *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (p34).

Visitors to Melbourne can experience some of the landscapes painted by the artists of the Heidelberg school by catching the train to Heidelberg station and walking across the Yarra River to the rambling gardens of the Heide Museum of Modern Art (below). Heide, former home of the Reeds, played a pivotal role in the development of Australian modernism in the early and mid-20th century. Sidney Nolan's epic series celebrating the bushranger Ned Kelly (see p24) is said to have been painted at the Reed's dining-room table. The early Australian modernism forged at Heide was expressively painted and passionately connected to the emotional, social and intellectual worlds of the artists.

At the same time as the Heide artists were forging newly modern national iconographies, the lyrical watercolours of Aboriginal artist Albert Namatjira were coming to public attention. Namatjira was an innovator who painted his country in vivid jewel-like shades, a radical shift from the traditional ochres of the Arrernte people of central Australia. While he was mission-raised, Namatjira regularly went walkabout, and his highly detailed Western-style paintings describe the landscape he loved: white ghost gums and ochre rock outcrops with shadows of plum and mauve. Animated by myriad possibilities of light, Namatjira's works created an audience for Aboriginal art and for an Aboriginal perspective. More recently, artists such as Emily Kame Kngwarreye and Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri have created extraordinary bodies of work that establish a bridge between their traditional obligations to culture and country and the development of their own individual artistic language. Likewise, artists of European heritage such as Fred Williams and John Olsen have drawn upon the Australian landscape to create poetic works that newly imagine both representational space and our sense of place.

Contemporary Australian artists are strongly concerned with an Australian sense of place, as well as being actively engaged in the more universal concerns of our contemporary, globalised world. The Melbourne art scene is an energetic and intellectually rigorous one, with a flourishing community of artists, experimental exhibition spaces and events. A good place to tap into this energy is Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces (p73), where you can see exhibitions by emerging artists and get the low-down on the newest experimental spaces. The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (p62) generates cutting-edge programs of exhibitions as well as developing large-scale projects with Australian and international artists. The Australian Centre for the Moving Image (p51) exhibits film and multimedia works by contemporary artists in thematic exhibitions that draw upon a rich diversity of moving-image formats, and the Centre for Contemporary Photography (p72) has a strong photo- and film-based program. Melbourne has an active network of university art museums and galleries, among which the Ian Potter Museum at the University of Melbourne (p77) and Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA; p27) offer dynamic exhibition

HEIDE

Around 10 to 20 minutes drive from Fitzroy, the **Heide Museum of Modern Art** (☎ 9850 1500; www.heide.com.au; 7 Templestowe Rd, Bulleen; adult/child $12/free; ⏱ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, noon-5pm Sat& Sun; 🚌 200) is nestled in sprawling grounds by the Yarra. This area is now deeply suburban, but was once the rural retreat of John and Sunday Reed. The couple nurtured an artistic community here that included Albert Tucker, Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Joy Hester, John Perceval and Danila Vassilieff. Heide has an impressive collection of modern and contemporary Australian art housed in three galleries and scattered throughout the tranquil gardens. Each gallery is unique: Heide I is the heritage-listed Victorian farmhouse that was the Reed's first home; Heide II, a Modernist beauty designed by David McGlashan in the 1960s, was their second; while Heide III is a purpose-built exhibition space. The Reed's kitchen garden is still lovingly tended and the surrounding grounds are landscaped with a combination of European and native trees.

If you are driving, Heide is signposted off the Eastern Fwy; otherwise, catch bus 200 from outside Melbourne Central on Lonsdale St, or the Hurstbridge-line train to Heidelberg Station, then bus 291.

WALL TO WALL ART

A stunning black-and-white graphic of a homeless person holding a card: 'Keep your coins, I want change'. A perpetual shadow of a signpost painted on the footpath. A beautiful photo-real representation of 'Animal' – the grumpy Melbourne icon who sits on city street corners drumming on crates and upturned buckets. All arresting examples of Melbourne street art: public nuisance or stimulating element of Melbourne's urban fabric?

Like it or loathe it, Melbourne's graffiti is a beacon for travellers. You'll see many visitors snapping themselves in front of emblazoned alley walls. 'Caledonian Lane attracts more visiting Brazilians, Londoners and New Yorkers than anywhere else in the city,' says Tai Snaith, a local curator and artist. 'Such areas also support thriving and uniquely Melbourne businesses such as St Jerome's (p150), an artistic hide-out.

It's not just the out-of-towners who are flocking to see the city's street art. Wedding parties seeking street cred are recording their special day against the gritty backdrop of Hosier Lane. The National Gallery of Australia is considering ways of incorporating stencil art into its collection of Australian prints. Street art is discussed in art and culture journals, and a world-renowned website on graffiti, www.stencilrevolution.com, comes out of Melbourne.

It wasn't always so universally appreciated. In the lead up to the 2006 Commonwealth Games, the city council introduced a zero tolerance policy in an attempt to 'clean up' the streets. It encouraged the public to report broken streetlights in an attempt to counter graffiti. Around the same time there were many condemning the publication of **Stencil Graffiti Capital: Melbourne** (www.stencilgraffiticapital.com) – a 150-page book documenting Melbourne's stencil-art scene. There were also pressure groups rallying against private and public property being vandalised.

'Street art is a way of artists countering advertising and claiming some of that visual space, which is often subliminally influencing our political ideals,' says Tai. 'The act of graffitiing itself is a political action motivated by aesthetically minded people to make a statement, large or small.'

Does the council's increasing acceptance and its move to allow graffiti in allocated areas mean that the work loses its street credibility and political clout? 'You can see superb sponsored or commissioned work, of course,' says Tai, 'but ultimately work created without pay and often illegally comes from a wilder place.'

It's an exciting time to stroll through Hosier Lane (Map pp52–3; F4), Caledonian Lane (Map pp52–3; E3) and Centre Way (Map pp52–3; E4) in the city, and Canada Lane (Map pp78–9; E7) in Carlton. If you're interested in the artists themselves, *Rash,* a locally produced documentary explores the work and worldview of several key players. It is available on DVD (www.rashfilm.com).

programs of work by contemporary artists, as well as reflecting upon the history of Australian art. Regional galleries throughout Victoria also are very strong.

Melbourne takes pride in being a city for ideas, a city for contemporary art. Only a small slice of the mass of work being produced will be evident at any one time, but between the commercial, public and artist-run galleries there is much to discover. The city's strength as a centre for architecture and spatial investigation is reflected in the work of contemporary artists such as Stephen Bram, Callum Morton and Natasha Johns-Messenger. The practice of the making of art and the reflective ricochet between the real and the represented are explored by Melbourne artists Ricky Swallow, Nick Mangan, Christian Capurro, Nadine Christensen and Chris Bond.

