

# Discover historic Melbourne

Victoria's capital city is a great place to visit but before you do, let Heather Zubek give you a history lesson and a few tips on where to go.

## EARLY DAYS

The city of Melbourne is home to the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation.

These indigenous people gathered every year in the area now known as Melbourne for ceremonies, trade and celebrations.

The first white settlers were a group of Tasmanian farmers and businessmen who in 1835 bought 243,000ha of land from eight Aboriginal chiefs in exchange for scissors, beads, suits, blankets, food and tomahawks.

In 1836, the Governor of NSW, Sir Richard Bourke, sent government surveyors Robert Hoddle and Robert Russell to design a new city.

The Governor wanted "order and grandeur" so the resulting design was a grid of straight streets and lanes.

In 1837 the new town was named Melbourne after the British Prime Minister of the time, William Lamb, Lord Melbourne.

In 1851, Victoria was created as a separate colony and Melbourne became its capital.

The settlement grew quickly from a population of just 50 in 1835 to more than 700,000 by 1869.

Interesting origin: A Melbourne CBD laneway. Picture: Mark Irving



Historical names: The busy intersection of Flinders and Swanston streets in Melbourne. Picture: Frances Pratt



Melbourne landmark: Flinders Street station. Picture: Trevor Collins



## STREET WISE

Walking around the city streets is a history lesson in itself as most were named after historical figures

**Collins Street:** named after Lieutenant-Governor David Collins.

Walking up Collins Street is like going back in time as it is lined with many buildings from the Gold Rush era. However, the street was known for something more deadly during earlier years. In May 1839 Melbourne's first duel was fought at the lower end of Collins Street with the only casualty being the

hat worn by a spectator. On New Year's Day 1840, another duel ended with one of the duellists, a man named Snodgrass, shooting himself in the foot.

**Swanston Street:** named after Captain Charles Swanston, who owned the city's first bank.

If you have watched the AFL Grand Final Parade you would have seen Swanston Street, as this is the city's main parade route. Swanston Street became

Melbourne's busiest thoroughfare during the Gold Rush and is the location of many significant buildings such as the Town Hall,

the State Library and the Museum of Victoria

**Bourke Street:** named after the Governor of NSW, Governor Richard Bourke.

Home to the Bourke Street Mall and Melbourne's shopping precinct, the top end of Bourke Street, opposite Parliament House was once the home for sporting events, including goat and pig race meetings.

When you walk around the city you can't help but notice laneways connecting streets and disappearing into buildings. These



Colourful creation: A painted cafe in Hosier Lane. Picture: Mark Irving

## TRANSPORT TRADITIONS

Standing in the centre of Melbourne you will hear a unusual sound – the "dinging" of hundreds of trams.

The Melbourne tram network is the biggest urban network in the world with in excess of 250km of track and more than 490 trams.

Trams have operated continuously in the city since 1884 with the opening of a horse tramline.

Flinders Street Station was the first railway station in an Australian city, with the main station building completed in 1909. In one year it recorded nearly 93 million passenger movements.

## Shopaholics

Melbourne is a shoppers' paradise, catering for the rich and those with pocket-money budgets. The historic **Queen Victoria Markets** opened on the site of an old cemetery in 1878. The markets are spread over 7ha, making it the largest open-air market in the Southern Hemisphere. This is the place to spend your pocket money on anything from fruit and vegetables to cosmetics, clothing and souvenirs.

## Sports lovers

Melbourne is a sporting mecca. Australian Rules football is the most popular sport in Victoria and its spiritual home is the **Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)**. The Melbourne Cricket Club selected the current site in 1853 after previously playing at several unsuitable grounds around the city. When the first inter-colonial cricket match was played at the MCG in 1856 between Victoria and New South Wales, the latter won. Today sports lovers can tour the MCG grounds and visit its National Sports Museum.

Did you know?

The MCG:

- Is the biggest stadium in Australia.
- Has the highest light towers of any sporting venue.
- Is remembered as the centrepiece for the 1956 Summer Olympics, 1992 Cricket World Cup, 2006 Commonwealth Games and this year's Cricket World Cup.
- Held a record for 130,000 people attending a Billy Graham Crusade in 1959.

## History buffs

To find out more about Melbourne's history, start your tour at one of the city's many museums.

The **Melbourne Museum** is the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere. It houses a stuffed Phar Lap – Australia's most famous champion racehorse – as well as exhibits on themes such as natural history, art and the history of Melbourne. A must-see for media fans is the **Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI)**. Filled with exhibits relating the history of film, television and electronic gaming in Australia, ACMI is found within the iconic Federation Square.

