

# From serious science to one cool cat



Sisters Victoria (front) and Elizabeth Carey are the smiling faces behind the wonderfully named Day Kitty cafe in the former Flaherty's Chocolate Shop, Warrnambool.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] A [/dropcap]mid all the gloom of shops closing in Warrnambool, the city's burgeoning cafe scene is stepping up to the plate to show how funky places can not only survive, but thrive.

The wonderfully named Day Kitty cafe is among the newcomers, having taken over the former – and famous – Flaherty's Chocolate Shop building in Kepler St, right next door to the Capitol Cinema.

Since opening six months ago, the cafe with a striking black-and-white decor has carved out a niche market with its emphasis on organic that includes home-made, artisan

milkshakes and icecreams, fresh-pressed juices, light meals, salads and hot drinks.

It is like a soda fountain, meets a coffee shop, meets a gourmet salad-and-juice bar – and it works.



The sisters (Victoria in the middle, Elizabeth, right) were always close and have ended up working side by side after initial careers as scientists. They are pictured here with their eldest sister, Anastasia.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] W [/dropcap]arnnambool sisters **Victoria** and **Elizabeth Carey** are behind the venture, although Elizabeth insists she is simply “helping out” Victoria, who created the dream and has pulled all of the pieces together.

Both are former scientists who, after 10 years in their respective fields (the sisters were born two years apart), decided they wanted to do something completely different with their lives.

Victoria worked in dairying manufacturing at Murray Goulburn, in Koroit, where she gained all of the experience necessary to break out into making artisan icecreams that would use only organic ingredients.

The waffle cones, which are hand-made by Elizabeth, use the egg whites leftover from the icecream.

The cafe's icecream and milkshake bar harks back to the hey-day of Flaherty's, who were known not only for their extraordinary array of chocolates – particularly at Easter – but for the entire Flaherty family each taking a turn at serving icecreams and milkshakes to cinema goers.

"I knew exactly the sort of cafe I wanted to have, and I knew it had to be here, in this building," Victoria says.

"We have had different members of the Flaherty family drop in to see how it looks, and that has been really lovely," she adds.



Victoria hand-makes all of the icecreams, using only

organic ingredients, while Elizabeth makes the waffle cones using the leftover egg whites.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] B [/dropcap]efore joining her big sister at Day Kitty, Elizabeth specialised in the remediation of contaminated land so it is not surprising that she, too, has a strong commitment to sustainability.

**"We try and recycle and reuse as much as we can. Our food scraps are composted and all of the cardboard is taken away and recycled," she explains.**

Even the cutlery and drinking straws are made from recycled bamboo – rather than plastic – although it did take a bit of trial and error to find the right straws.

"We started with some paper ones, but they fell apart before the drink was finished," Victoria says, laughing.

Day Kitty is now "about 95 per cent organic", according to Victoria, with a particular style of coffee bean proving to be the final, 5 per cent hurdle.

As for the name, it was chosen simply because it sounded good and is easy to remember.

"It was going to be Day Kitty-Night Owl, because we had planned to eventually open in the evening and offer cheese platters with a nice glass of wine," Victoria says.

That may still happen, but for now the pair is happy to keep growing the business during daylight hours. The next chapter is about to unfold, with the hiring of a chef so that they can expand their lunch and breakfast menu.

"One day I would really like to also run an organic fruit and veg store, but that is a little further down the track," Victoria says.



These vintage scoops were found in secondhand stores around Warrnambool and may have even been used by Flaherty's....who knows?

**[box type="bio"] Day Kitty, 53 Kepler St, Warrnambool is open Mon to Fri 8.30 to 5.30 and Sat 9-5. Ph: 5561 6921[/box]**

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## Transparency lacking over trader levy





## OPINION

[dropcap style="color: #a02f2f;"] I [/dropcap]t is interesting to see **Mainstreet Australia** adding its voice to those urging Warrnambool traders to pay a special levy to fund a \$3 million marketing and promotion campaign by **Commerce Warrnambool** over the next five years.

Mainstreet Australia president **Steve Bentley** was recently the [focus of a local news article](#) in which he praised the trader levy, saying it was one way to counteract the impact of online shopping and that it had worked very successfully for Geelong, where he works as part of the City of Geelong Council.

As infamous model Mandy Rice-Davies once said, “he would say that, wouldn’t he” because what Mr Bentley failed to mention – or what the news article failed to report – is that the person who was paid by Commerce Warrnambool to develop the trader levy, **Peter McNabb** from Peter McNabb and Associates, is a key figure in Mainstreet Australia.

Indeed Mr McNabb’s [own website](#) explains that he “played a leading role in the establishment of the Victorian version of Mainstreet in 1996, and was its inaugural President from 1996 to 2001”.

The Mainstreet Australia [website states](#) that Mr McNabb is a current committee member and a life member of the association.