The impact of technology upon our lives is a subject of much interest to artists such as Stephen Honegger, Anthony Hunt and Patricia Piccinini, artists who are empowered by the digital world as well as being thoughtfully engaged with the ethical dilemmas it generates. The politics of memory and the borders of empathy are explored by artists such as Susan Norrie, Gordon Bennett, Tom Nicholson and Louisa Bufardeci. Melbourne is also a centre for cross-cultural investigation, with artists such as Kate Beynon, Sangeeta Sandrasegar, Rafat Ishak and Constanz Zikos drawing upon a diversity of cultural perspectives to find their own expressive language.

For a comprehensive guide to the city's galleries get a copy of *Art Almanac* from bookshops and newsagents. See also the White Cube Fever walking tour (p100).

LITERATURE

Has there been a great Melbourne novel? Melbourne has certainly provided a variety of memorable backdrops in literary works from the cult crime fiction of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1886; Fergus Hume) to the Brunswick backstreets of Chritos Tsoklas' *Loaded* and Steve Carrol's ongoing exploration of cultural shift in outer suburbia. But there's nothing that quite puts the city front and centre.

VICTORIA IN PRINT

Fiction

The Mystery of a Hansom Cab (1886; Fergus Hume) Marvellous Melbourne–era crime fiction.

The Getting of Wisdom (1910; Henry Handel Richardson) Loss-of-innocence story set in a Melbourne girl's school; its simple, direct style ushers in the 20th century.

Power Without Glory (1950; Frank Hardy) Barely fictionalised story of crime and dirty politics in WWI 'Carringbush', a suburb closely resembling Collingwood.

Monkey Grip (1977; Helen Garner) Tortured love and bohemian life in the inner-city Melbourne of the '70s.

Loaded (1995; Christos Tsiolkas) Grunge-era first novel, with sex, drugs and bouzouki. Became the film *Head On,* with Alex Dimitriades as Ari.

True History of the Kelly Gang (2002; Peter Carey) This fictional, epistolary account of the life of Victoria's most famous bushranger is told in the vernacular style that Carey is known for.

Of a Boy (2000; Sonya Hartnett) This haunting invocation of troubled childhood is one of many books worth seeking out by this prolific Melbourne writer, who also writes for young adults.

Three Dollars (1998; Elliot Perlman) A multi-award winning book that's uncompromising in its chronicle of middle-class angst, downsizing and globalisation. It was made into a film directed by Robert Connolly.

Dead Europe (2005; Christos Tsiolkas) Tackling the big themes, *Dead Europe*'s central character is a Greek-Australian photographer who leads us through questions of history, belonging and poverty.

Players (2005; Tony Wilson) Satirical romp that skewers sporting celebrity and its media handmaidens.

The Time We Have Taken (2007; Steven Carroll) Luminous exploration of the radical changes of the '70s and meditation on the rhythms of suburban life.

Sucked In (2007; Shane Maloney) The sixth of the Murray Whelan novels, which follow his journey through the ranks of a well-known but entirely fictional Australian political party and takes place firmly in Melbourne, a city he describes as 'on the way to nowhere'.

The Spare Room (2008; Helen Garner) The long-awaited return to fiction from one of Melbourne's best writers. A beautifully written but blunt, challenging story of friendship and how we choose to die, set in the familiar streets of inner Melbourne.

Memoir

In My Skin (2006; Kate Holden) A young woman's story of heroin addiction and prostitution on the streets of St Kilda.

Unpolished Gem (2006; Alice Pung) A vivid rendering of immigrant life in the western suburbs and the attendant anxieties of living between two cultures.

Shadowboxing (2006; Tony Birch) Linked stories about a working-class childhood in '60s Fitzroy.

Non-Fiction

Bearbrass (1995; Robyn Annear) Melbourne's first decades are brought vividly to life.

Australian Gothic: A Life of Albert Tucker (2002; Janine Burke) Mid-century Melbourne through the eyes of its artistic elite.

The Birth of Melbourne (2002; Tim Flannery) Includes the voices of a mixed bag of pioneers and travellers, such as John Batman, Mathew Flinders, Marcus Clark and Rudyard Kipling.

A City Lost and Found: Whelan the Wrecker's Melbourne (2005; Robyn Annear) The city's history is revealed in this fascinating story of the clash of progress and preservation.

Yarra: A Diverting History of Melbourne's Murky River (2005; Kristin Otto) An erudite but rollicking history of Melbourne's main waterway, that tells as much about the city that grew up around it as the river itself.

Children's & Young Adult Fiction

Winter (2000), *The Head Book* (2001), *The Boy You Brought Home (2002)* (John Marsden) Marsden taught generations of Victorian teenagers and is one of the world's most popular young adult writers. His vision can be bleak but his audience adore him.

How to Make a Bird (2003; Martine Murray) A country teenager's odyssey through St Kilda and Brunswick in search of the truth about her troubled family and herself.

Henrietta (2004; Martine Murray) Murray's illustrated book for younger reader's features the delightfully impish and very modern Melbourne miss, Henrietta.

Jethro Byrde, Fairy Child (2004; Bob Graham) This gentle, beautifully illustrated work tells the story of little girl's meeting with a family of fairy travellers. It captures both the rhythms of everyday inner-city life, plus the temper of the times; Graham wrote it as a response to the Howard government's treatment of refugees.

Melbourne certainly nourishes writers with its tempestuous weather, richly complex range of cultures and identities as well as its moody architecture, but at the same time it can relegate words and stories to the wings, while sport and social life take centre stage. That said, the city is far from philistine. Publishing companies Black Inc, Text and Penguin are based here and the city produces a host of commercial and 'little' magazines that highlight literature and intellectual life in general. These include the *Australian Book Review*, *Meanjin*, Black Inc's series of 'best' anthologies and *Quarterly Essays*, and the short-fiction collection *Sleepers Almanac*.

There is also a small but vigorous poetry scene. During the 1960s, a group called the 'Melbourne poets' created work that was 'deliberately prosaic… finding their poetry in suburbs and ordinary days'. Chris Wallace-Crabbe is the best known of these and continues to write, and to teach new generations of poets. Dorothy Porter, who is well known for her verse novels, including the *The Monkey's Mask* (1994), which was made into a feature film, is also based in Melbourne.

The **Melbourne Writers' Festival** (www.mwf.com.au), held at Fed Square, draws crowds each August; its readings and discussions featuring local and international writers often sell out. The **State Library of Victoria** (www.slv.vic.gov.au) also holds literary events throughout the year (including awarding the lucrative Victorian Premier's Literary Awards), as do bookstores such as Readings (see p116) and **Reader's Feast** (☎ 9662 4699; www.readersfeast.com.au; cnr Bourke & Swanston Sts). The publishers of **Sleepers Almanac** (www.sleeperspublishing.com) also host 'salons' which feature Australian writers and encourage bookish types to get together and talk literature (see their website for details). The city also boasts some of Australia's most prestigious creative writing courses at RMIT University and the University of Melbourne.

Despite a largely urban, multicultural population, it's still up to a novel with a historical (even mythological) bush setting to claim the 'great' title. Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang,* set in the central Victorian haunts of Australia's most famous bushranger, took both the Booker and Commonwealth Writers' Prize when it was published in 2002.