Any enthusiast of the Ned Kelly legend must take time to visit the **State Library of Victoria**. Here you will discover Ned Kelly's armour (complete with bullet dents), rifle and death



Biggest stadium: The Melbourne Demons playing the Collingwood Magpies at the MCG last year. Picture: Michael Dodge

mask as well as other Kelly memorabilia. If you need to know more about Ned Kelly visit the nearby **Old Melbourne Gaol** where you can be locked in the bushranger's old cell.

## Culture vultures

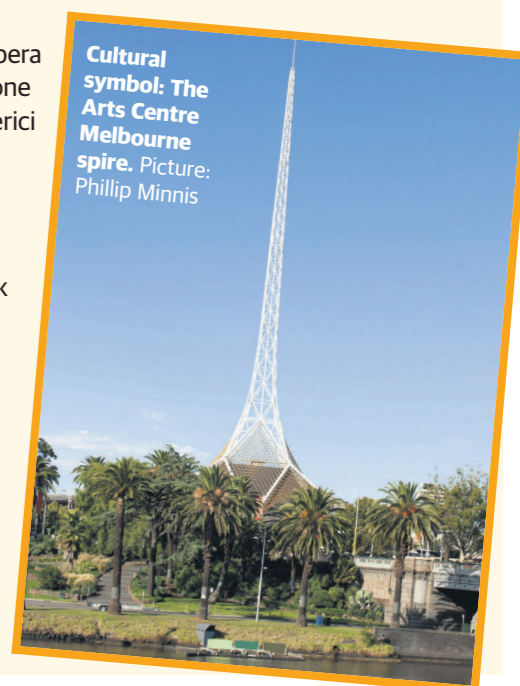
Melbourne is the cultural heart of Australia and the most recognisable cultural icon is the **Arts Centre Melbourne** spire. Underneath lie the arts centre's theatres and exhibition spaces.

Did you know?

- The Arts Centre Melbourne extends five floors underground.
- The spire reaches 162m above street level.
- There is more than 6600m of fibre-optic tubing within the spire and 14,000 incandescent lamps on its "skirt".
- The spire caught fire in 2012 during New Year's Eve celebrations.

The **Princess Theatre** is another cultural and heritage symbol of the city. First erected in 1854, the magnificent building on Spring Street has held musicals and performances under the watchful eye of a ghost. During a performance of the opera Faust in 1888, a baritone named Frederick Federici was being lowered through a trapdoor in the stage when the unfortunate actor suffered a heart attack and died. Actors have since seen his ghost taking his final bows and sitting in the theatre. Every opening night a seat is left empty for the ghost and a sighting of him is considered good luck.

Cultural symbol: The Arts Centre Melbourne spire. Picture: Phillip Minnis



The York family moved from Perth to Melbourne a year ago. ED! paid them a visit to see how they were settling in.

### JUDD, 9

**What do you like about Melbourne?** There are lots of sporting events here. I can watch the footy, the cricket, soccer, rugby – but I'm still a West Coast Eagles supporter though!

**What do you miss about living in Perth?** We used to have a pool so I miss swimming every afternoon after school but here it's a little too cold to do that and we don't have a pool any more.

**If friends came from Perth to Melbourne for a visit, where would you take them?** The MCG of course! It's a landmark of Australia. I did a tour there and watched the footy.

### SCARLETT, 7

**If you could go anywhere in Melbourne, where would you go?**

I would visit the Melbourne Star (the famous ferris wheel). I went there for my seventh birthday as a treat. It has a beautiful view of Melbourne; you can see Etihad Stadium from it. The view is even better at night as the star glows up.

**Where would you take your Perth friends if they visited you in Melbourne?**

I would take them into the city and up the Eureka Tower. **So how different is Perth to Melbourne?** Well, both cities have rivers but Melbourne's river is a little yucky. Melbourne is bigger than Perth and you do get trams in Melbourne and not in Perth. I also like to go into Melbourne to see the window displays at Christmas.

### LEWIS, 6

**What's the difference between living in Perth and living in Melbourne?**

There's a lot more people in Melbourne and the weather is different. It's hot here sometimes but it gets really, really cold. And it rains.

**Was there anything you had to get used to living in Melbourne?**

Yes, being in traffic. It takes a long time to get to places sometimes. When we go into the city we often take a train. We always drove into Perth. Also, when I started school in Melbourne, it was called prep but in Perth it's called pre-primary.

Changing places: Scarlett, Judd and Lewis York moved from Perth to Melbourne a year ago. Picture: Stephanie York