As part of his duties with Mainstreet Australia, Mr McNabb was a judge for the annual Mainstreet Australia Awards in 2008, 2010 and 2012. The awards [include](#) a category for groups that have a “special rate and charge budget” of under \$100,000 (in 2014) and a category for those who have a special rate and charge budget over \$100,000 (in 2014).

In other words, Mainstreet Australia rewards those associations that oversee the sort of special rates and charges that Mr McNabb specialises in setting up.



Peter McNabb from Peter McNabb and Associates. Image: [Peter McNabb and Associates.](#)

[dropcap style="color: #a02f2f;"] S[ /dropcap]pecial rates and charges are part of what Mainstreet Australia is all about and it is not ashamed to say so. In fact it held a conference in 2009 in which [the use of special levies](#) – right down to [how to avoid and handle appeals](#) to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal – was a particular focus.



**There is nothing wrong with any of this activity, after all, Mainstreet Australia is a business lobby group and Mr McNabb is paid to help business groups, but what *is* wrong is that none of this has been disclosed.**

This means that you, me, and all the traders who are grappling with whether the controversial levy is a good idea or not, think that Mainstreet Australia is offering an independent assessment.

It is not.

I believe it is part of a strategy designed to make those traders who are uneasy about the levy feel as if there is something wrong with *them*, because they can't see its "obvious" benefits and may wish to vote "no" to its introduction.

We saw another example of this when those local traders who clearly object to the levy – which would add an impost to their overheads until 2019-20 – were [asked to come up with a better idea](#), as if this was somehow their responsibility. Why should they have to find a solution to a problem that they did not create?

It is muddle-headed thinking and, to my mind, a dangerous precedent for how objectors are treated.

Even [the intervention](#) of **Mayor Neoh** later this week to try and find a middle ground between Commerce Warrnambool and dissenting traders speaks volumes as to how the process has been rushed through.



High rents in Warrnambool's main street of Liebig St remain a burden to many traders...and will continue to do so.

[dropcap style="color: #a02f2f;"] A[/dropcap]nd while all of this pushing and pulling and lack of transparency is going on, another Warrnambool CBD trader [has announced](#) that they will close. Not simply because of online shopping. Not because of a lack of any "buy local" campaign, but largely because of high rents in the main street of Liebig St.

This, plus the lack of any free, timed parking in the CBD during the week, remains the single biggest issue facing many traders who can't afford to pay the rent and make a decent living.

A special levy is not a magic wand and will not resolve these fundamental problems, which is why a levy has attracted so much dissent in places such as [Croydon](#), [Bendigo](#) and [Adelaide](#).

And for every success story about the levy in other towns, there is equally a story about those Warrnambool traders who feel the extra cost would provide little benefit above the

promotional schemes that are already in place via [Warrnambool City Council](#), the [Great South Coast Group](#) and the [Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Board](#).

There are also those traders, like the one who called us this week, who run the sort of businesses that don't usually feature in marketing campaigns – think laundrettes, funeral parlours, architects and the like – but who will still pay the fee.

Given the scale and scope of this levy, it needs careful thought and absolute transparency as traders decide whether to support the idea or whether, as is their democratic right, they simply say no.

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# Art environment award delivers a message



*Albumen*, by Collingwood artist Julia de Ville, took out the \$5000 first prize in the 2014 SCOPE Galleries Art Award Exhibition.

A “seductive” art work with a powerful message has taken out the 2014 SCOPE Galleries Art Award for works based on an environmental theme.

Collingwood artist **Julia De Ville** won the \$5000 first prize for her work, *Albumen*, which features three taxidermy chicks with eyes of black diamond, sitting in a highly-polished, engraved silver goblet.

And while the piece is immediately visually appealing, if not even humorous, it contains a sobering message about battery hen farming and the many ways – beyond a dozen eggs – that battery hen products slip into the food stream.

The SCOPE Galleries Art Award: Art Concerning Environment is a biennial, non-acquisitive award that is fast becoming one of the most prestigious and lucrative awards in South-West Victoria since it was first held in 2012.

This year the award attracted a range of first-class entries from around the south-west and every state of Australia, making it a difficult task for guest judge **Marita Smith**, director of Gallerysmith, North Melbourne, to select just one winner. Eventually, however, she settled on *Albumen*.

“Julia’s piece is really intoxicating and seductive in its presentation,” Marita said.

“You are seduced by the work and, because of this seduction, you are drawn to look at the work in greater detail – and that’s when it delivers its punch.”



SCOPE Galleries director Dr Liza McCosh, left, with guest judge for the award, Marita Smith, director of Gallerysmith North Melbourne.

[dropcap style="color: #dc943c;"]S [/dropcap]COPE Galleries director **Dr Liza McCosh** established the award to encourage the

exploration of environmental issues through art and provide a forum to provoke discussion around the environmental challenges of today.