For a list of Melbourne's best bookstores, see p107.

MUSIC

Melbourne's cultural image has involved music since producing two of the most enduringly fascinating talents of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Dame Nellie Melba, opera diva, was an international star who lived overseas for many years, but retained a sentimental attachment to her home town. Percy Grainger, whose innovative compositions and performances prefigured many forms of 20th-century music, was born and brought up in Melbourne. Grainger's eccentric genius extended beyond music to the design of clothing; he was also known for his transgressive sex life. A museum is dedicated to his work at the University of Melbourne – at the time of writing it was closed for restoration until early 2010.

More recently, Melbourne's live music scene exploded in the mid-60s with a band called the Loved Ones, who broke the imitative mould of American '50s rock and roll. The early 1970s saw groups like AC/DC, Skyhooks and Daddy Cool capture the experience of ordinary Melbourne life in their lyrics for the first time. By the end of that decade punk descended; Melbourne's moody weather and grimy backstreets had a natural synergy with the genre. In her book *In The*

George: St Kilda Life and Times, author Gillian Upton describes the scene that concentrated around the Crystal or Seaview Ballroom (now the George Hotel):

> Bands could be roughly divided into two camps. One stream of bands, such as La Femme and Chosen Few, grew from skinhead roots…in opposition were the 'art-school' middle-class punks personified by the Ballroom's anointed sons, Nick Cave and the Boys Next Door. The enemy was the moribund culture perceived outside the walls…the so-called Carlton bands playing their American-influenced music across town.

Bands that grew out of this scene included the Sports, the Models, the Johnnys, X, Sacred Cowboys, the Wreckery, Cosmic Psychos, Hunters & Collectors and Paul Kelly. The intervening years have been fast and furious, with too much talent to mention here.

Melbourne is still seen as the live-music capital of Australia, and draws musicians here from around the country, despite an increasing dearth of inner-city venues for them to play in. Current darlings include the Drones, Plug-in City and the Midnight Juggernauts. Although it doesn't have the pulling power of cities like New York or London, for a city so very far away, Melbourne is blessed with a large number of touring acts each year. Pickings are particularly rich during summer. The Drinking & Nightlife chapter (p146) lists live-music venues and gig guides.

Melbourne also has a healthy club and dance music scene. The mega-clubs of the '80s gave way to a more fluid dance party culture revolving around techno and other electronic styles. The 'doof' was born; these festivals, often held in bushland settings over several days, peaked in the late '90s, though still have their devotees. Legendary laneway club Honkytonks took its musical responsibility very seriously and nurtured local DJ talent (and a generation of club kids) through the early years of this decade. Since its demise, venues such as Miss Libertine (p151), Roxanne Parlour (p151) and Brown Alley (p150) have filled the gap. Local electronic artists include Cut Copy, the Avalanches and DJ Digital Primate who works with vocalists such as B-Girls Fabulous. See Drinking & Nightlife (p146) for venues or check out the Melbourne section of national dance website In the Mix (www.inthemix.com.au).

Australian hip-hop is well represented in Melbourne. Listen up for locals True Live and DJ Peril. Hip-hop has also proven enormously popular with young Aboriginal and Islander musicians: the CD *All You Mob* is an excellent compilation of indigenous artists. Other modern indigenous musicians create unique styles by incorporating traditional instruments into modern rock and folk formats. Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter are two well-known and widely respected indigenous musicians based in Melbourne.

Jazz also has a dedicated audience. The heart of the scene is Bennetts Lane (p151), an archetypal up-an-alley jazz club if ever there was one. Its Sunday night A-Live Jazz Series organised by the Melbourne Jazz Cooperative (www.jazzvic.org) features locals, and the venue draws a crowd that knows its hard bop from its bebop. The city is known for its improvisational élan, as well as musicians who cross genres into world and experimental electronic music. Some well-respected Melbourne names include Paul Grabowsky, Paul Williamson, Ian Chaplin, Doug de Vries, Tony Gould, Phillip Rex, Barney McAll, Jex Saarelaht, Sam Keevers, Andrea Keller, Scott Tinkler and Niko Schäuble. Both the Newmarket Music (www.newmarketmusic.com.au) and Jazzhead (www.jazzhead.com) labels were founded in Melbourne. Both are worth checking out for their recordings of local artists.

Ninety years after Nellie Melba was made a dame, classical still has a strong presence in Melbourne. The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, based at Hamer Hall, performs works drawn from across the classical spectrum from the popular to challenging contem-

top picks

SONGS OF THE CITY (AND BEYOND)

- **Lygon Street Limbo** Skyhooks
- **Beautiful People** Australian Crawl
- **From St Kilda to Kings Cross** Paul Kelly
- **Leaps and Bounds** Paul Kelly
- **(Boys) What Did The Detectives Say?** The Sports
- **Under the Sun** Hunters & Collectors
- **Throw Your Arms Around Me** Hunters & Collectors
- **Underneath the Clocks** Weddings Parties Anything
- **Four Seasons in One Day** Crowded House
- **Footy** Spiderbait
- **Melbourne** The Whitlams
- **Charcoal Lane** Archie Roach
- **Maroondah Reservoir** Augie March

MUSIC FESTIVALS

Harvest Festival (9773 0722) Alternative country and roots music festival held at the Mornington Peninsula's Red Hill in mid-January; includes a film festival and features regional produce.

Big Day Out (www.bigdayout.com) Huge line-up of local and international acts, which tours the country. Melbourne's BDO, held at the end of January, attracts about 40,000 people.

Port Fairy Folk Festival (www.portfairyfolkfestival.com) This far-west-coast festival has been hosting bluegrass, Celtic, blues and acoustic bands for over 30 years; it's a good one for families. It's held in early March over the Labour Day long weekend.

Apollo Bay Music Festival (www.apollobaymusicfestival.com) This community music festival on the west coast has been hosting local and international musos for around 15 years. It's held in March or April.

Brunswick Music Festival (www.brunswickmusicfestival.com.au) Held annually in March/April. Attracts around 50,000 people, with stalls and stages featuring world-music acts.

Wangaratta Jazz (www.wangaratta-jazz.org.au) Over 350 of the world's finest jazz and blues acts take over Wangaratta for a long weekend at the end of October/start of November.

Queenscliff Music Festival (www.queenscliffmusicfestival.com.au) Seaside festival, on the last weekend in November, fostering all-Australian acts from all genres.

Meredith Music Festival (www.mmf.com.au) Legendary music festival that's been running annually for almost two decades; it's held over a few days in mid-December in a natural amphitheatre near the small country town of Meredith. Attracts international big-name indie acts.

Falls Festival (www.fallsfestival.com) Ten thousand or so revellers head to a 120-hectare property in Lorne on New Year's Eve to hear 50 acts over two days; featuring headliners such as the Go! Team or Black Rebel Motorcycle Club.

