



# 10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT MELBOURNE

## VICTORIA'S STATE CAPITAL IS ALREADY KNOWN FOR ITS GREAT COFFEE, COOL BARS, HIP LANeways AND DYNAMIC FASHION SCENE. HERE ARE 10 MORE THINGS THAT MAKE THE CITY A STANDOUT

WORDS MITCH BROOK



1

### IT'S A LITERARY CITY

**BOOK ENTHUSIASTS UNITE** in Melbourne. That's just one of the reasons UNESCO has named Melbourne a "City of Literature" – a title it's also earned for the quality of its literary output and availability of educational programmes, libraries and events. You'll notice it in the amount of tram riders reading both print and ebooks.

**SEE IT:** The Wheeler Centre is the city's hub of "books,

writing and ideas". The centre gives aspiring writers residency space, access to editors for pitching sessions, and holds regular events and talks. Upcoming talks include "What's Happening in Australian Journalism" (9 Oct), "Indigenous Voices" (10 Oct) and an evening with Peter Carey (23 Oct; [wheelercentre.com](http://wheelercentre.com)). Readings is a line of independent bookstores that holds regular bookish events at its five stores across Melbourne ([readings.com.au](http://readings.com.au)).



2

### IT'S OLDER THAN YOU MAY THINK

**THE CITY STANDS** on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation, which is made up of the Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Taungurung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Wathaurong peoples. Evidence shows millennia of inhabitation, such as at the archaeological site in the northern suburb of Keilor, which has shown evidence of human fireplaces dated at 31,000 years old, and human remains dated at nearly 15,000 years old.

**SEE IT:** The Corroboree Tree in St Kilda is thought to

be between 300 and 500 years old, and was a pre-European meeting site for local Indigenous people; the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre allows visitors to engage with cultural heritage with exhibitions and activities ([museumvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka](http://museumvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka)); the Koorie Heritage Trust in the CBD is holding an Aboriginal art exhibition from 2 October to 21 November ([koorieheritagetrust.com](http://koorieheritagetrust.com)).





3

### IT'S A CITY OF DIVERSITY

#### YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT

Little Italy along Lygon Street in Carlton, and Chinatown in the CBD. But did you know Melbourne's Greek-speaking community is the largest outside of Europe? Nearly a quarter of Greater Melbourne's population was born overseas: there are also Jewish, Indian, Chinese and Vietnamese communities.

**SEE IT:** Visit the CBD's Greek precinct on Lonsdale Street (between Swanston and Russell Streets) or take a trip out to Oakleigh to visit the old-school Fresh Food Markets (Weds-Sat) and Orexi Souvlaki Bar Cafe (one of the best in Melbourne). Head to Balaclava to check out Jewish delicatessens, or Victoria Street in Richmond for Vietnamese restaurants and grocers. The Immigration Museum on Flinders Street tells why such a wide variety of nationalities choose the city as their home.



4

### IT'S AUSTRALIA'S CAPITAL OF SPORT

**IT WAS THE FIRST** southern-hemisphere city to hold an Olympic Games; it has five international-standard major sporting facilities right near the CBD; it's where Aussie rules football (AFL) was invented; and it hosts the "race that stops a nation", the Melbourne Cup. Melbourne is well equipped to host any sporting event, but have you ever seen behind the scenes?

**SEE IT:** At the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG; [mkg.org.au](http://mkg.org.au)) you can visit the National Sports Museum and even take a tour of the arena, which could include a walk on the field and a visit to the changing rooms. For an insider's perspective on the Melbourne Cup, explore the jockeys' rooms, mounting yard and the Heritage Centre at Flemington Racecourse ([flemington.com.au](http://flemington.com.au)), or visit Phar Lap at the Melbourne Museum ([museumvictoria.com.au](http://museumvictoria.com.au)).

**Visit the National Sports Museum and even take a tour of the arena**





5

IT'S REALLY EASY  
TO GET AROUND

**MELBOURNE'S EASY-TO-NAVIGATE**

streetscape is a legacy bestowed on the city by the "Hoddle Grid". Surveyor Robert Hoddle designed it that way in 1837, to allow for wide streets and the easy allotment of property in each block. This early planning allowed for the eventual easy addition of trams and bicycle paths to the city.

The plan of action outlined in the city's Bicycle Plan 2012-16 includes making cycling even more accessible. Melburnians make nearly 82,000 bike trips per weekday.

**SEE IT:** Melbourne has the largest tram network in the world; take a free tram on the City Circle route 35. As of 1 January, 2015, all trams in the CBD will be free to ride.

