

OCTOBER NEWS FROM YOUR LIBRARY

FUNDING BOOST FOR ATHENAEUM

The Melbourne Athenaeum has been awarded a \$200,000 grant from Heritage Victoria for urgent conservation, repair and restoration works to the building's roof and clerestory windows.

Business manager Sue Westwood spoke about the project in an article in the October 2021 *CBD News*. Click this [link](#) and scroll to page 11.

The \$260,000 project (the Athenaeum is contributing \$60,000) will protect the building's interior, and particularly the pressed metal ceiling in the Athenaeum 2 theatre, from leaks and damp. Regular maintenance is undertaken but a 2019 condition report identified the roof as requiring major work.

Planning Minister Richard Wynne recently announced 19 restoration projects, including the Athenaeum, would receive a total of more than \$2.3 million funding under the Government's *Living Heritage Program*.

NEW FURNITURE FOR LIBRARY

The final instalment in our library refurbishment is almost complete, with the imminent delivery of new Victorian-made timber tables.

In 2020, the library received a \$10,000 State Government grant to replace its old, donated and mismatched tables. The new tables are the finishing touch to a \$150,000 upgrade, which included new carpet, new electrical wiring and repainting. New chairs were bought thanks to generous donations from library members.

CLICK AND COLLECT CONTINUES

The library's 'Click and Collect' service on Thursdays will continue throughout October for members who live or work within a 15km radius. We anticipate being able to expand our services from late October, and will keep members informed. Click and collect operates between 10am and 4pm on Thursdays from the building's foyer. For more information contact the library via email on library@melbourneathenaeum.org.au or by phoning 9650 3100 and leaving a message.

Please ignore any automated returns messages regarding overdue loans, and continue to enjoy our expanding eBook collection while visits to the library are off-limits.

NEW ACTING PRESIDENT

Matt Balmford, who first encountered the library as part of Open House Melbourne in 2015, is the Athenaeum Committee of Management's new acting president.

“While I’d been to the Athenaeum to see things at the main theatre, the first time I walked up the stairs into the library and reading room was during Open House Melbourne,” said Matt. “Then, a few weeks later, riding my bicycle up Swanston St on a Saturday morning, I saw the Athenaeum looming around the corner and through, ‘Right, I’m going to join now’, and did.”

Matt joined the Committee in 2018 and said, as acting president, he would be “building on the strong legacy of our retiring president, Don Smith, who led the organisation so well over the past decade”.

“As COVID restrictions recede, I’m looking forward to our community being able to re-engage with what we love about being part of the Ath.”

Matt said the Committee of Management was “planning some exciting things for 2022 and beyond”.

FAREWELL EUNICE

The library is bidding farewell to Eunice Ang, who has accepted a full-time position with Monash Health. While Eunice’s departure is a loss for the library, this is a great opportunity for her and we wish her well. Eunice’s last day at the Athenaeum will be Saturday 16th October.

BOOK CLUB MEETINGS AND READS

While book and screen clubs are continuing to meet via Zoom, other members can enjoy the clubs’ selected reads by placing reserves. Some of the October picks for our books clubs include *The Dutch house* by Anne Patchett (also available as an eBook), *Mayflies* by Andrew O’Hagan, *The silent patient* by Alex Michaelides and *A room made of leaves* by Kate Grenville.

EARTHQUAKE UPDATE

In the words of librarian Fiona Malcolm, the Athenaeum Library “did what it always does in times of crisis, pandemic, protests, and pestilence. It came through unscathed. No books fell off the shelves and the coffee machine still works.” And, according to business manager Sue Westwood, the building suffered no damage. Good news in crazy times.

NEW BOOKS ADDED TO THE COLLECTION

The library purchases more than 100 new books each month, and new book lists are added to the library website within the first few days of each month. Please check the website soon for September’s new books or contact the library for the book list.