The environmental focus also complements SCOPE's location in Warrnambool, which sits between some of Victoria's most dramatic coastline and its most beautiful hinterland: a combination that continues to inspire both local artists and those from further afield.

"Personally, my own work has always been influenced by the natural environment around me and its various elements – the sky, the landscape – so I am aware of its impact," Liza said.

**[box type="bio"] The Art Concerning Environment Award exhibition will run until July 20. SCOPE Galleries, at 38 Kelp St, is open Thur-Sun 12-5pm.[/box]**

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# Scrap trader levy and start over



An attempt to unite Warrnambool traders through a new marketing levy has run off the rails: perhaps it is time to start fresh?

## OPINION:

[dropcap style="color: #a02f2f;"] A [/dropcap] ballot will soon be held on whether Warrnambool traders should pay a special levy to fund a \$600,000 marketing plan by [Commerce Warrnambool](#), but the main game – to unite the traders as one – has already been lost.

**Traders for and against the annual levy are deep in their trenches and, no matter how the ballot falls, there will be bitterness on at least one side.**

Even the ballot process itself is fundamentally negative: rather than relying on enough traders to vote *for* the levy, it will go ahead unless enough traders vote *against* it. Hence

there is now a very active and growing grassroots campaign by the [Warrnambool Traders Action Group](#) asking traders to be sure they object.

**Given this no-win situation, I would suggest it is time to scrap the levy idea and start over.**

It is three weeks since *Bluestone Magazine* [exposed the full extent of the plan](#) by Commerce Warrnambool (a chamber of commerce) to ask the Warrnambool City Council to attach a levy to 1346 commercial and industrial properties based on their capital improved value.

The levy, which would rise by 5 per cent each year for the next five years, would fund Commerce Warrnambool to operate as a major promotional and marketing body for the city.

Of the \$600,000 to be raised, around \$200,000 will be used for administrative and professional development costs, \$100,000 will go toward an annual infrastructure project, and the remainder will be used for a range of promotional and marketing activities.

Regardless of its intent, however, the roll-out of the levy plan has so far been a dismal failure.



*To stop the proposed  
Commerce Warrnambool  
levy  
You must **OBJECT***

The slogan  
produced by the  
Warrnambool  
Traders Action

Group.

[dropcap style="color: #a02f2f;"] D [dropcap]espite Commerce Warrnambool saying it had contacted hundreds of people about the idea, a large number of traders, including several high-profile businesses, said they knew nothing about it until they read it in *Bluestone*, on Facebook, or after it was tabled as a fait accompli at the May 19 council meeting.

**These traders fall into two broad camps:**

i) those who object to paying any more than what they already do in council rates and various tourism levies;

ii) those who might support the concept, but fear Commerce Warrnambool will only duplicate what is already being done by [Warrnambool City Council](#), the [Great South Coast Group](#) and the [Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Board](#).

Last week, the city of Geelong was [held up as an example](#) of how a trader levy for marketing and promotion can work very well, but the Geelong model is run completely differently to that being proposed for Warrnambool.



The City of Geelong has operated a trader levy since 2001, but it is a very different model to that proposed for Warrnambool. Image: [www.g21.com.au](http://www.g21.com.au)

[dropcap style="color: #a02f2f;"] I [/dropcap] taking a closer look at Geelong, there is a template for how things could work here.

**First, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce has nothing to do with the special levy: it does not collect it, spend it, administer it or receive a cent from it.**

Instead, the [Geelong Chamber of Commerce](#) – which has been running for about 160 years – is an independent body funded through memberships, corporate partners and fundraising events and does all of the things that a business group aims to do, such as networking and lobbying.

Second, the [Central Geelong](#) marketing levy, as it is called, is collected by the City of Geelong Council and is administered by a special committee set up *within* the council.

The Central Geelong Marketing Committee is made up of [12 volunteer representatives](#) from local businesses and sectors, plus one councillor, and supported by a four-person executive team that is employed by the council, including CEO Jodie Reyntjes. (You can [read more here](#)).

The committee manages a levy that in 2012-13 raised \$671,000 and the process appears entirely transparent and fully accountable: they hold monthly public meetings, upload their monthly minutes and produce an annual report.

Indeed, in 2009, Ms Reyntjes wrote an [interesting presentation](#) that underscored the importance of being able to measure the success of the levy in real and meaningful ways: right down to counting the number of pedestrians in the city on a given day.

**Such an approach avoids unnecessary duplication of staff and projects, and sits the levy within an established civic framework rather than trying to replicate this framework outside the council and from the ground up.**

The Central Geelong levy has been running since 2001 – although not without its detractors – but its ongoing survival and successes indicates that it is doing something right.

Could we learn something from our coastal cousins?



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