Melbourne Jazz (www.jazzvic.org) International stars take it out of the clubs and play Crown and the Arts Centre.

porary composition. The Melbourne International Festival has a vibrant music program that features local and international acts, as well as talks and workshops. The independent classical radio station 3MBS (103.5 FM) actively supports local musicians, recording and broadcasting a wide range of concerts and recitals. The 3MBS arts diary (www.3mbs.org.au/arts.html) is an invaluable resource for what's going on. The *Age* newspaper also lists classical performances in its Friday and Saturday editions. See the Arts section (p163) for more details.

CINEMA

Although Sydney is still considered the centre of the Australian film industry, new production facilities at Docklands, a slightly lower cost of living and generous government subsidies has seen Melbourne wield its movie-making muscle. And Melbourne looks good on the big screen. Filmmakers tend to eschew the stately and urbane and highlight the city's complexity, from the winsomely suburban to the melancholic, grimy and gritty.

Film culture is nurtured in Victoria through local funding projects, education and exhibition. Film making, screenwriting, drama and animation are taught in Melbourne's major universities. Funding for features, documentaries, shorts, digital media and game content is provided by Film Victoria (www.film.vic.gov.au), which also provides mentoring schemes. Federation Square has consolidated a big part of Melbourne's screen culture, housing the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (p51) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS).

The prominence of film in Melbourne is evident in the number of film festivals the city hosts. Apart from the main Melbourne International Film Festival (www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au), there's everything from the Melbourne Underground Film Festival (www.muff.com.au) to shorts at the St Kilda Film Festival (www.stkildafilmfestival.com.au) and the Sydney-import Tropfest (www.tropfest.com.au) at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl (p147). Other film-festival genres include foreign-made, seniors, hip-hop, queer and documentary.

Film-focused publications include *Inside Film*, devoted to the creation of screen content and available at newsagents; and *Real Time,* available free from cafés and cinemas. For movie-theatre listings see p162. See p34 for a glimpse of Melbourne's celluloid journey.

MELBOURNE ON SCREEN

The Story of the Kelly Gang (1906) Although only fragments remain of its original 70 minutes, what has survived of the world's first feature film is stylistically sophisticated. Shot in a St Kilda pharmacy and the upper Yarra suburbs of Heidelberg and Eltham, and featuring the actual hand-wrought armour of one of the Kelly gang.

On the Beach (1957) Duck-and-cover-era drama with Melburnians facing the end of the world with an unsettling mix of partying and passivity. Sadly, not even Gregory Peck can save us. A train ride to Frankston will never be the same without Ava Gardner waiting at the other end with a horse and cart.

Picnic at Hanging Rock (1975) Elliptical, sensual Australian New Wave classic; the rock of the title rises from the plains just beyond Melbourne's outer suburban fringe.

Pure Shit (1976) Called 'the most evil film ever made' by the *Herald* newspaper, this ultra lo-fi look at 24 hours in the life of four junkies has great shots of a still-shambolic inner-city as well as hilarious cameos from author Helen Garner, comedians Greg (HG Nelson) Pickhaver and Max Gillies, as well as producer Bob Weiss.

Mad Max (1979) Postapocalypse take two: the gangs take over the highways, and the wide-screen anamorphic lens takes in Spotswood, Lara, Williamstown, a stunning car-park underneath Melbourne Uni and the dunes of nearby Fairhaven.

Malcolm (1986) Set in the then working class suburbs of Flemington and Preston, a quintessential Melbourne-eccentric story about a tram-obsessive turned petty crim. One of the first in a long line of suburban quirk flicks.

Dogs in Space (1986) Shot in the actual house in Richmond where director Richard Lowenstein lived at the end of the '70s. The late Michael Hutchence is joined by a huge local ensemble cast in a swirling, chaotic chronicle of the city's punk past.

The Big Steal (1990) Ben Mendelsohn and Claudia Karvan charm in this home-grown teen movie with cars, scams and the good citizens of the western suburbs providing a comic backdrop.

Death in Brunswick (1991) Culture-clash high farce with a witless outsider played by Sam Neill, set in a Greek restaurant in prehipster Brunswick. Nice supporting role by satirist John Clarke.

Romper Stomper (1992) A much younger Russel Crowe plays a violent, nazi skinhead. Set in the inner city suburb of Footscray, this film has a less-than-subtle depiction of Vietnamese-Australians.

Love and Other Catastrophes (1996) Slight but box-office pleasing campus rom-com. Shows the University of Melbourne in all its sandstone-league glory.

Chopper (2000) Based on the life of not-so-petty but eternally charismatic criminal Mark Read. Eric Bana's portrayal of Collingwood's most infamous resident proved career-making.

The Bank (2001) Bank-bashing paranoid thriller with a rare appearance from corporate Melbourne *and* a Yarra water taxi.

Harvie Crumpet (2003) Oscar-winning claymation short made in Melbourne by local film school grad Adam Elliot.

Ned Kelly (2003) Uneven but thoughtful depiction of the mythological Ned, adapted from the novel *Our Sunshine*. The late Heath Ledger stars and manages to charm through the period beard. Unlike Tony Richardson's troubled Jagger vehicle, this one was shot in historically accurate locations.

Salaam Namaste (2005) Twisted tale of professional Indians abroad was the first Bollywood film shot entirely in Australia. Features loads of shiny city locales and some stunning shots of the Great Ocean Rd (and not forgetting the smash-hit song *My Dil Goes Mmm…*).

Kenny (2006) This mockumentary set in the western suburbs takes toilet humour to its logical conclusion and is a feature-length tribute to the vernacular flair of tradesmen.

Where the Wild Things Are (2006) Spike Jonze came to town and shot this Maurice Sendak adaptation *his* way in the wet and wild forests of Gembrook. At time of writing, it's not certain it will survive the test audience run-around.

TELEVISION

There's an enduring affection for police drama and comedy shows in Australia. The barely-ficionalised Melbourne organised crime series *Underbelly* didn't make it to air in the city in which it was set, not because of its tits-and-arse overload, but because it was ruled that its plot lines could prejudice concurrent court proceedings. *Canal Road*, a drama set in a community legal and medical practice is the latest made-in-Melbourne series to be seen at time of writing. It was shot at the Yarra-side warehouse Banana Alley and around Docklands. Beloved local

LOVE THY NEIGHBOURS *Alan Fletcher*

For many travellers to Australia, particularly those of British origin, Melbourne is a 'must-see' destination because it is home to the internationally renowned TV program *Neighbours*. A trip to Melbourne would not be complete without a visit to the legendary Ramsay St. Pin Oak Ct in Vermont South is the suburban street that has been the home of the show for 23 years.