For a glimpse of places further afield, book a meal on the historic tram restaurant ([tramrestaurant.com.au](http://tramrestaurant.com.au)). Cyclists can pick up a TravelSmart bicycle path map from the Visitor Centre in Fed Square or the Town Hall. Melbourne Bike Share has bicycles for hire at bike-station kiosks throughout the city; cheap helmets can be purchased from nearby 7-Eleven stores ([melbournebikeshare.com.au](http://melbournebikeshare.com.au)).



6

THE INDIE SCENE IS  
NOT DEAD – LONG LIVE  
MELBOURNE MUSIC!

**THE CITY OF MELBOURNE'S** Victorian *Live Music Census* of 2012 found that more than 97,000 people attended live popular-music performances at 470 venues every Saturday and Friday night in Greater Melbourne. The offerings at Melbourne's music venues are as diverse as the people, but pub-rock is still king.

**SEE IT:** Popular indie venues include the Yarra Hotel in Abbotsford ([theyarrahotel.com.au](http://theyarrahotel.com.au)), Fitzroy's The Old Bar ([theoldbar.com.au](http://theoldbar.com.au)), Northcote Social Club ([northcotesocialclub.com](http://northcotesocialclub.com)), Howler in Brunswick ([h-w-l-r.com](http://h-w-l-r.com)), The Tote in Collingwood ([thetotehotel.com](http://thetotehotel.com)) and The Espy in St Kilda ([espy.com.au](http://espy.com.au)). Coming soon: Melbourne Music Week, 14-23 November ([blog.melbmusic.com](http://blog.melbmusic.com)).



7

SOME OF ITS  
HIDDEN LANEWAYS  
ARE VERTICAL

**EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT** Melbourne's horizontal laneways, but there are also "vertical laneways" – tall art-deco buildings occupied by artists and businesses for creative pursuits. Located on Swanston Street, Curtin House and the Nicholas Building have long histories as artist studios.

**SEE IT:** Scale the many storeys of Curtin House to check out Kimono House store and textile house; wander through the photo exhibits at the Edmund Pearce Gallery; browse quirky titles at Metropolis Bookshop; or hang out at the Rooftop Bar, which in summer doubles as a cinema. The Nicholas Building often holds open days for visitors to check out its tenants' creative pursuits. Check [thenicholasbuilding.blogspot.com.au](http://thenicholasbuilding.blogspot.com.au) for upcoming dates.





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MELBOURNE IS...  
PRETTY SMART

**DID YOU KNOW** that Vegemite, an early black-box flight recorder and the ute were all invented here? Melbourne's "knowledge sector" was recently celebrated with a MAKCi (Most Admired Knowledge City) Award, which recognised its contribution to research, education and technology. The city aims to continue embracing all things cerebral, and now even holds a week-long knowledge festival to inspire innovation.

**SEE IT:** Melbourne Knowledge Week, from 27 October to 2 November, showcases the smarts of Melbourne residents while promoting new projects across technology, design, creativity, health and research ([melbourne.vic.gov.au/knowledgeweek](http://melbourne.vic.gov.au/knowledgeweek)).

**Work up a hunger cycling or hiking by city hotspots**



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THE YARRA RIVER  
EXTENDS WAY BEYOND  
CROWN PROMENADE

**EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT** the Yarra, but the Capital City Trail stretches 27km out of the city along the Yarra's banks from Docklands through the CBD and into Melbourne's eastern and northern suburbs, taking in scenic leafy suburbs. Many spokes diverge from the path, routing along the Merri Creek Trail and Moonee Ponds Creek Trail. There's also an Inner Circle Railway Trail ([railtrails.org.au](http://railtrails.org.au)).

**SEE IT:** Work up a hunger cycling or hiking by city hotspots like the MCG, Yarra Bend Park, the Collingwood Children's Farm and Melbourne Zoo. Stop off at a café en route, such as Kanteen in South Yarra or The Farm Cafe in Abbotsford. Visit [yarracity.vic.gov.au](http://yarracity.vic.gov.au) for more information. Or, hire a boat for a Yarra cruise ([boat4hire.com.au/yarra\\_river\\_cruisers](http://boat4hire.com.au/yarra_river_cruisers)).

THE WORLD'S  
FIRST FEATURE FILM  
WAS MADE HERE

**THE STORY OF THE KELLY GANG**

documenting the life of Ned Kelly, was the first feature-length narrative film ever made, in 1906. While the details – and most of the film itself – have been obscured by time, it's thought to have been directed by Charles Tait at his estate in what is now the north-east Melbourne suburb of Heidelberg.

**SEE IT:** The film was lost by the 1970s, but nearly a quarter of the original has since been recovered and pieced back together. See it at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), located in Federation Square, in the free-to-access media centre, Mediatheque ([acmi.net.au](http://acmi.net.au))

**Travel info ↓**



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