The best way to see Ramsay St and have a true *Neighbours* experience is by taking the Official Neighbours Tour (☎ 03-9629 5866; www.neighbourstour.com.au; $45) It's the only licensed tour and is approved by the residents of Pin Oak Ct. If you're lucky you might see us filming and have the chance to grab a photo and an autograph! Two tours are available: Tour A runs twice daily, Monday to Friday, and visits Ramsay St, Erinsborough High School and includes an exclusive meeting with a *Neighbours* actor; the second, more comprehensive, tour ($65) visits the street, the school and the outside studio sets of the Lassiter's Complex, Lou's mechanics and Grease Monkeys. This tour runs on the weekends and starts at the Neighbours Centre (570 Flinders Street, Melbourne) where you can check out and purchase official *Neighbours* memorabilia.

There are a variety of ways to make the pilgrimage yourself: if you don't have wheels, take the train to Glen Waverley station, then bus 888 or 889 north (get off at Vision Dr near Burwood Hwy). Alternatively, tram 75 from Flinders St will take you all the way to the corner of Burwood Hwy and Springvale Rd: a short walk brings you to Weeden Dr and Pin Oak Ct is the third street on the left. If you do make the trip, please remember to respect the privacy of residents. Don't do anything in their street or front yards that you wouldn't be happy with in your own street or home!

The Backpacker King also runs a hugely popular Official Neighbours Trivia Night (☎ 03-9629 5866; www.neigh boursnight.com.au; $40; Mon & Fri Nov-Apr) at the Elephant & Wheelbarrow (169 Fitzroy St, St Kilda), where you have the opportunity to rub shoulders and have your photo taken with some of your favourite *Neighbours* stars. The night is full of entertainment and prizes – call the Backpacker King to book. After meeting the stars, fans are entertained with a one-hour concert by my band – The Waiting Room.

Alan Fletcher has worked in every branch of the performing arts for 30 years. He has played Dr Karl Kennedy on Neighbours since 1994.

comedies include *Kath & Kim,* a piss-take of nouveau-riche suburban habits and language, and the bitingly satirical *Summer Heights High* – both are available on DVD at ABC shops (http://shop.abc.net.au). And, of course, there's the never-ending froth of soap opera *Neighbours* (see the boxed text,) on Channel 10.

THEATRE

Melbourne's vibrant theatre scene encompasses a wide spectrum of genres, from blockbuster musicals to intimate experimental productions.

Melbourne's most high-profile professional theatre company, the Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC; www.mtc.com.au), is also Australia's oldest. It stages up to a dozen performances year-round at the Victorian Arts Centre. Productions are often firmly focused on satisfying the company's middle-market subscriber base. It features works by well-known Australian playwrights such as David Williamson and locals Hannie Rayson and Joanna Murray-Smith, as well as international works. The MTC also runs a readings program to promote and develop the works of emerging playwrights.

The Malthouse Theatre (www.playbox.com.au) was established in 1976 and is dedicated to the performance of Australian works. Its program tends to be a little more edgy, nurturing emerging writers and actively promoting its productions in Asia.

Melbourne's numerous progressive fringe-theatre companies not only keep actors in work but challenge theatre's middle ground. The more enduring companies to seek out include Red Stitch Actors Theatre, Hoist, Kage Physical Theatre and Ranters Theatre Ensemble. The Theatre Alive (www.theatrealive.com.au) website has a comprehensive listing as well as news of upcoming performances.

Melbourne's theatrical heritage is evident in the city's remaining Victorian-era theatres: the Princess and Athenaeum. The diminutive La Mama (see the boxed text,), in Carlton, is an institution whose humble size and aspect is far outweighed by its place in the heart of the city's theatre scene.

For listings of Melbourne's theatre venues see .

LA MAMA

Founded in 1967 as a theatre for new and experimental plays, La Mama (p164) is literally the mother of independent theatre in Melbourne. If the theatre is the metaphoric matriarch, then Liz Jones – artistic director for nigh on 30 years – is the actual one. La Mama and Liz nurture Australian playwrights and artists by providing the facilities and community necessary to get shows off the ground.

The tiny 40-seater La Mama theatre and its second venue, the Courthouse, stage around 70 performances each year. 'We have five going at a time,' says Liz, who reads 250 scripts a year. 'I'm also considering people who just come up with an idea, a scenario or a group collaboration. Especially for the Exploration season, which is dedicated to non script-based works. It includes a lot of dance and multiple art forms, where people want to really try out new ideas.'

La Mama acts as a production company, of sorts. When it takes on a performance, it provides the theatre space and pays the writer and the director. Actors and others involved in a production split the door takings. Liz spends a lot of time matching writers with directors. 'You might have three or four goes at it before you get a marriage.' La Mama has an illustrious index book of actors, stage directors and set, costume and lighting designers to assist in seeing a script or idea come to fruition.

'If I want to be proactive in this 21st century, I would like to continue to encourage indigenous theatre and ensembles – groups who want to work together,' says Liz. 'When I was travelling through Europe I was really aware how conservative theatrical forms tended to be in the English-speaking countries, and how radical they were particularly in Germany, Spain, Italy and Eastern European countries. I was so much more excited by the theatre I saw in Berlin than the theatre I saw in London. I came home thinking that I did want to try and encourage that. Now, I think the key to that is the ensemble and people working together in a large group trusting each other.'

From an audience perspective, La Mama is intimate and generous. You are invited to chat to those involved in a production after a performance, and you get to participate in the raffle. 'There's such a good chance of winning, which people don't normally have in a raffle,' says Liz. The raffle tradition began in about 1990. 'I edited a book called *La Mama – the Story of a Theatre* with Betty Burstall (founder of La Mama) and Helen Garner (author). The publisher printed 3500 copies, which were not selling like hot cakes, so Betty said, "Why don't we raffle one at the beginning of each show?" We raffled the entire stock. Then I edited a book of plays, and we raffled the entire stock of that. So, now we just find a worthy book.' Your entry ticket is also your raffle ticket, which is still drawn at the start of each performance.

Seeing a performance at La Mama is a little like a raffle itself. There's a similar anticipation inherent in innovative theatre. And like the raffle, there's a good chance of being rewarded.

DANCE

The **Australian Ballet** (www.australianballet.com.au) is the national ballet company and is considered one of the finest in the world. It performs regularly at Melbourne's Victorian Arts Centre, with a program of classical and modern ballets.

Victoria's main contemporary dance company, **Chunky Move** (www.chunkymove.com), has been pushing the boundaries that define contemporary dance since 1998. Founder and artistic director Gideon Obarzanek studied with the Australian Ballet and choreographs many of the company's shows. Chunky Move is a tidy package of vital choreography, clever concepts referencing pop culture, extraordinary dancers, sleek design and smart marketing. As well as Obarzanek, Melbourne is home to two of Australia's most acclaimed contemporary choreographers. Lucy Guerin, who has been praised by Joan Acocella from the *New Yorker* magazine, has a small eponymous company and also works with Obarzanek. Shelley Lasica locates her work in non-theatre spaces and collaborates with visual artists and architects, and her works blur the lines between dance and performance art.

Bangarra Dance Theatre (www.bangarra.com.au), though Sydney-based, tours with some frequency. The company presents traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance in a contemporary setting. Stories and characters of the Dreaming are retold through dance. As Bangarra itself puts it, the company is 'one of the youngest and oldest of Australia's dance companies'.

Melbourne-based **Dancehouse** (www.dancehouse.com.au) is a studio setup that supports and nurtures independents. Supported by the Australia Council, it features a program of lectures and forums, dance classes and workshops, offers rehearsal space and coordinates regular performances. It fosters some truly innovative and beautiful work.

For a list of dance venues see p164.

ARCHITECTURE

For a planned city, and a relatively youthful one, Melbourne's streetscapes are richly textured. Long considered one of the world's most beautiful Victorian cities, buildings that run the full gamut of that age still survive, from exuberantly embellished Second Empire institutions to hulking former factories that would make Manchester proud. Its built environment has continued to document the highs and lows of its short history. Today its architectural energy comes not from the monumental but from what goes on in between the new and the old, the towering and the tiny. Midcareer practices such as Six Degrees, Cassandra Complex, Ellenberg Fraser and Kersten Thompson create witty, inventive and challenging buildings and interiors that see these spaces spring to life.

Melbourne architect, lecturer and broadcaster Stuart Harrison walks us down the city's spine and loops around its fringe, highlighting prominent buildings that have become landmarks of city life.

MELBOURNE BY DESIGN *Stuart Harrison*

Much of Melbourne's excellent architecture is focused in the city centre, along the Swanston St–St Kilda Rd spine and in a loop around the edge of the city grid that was laid down by Robert Hoddle in 1837. Visible down Swanston St, and along St Kilda Rd, is the iconic Shrine of Remembrance (p83). Built to commemorate WWI, it was recently the subject of an excellent contemporary renovation by cutting-edge local architects Ashton Raggatt McDougall (ARM), whose other projects include the controversial (and bright green) **RMIT Storey Hall** (Map pp52–3; 344 Swanston St) and the redevelopment of Melbourne Central Shopping Centre (p58).

The QV (p58) development takes up almost a whole city block but has used new laneways, emulating the successful shopping lanes that date from late-19th-century Melbourne. QV was also designed by several of Melbourne's best architects. The black **QV2** (cnr Swanston & Little Lonsdale Sts) residential 'slug', by McBride Charles Ryan, is perched on the edge of the State Library forecourt, one of Melbourne's best public spaces, a sort of grass beach. The State Library (1856; p57) itself is a fine classical building – the highlight is the glass-domed reading room (1913). The library launched the career of Joseph Reed, who went on to become the most influential Victorian-era architect for Melbourne's skyline.

The Melbourne Town Hall (p56) is another classical institution by Joseph Reed, in French Renaissance mode, featuring a temple-like portico that enters into the spine of the building. The section of Swanston St opposite the Town Hall is a dense urban block, built up to the old 40m height limit imposed by the then government. The **Capitol Theatre** (Map pp52–3; 113 Swanston St), built in 1924, is the work of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin, two Chicago architects who moved to Australia after winning the competition to design Canberra, the nation's new capital. The Capital Theatre's crystalline ceiling is perhaps the most amazing of its type in the world, and a must-see. Featuring a coloured light show, the space is now owned by RMIT University and used for lectures and part of the Melbourne International Film Festival. Free tours run once a month; phone ☎ 9925 1773 for exact dates.

The two corner buildings of this block are by Marcus Barlow; Manchester Unity (1932; Map pp52–3) and the Century Building (1938; Map pp52–3) show the influence of Chicago and New York, with their commercial modern take on the Gothic style. The latter is less decorative, in line with post-WWII principles of abandoning decoration. The former ICI building, now **Orica House** (Map pp52–3; 1 Nicholson St), on the eastern edge of the city's grid was the city's first purely abstract, glass curtain-wall skyscraper. Finished in 1958, it evaded the 40m height limit by moving just outside the grid. Bates Smart and McCutcheon designed the well-preserved glass slab, which still has the original tropical-feeling garden at ground-floor level.

The **Nicholas Building** (Map pp52–3; cnr Swanston St & Flinders Lane), designed by Harry Norris in 1926, is a classical *palazzo* (grand building) in terracotta tile. Built as a demonstration of the wealth of the Nicholas family, the building today is full of artists' studios and designers. Having managed to escape being turned into apartments, it's one of the few unrenovated buildings of its type left in the city.

Southward over the Yarra on Princes Bridge and onto St Kilda Rd is the Arts Centre (p64), a suite of cultural buildings dating from the '60s and '70s designed by legendary local architect Sir

Roy Grounds. The National Gallery of Victoria (p63) is his masterpiece. It was recently renovated by Italian Mario Bellini to become NGV International. Key features such as the famous water-wall entry have survived along with the amazing stained-glass ceiling by Leonard French in the Great Hall. Local tradition is to lie down on the carpet in this almost medieval modernist public room and stare up at the ceiling. Nearby are some of the best recent institutional buildings: the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA; p62) by Wood Marsh Architects, the exceptional Centre for Ideas at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA; 234 St Kilda Rd) by Minifie Nixon and the School of Drama (28 Dodds St), also part of the VCA, by Edmond & Corrigan. A trip into the Royal Botanical Gardens will reveal the Sidney Myer Music Bowl (Map pp84–5), a brave work of 1950s' engineering whose 'sound-shell' roof projects sound out to the surrounding lawn.

Buildings on the loop around the edge of the city can be seen from the free city-circle tram (p94). Federation Square (p50) is both part of this circuit and a key point along the spine. It has been the city's main architectural talking point for visitors and locals alike since opening in 2002. Opposite the fine baroque Flinders Street Station (1911; p59) – Melbourne's principal suburban train station – Fed Square was designed by LAB Architecture Studio and features allusions to complex geometry and a desert-like material palette, using Western Australian sandstone in conjunction with zinc, glass and steel. The square itself works incredibly well, serving as the city's lounge room at large events, cramped with people sitting around and watching the giant video screen. Also at this key intersection of Flinders and Swanston Sts is St Paul's (p59), the Anglican cathedral designed by William Butterfield in London in the 1880s. A visit inside will reveal the Italian influence in the polychromatic stonework.

To the east of Flinders Street Station and across the river is Southbank (p62), a 1980s development, the promenade of which extends past the new Freshwater Place and Eureka Tower (p62) apartment complexes and then along past the lavish Crown Casino (p62) to the Melbourne Exhibition Centre (p63), known locally as 'Jeff's Shed' after former Victorian premier Jeff Kennett. Finished in 1996 and designed by Denton Corker Marshall (DCM), the enormous building has a superveranda along the river which provides a flexible exhibition space. The work of DCM is associated with the 1990s Kennett era and Melbourne's architectural and economic recovery.

Further around is Southern Cross Station, formerly called Spencer Street Station, the terminus for interstate trains. It recently had a major upgrade by English architect Nicholas Grimshaw. A waving, complex surface roof covers new facilities and platforms, making a link to the great English railways halls of the 19th century but demonstrating the latest in computer-assisted design and fabrication. The Melbourne Docklands development, a huge conversion of former docks into a commercial, retail and mainly residential space, is separated from the city grid by the Spencer St rail yards. In the last 10 years many people have moved into the City of Melbourne to live, many into the new residential towers of the Docklands (p62). Though not an architectural masterpiece, Telstra Dome has become the heart of the Docklands. The architectural quality is varied at the Docklands; highlights include the Webb Dock Bridge by artist Robert Owen in conjunction with DCM, and the nearby Yarra's Edge Apartments (90 Lorimer St) – a bronzed monolith apartment tower by Wood Marsh.

Along the northern edge of the city grid are the fine Carlton Gardens, and within is DCM's Melbourne Museum (2000; p77). Alongside is the historic Royal Exhibition Building (p77), another by Joseph Reed. It's a large classical show hall that was built for the International Exhibition of 1880 and used for such events since, until the Melbourne Exhibition Centre took over. Now restored, it is the largest exhibit in the museum's collection. The building was used for Australia's first federal parliament in 1901 and the whole park site is now subject to World Heritage listing.

The eastern edge of the grid is formed by Spring St: home to the state government and two fine classical institutions. Parliament House (p56) dates back to 1856 and has never been fully finished; it's a robust classical statement of order at the termination of Bourke St. Further down is the finer Renaissance sensibility of the Old Treasury, designed by 19-year-old JJ Clark in 1857 – the building is now the City Museum at Old Treasury (p58). Behind these two and further east along Macarthur St is the imposing St Patrick's Cathedral (p59), a blending of French and English Gothic tastes by William Wardell; it was consecrated in 1897.

Southeast of the city grid is the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG; p67), aka the G, which has been entirely rebuilt in the last 15 years, principally by architect Daryl Jackson. The most recent northern stands redevelopment, completed in time for the 2006 Commonwealth Games, has increased the ground's capacity to just under 100,000. The G is the city's arena, and is the venue for key sporting events such as the AFL Grand Final and Boxing Day Cricket Test. Other great sporting architecture can be seen in the nearby former Olympic Pool, finished for the 1956 Games, which expresses its structural dynamic brilliantly. A proud architectural statement of a city trying to escape its 19th-century heritage, the pool was designed by young architects Kevin Borland and Peter Macintyre; the latter oversaw the building's recent restoration and conversion into the Lexus Centre – the training facility for the hugely popular Collingwood Football Club. This and other buildings around here, such as the Rod Laver Arena (1988), form Melbourne Park (p67).

More information can be found in the excellent *Melbourne Architecture* guide, by Philip Goad, in the National Trust's compact *Walking Melbourne* guide, or on the unrelated website www.walkingmelbourne.com. Also recommended is *Design City Melbourne,* by Leon van Schaik which positions Melbourne as the world's design city du jour.

ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING
THE LAND
From a bird's-eye view, Melbourne perches at the top of Port Phillip Bay; it's about 860km south of Sydney by road. At 8806 sq km, compared to Sydney's approximate area of 4000 sq km, metropolitan Melbourne is Australia's largest city per capita and one of the largest in the world.

The CBD comprises only a tiny portion (1.8 sq km). Its flat topography and grid-like planning imbues the city with an ordered and self-contained feeling. The CBD is almost surrounded by a green belt of parks and gardens. Inner-city suburbs cluster around the fringes of the CBD and are often included in the boundaries of the general term 'city'. The Yarra River divides Melbourne geographically and, to some extent, socio-economically. Traditionally, the northern and western suburbs were industrial and working-class, while areas south of the Yarra and to the east have been affluent and professional. With gentrification, these distinctions have become increasingly blurred. The demographic split now lies between the inner and the outer suburbs.

Melbourne's suburbs sprawl in all directions from the city's central core. Highways and bridges duck and weave through outlying Melbourne. New suburbs prop on repurposed land; cul-de-sacs, curving avenues and 'catalogue' homes have moved in where industry or market gardens once resided. A network of highways fan throughout the state to regional centres and beyond.

GREEN MELBOURNE
Melbourne City Council is committed to reducing the city's greenhouse emissions to zero by 2020. This admirable strategy glosses over Victoria's over reliance on brown-coal-fuelled electricity, although the state government has made some attempt to put the brakes on its rising emissions with research programs into green technologies. Water shortages are an ongoing issue, with restrictions in force at the time of writing. These laws have prompted a complete rethink of the way in which water is used. The days of suburban lawns being pampered by a 24 hour sprinkler system are long gone. Short showers and half-flush toilets have become a way of life for Victorians, and many have also adopted household grey-water systems. Visitors should note that it is seriously uncool to leave taps running. Waste recycling is a success story: public rubbish bins often offer sorting chutes, and all household waste is presorted before collection.

The current state government initiated a bold plan in 2001 entitled Melbourne 2030 which aimed to limit urban sprawl and the growing population's reliance on the car. While no one can doubt the sense of such a project, there has been ongoing problems with its implementation. More than 80% of Melbourne's population growth continues to occur on the outer fringes; many Australians have a deep-seated affection for living in a house on a block of land, something that is hard to discourage by legislation alone. Additionally, given that much of the planned development is slated to take place in existing 'transport hubs' in inner Melbourne, the National Trust of Victoria has expressed concern about the effect on heritage areas, particularly in sensitive suburbs such as Carlton, Fitzroy, Collingwood and South Yarra.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Melbourne is the capital of the state of Victoria, and the seat of the state's government. The state parliament meets in the imposing neo-classical Parliament House (☎ 9651 8911; www.parliament.vic.gov.au; Spring St). There is a Legislative Council – the upper house – and a Legislative Assembly, or lower house. This state, or second-level, government is responsible for hospitals, education, public transport, policing, main roads, traffic management and most major infrastructure projects.

Power is held by one of two main political parties, the centre-left Australian Labor Party and the right-wing Liberal/National coalition parties. The Australian Greens and independents also hold a handful of seats. At the time of writing, the Labor Party is in government, led by Premier John Brumby. Apart from ongoing disquiet among nurses and state school teachers over pay and conditions, and environmental concerns including ongoing controversy about the dredging of Port Phillip Bay, Labor's current tenure has been relatively uneventful. Parliament sessions are open to the public but don't expect high theatre; an architecture and history tour (see p56) when the pollies aren't sitting will be more entertaining for all but the most hardcore wonks and wonkettes.

The City of Melbourne, which takes in the CBD and its immediate surrounds, is governed by the Melbourne City Council (☎ 9658 9658; www.melbourne.vic.gov.au). At the time of writing, Lord Mayor John So heads up the council, which sits in what the press have always loved to call 'Clown Hall', in Swanston St. Melbourne's suburbs and the regions are divided up into a network of regional councils which take care of services such as libraries, parks and garbage collection as well as shouldering much of the responsibility for commercial and residential planning.

MEDIA

The Packer and Murdoch dynasties' global influence is felt nowhere more strongly than in their home country. Australia's media ownership is one of the most concentrated in the world, with most daily newspapers owned by the two organizations, or local player John Fairfax Holdings.

The enormous media empire of the late Kerry Packer, Publishing & Broadcasting Ltd (PBL), owns TV station Channel 9 and Australian Consolidated Press, who publish 60% of all magazines sold in Australia.

Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation has Melbourne's tabloid *Herald-Sun*, the national broadsheet *The Australian,* Sky News, Fox News, Foxtel…the list goes on. The local broadsheet *The Age* is published by John Fairfax Holdings, who are also responsible for the *Australian Financial Review* (universally referred to as the 'Fin Review') and *Business Review Weekly*. See Newspapers & Magazines (p353) for details.

Melbourne's newspapers syndicate many stories from their counterparts in Britain and the US, making by-lines from the *Times, Guardian, New York Times* or *Washington Post* not uncommon.

The state-funded Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC; www.abc.net.au) broadcasts nationally with TV, radio and online services. The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS; www.sbs.com.au) is also a national broadcaster with a special mandate to reflect multiethnic and indigenous communities in Australia. See p33 for more.

Melbourne's independent radio stations are one of the city's most precious assets; see p354 for details.

FASHION

Melbournians like to look good and fashion plays a big part in the city's self-image. Office clobber may have become more relaxed, and going-out clothes more casual too, but this just gives everyone more opportunities to improvise and layer. Melbourne's fashion needs are catered to by an impressive number of canny retailers who roam widely in search of the world's best as well as showcasing local design talent. And there's lots of that. Rather than adhering to the hierarchy of established studios, many young designers start their own labels straight out of university. This gives the scene an amazing energy and vitality. There are also a large number

that have their own flagship shops, where the designer's particular look and personality is writ large and whole collections can be discovered. Vintage is a persisting global trend but one that has flourished in Melbourne, both in the retailing and wearing of vintage pieces and in a general sensibility that pays heed to retro cuts and traditional tailoring.

Melbourne designers are known for their tailoring, luxury fabrics, innovation and blending of global elements, all underscored with a fuss-free Australian sensibility. Those to watch out for include TL Wood and Scanlan & Theodore for smart, lyrical elegance; Tony Maticevki and Martin Grant for demi-couture and dark reworkings of the classics; Ess Hoshika, Dhini and Munk for the beautifully wearable conceptual and deconstructed; Anna Thomas and Vixen for luxuriously grownup looks, both tailored (Thomas) and flowing (Vixen); Gorman, Arabella Ramsay and Obüs for hipster cheek with a delightfully feminine twist; Alpha 60, Schwipe and Claude Maus for clever, urban, pop-culture inspired pieces; Mjölk for precision-cut menswear; and finally, scene stalwarts Bettina Liano for straight-ahead glamour and Alannah Hill for her original girly-girl layers.

One constant is colour, or lack of it. You'll not go long in Melbourne without hearing mention of 'Melbourne black', and it's true that inky shades are worn winter, spring, summer and autumn. Perhaps it's because it works well with the soft light and often grey days, or maybe it's a product of many Melbournian's southern European heritage. It could be the subliminal influence of the city's building blocks of moody bluestone. Some speculate that it's the lingering fallout of the explosive 1980s postpunk scene. The fact is, black clothes sell far better here than in any other city in the country, and it's hard to succeed as a designer if you don't add a little every season. It's never out of fashion.

Where to shop? The city (Map pp52–3) has national and international chains spread out over Bourke and Collins Sts, as well as the city malls of Melbourne Central, QVB, GPO, DFO Spencer St and Australia on Collins. Smaller shops and designer workshops inhabit the laneways and vertical villages of Curtin House and the Nicholas Building. A strip of Little Collins is dedicated to sartorially savvy gentlemen (p106). The length of leafy Collins St lined with luxury retailers, especially towards its Spring St end. Chapel St (Map pp84–5) also has many of the chains and classic Australian designers, as well as some interesting players at the Prahran end. Further up the hill hit Hawksburn Village (p117) or High St Armadale (p120) for bobo chic and fashion-forward labels. Greville St and Windsor do streetwear, the later is also good for vintage shopping. Lygon St, Carlton (Map pp78–9), has some great small shops specialising in European tailoring and local talent, while Brunswick St (Map pp74–5) does streetwear and pulses with the energy of young designers in stores such as the legendary Fat. Gertrude St (Map pp74–5) mixes vintage with the innovators as well as some great menswear. This is just the tip of the well-cut iceberg, with fashion popping up in many other neighbourhoods as well.

LOCAL LINGO

Victoria was once known as the 'cabbage garden' because of the state's fertile rich soil and prodigious production of fruit and vegetables. Victorians were referred to as 'cabbage gardeners', the implication being that that's all they were good for. Victorians are also described as Mexicans, because from the point of view of New South Wales they are 'south of the border'. Here are some other terms and phrases you're likely to hear:

Buckley's No chance at all; refers to the convict William Buckley who escaped from the abortive first Victorian settlement, and lived with Indigenous tribes for over 30 years.

Doing the Tan A popular 4km jogging track around Kings Domain and the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Footy Australian Rules football.

Has more front than Myer Cheeky, not at all shy. Myer is a department store that originated in Melbourne and has a large shopfront presence in the Bourke St Mall.

Hook turn A driving manoeuvre that is only done in Melbourne's CBD and terrifies the rest of Australia. To turn right at an intersection, a motorist pulls over to the left of the road and then crosses all lanes of traffic to complete the turn. The hook turn is designed to keep the tram tracks clear of cars waiting to turn.

Like Bourke Street Very busy, usually referring to traffic. Bourke St is one of inner-city Melbourne's busiest thoroughfares.

The Loop The collective name for the five train stations arranged around the edge of the CBD.

LANGUAGE

English may be the official and dominant language, but Australians speak over 250 languages other than English, a true reflection of its broad multicultural mix. Surviving Aboriginal languages also contribute to this number. Many Melburnians who consider their first language to be English have family connections that mean they at least comprehend another language. Foreign languages, usually Italian, Chinese or Japanese, are taught in schools from kindergarten onwards.

The 20 most common languages in Victoria are Italian, Greek, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Arabic (including Lebanese), Mandarin, Macedonian, Turkish, Croatian, Spanish, Maltese, German, Polish, Tagalog, Serbian, Russian, Sinhala, French and Dutch. This is also joined by increasing numbers of African languages including Amharic, Tijrinyan, Dinka and Swahili.

The *Macquarie Dictionary* is generally accepted as the definitive source in Australian-English vocabulary and pronunciation. Americanisms are becoming more common in Australian English, though there is gentle resistance to the adoption of US spellings.

Victorians, like all Australians, embrace a plethora of colloquialisms and are particularly fond of shortening words or adding the suffix 'o' or 'y', especially in a social context. The Macquarie Dictionary (http://web.macquariedictionary.com.au) has created an online Australian Word Map that documents regionalisms; for a dictionary product, it's very amusing.