

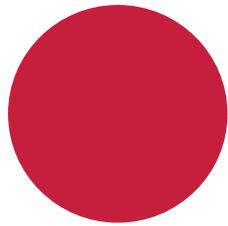


WHAT WE HOUGHT WOULD KILL US

CASE STUDY 8: ALFRESCO DINING

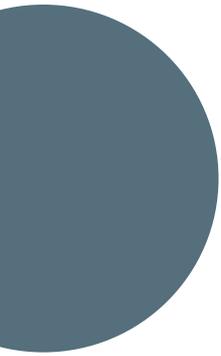
OCTOBER 2022





WHAT WE THOUGHT WOULD KILL US

CASE STUDY 8: ALFRESCO DINING



Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which the Committee for Perth operates – Wadjuk Noongar country.

About the Committee for Perth

The Committee for Perth is a future-focused and apolitical think tank that seeks to positively influence debate and policy through our unbiased fact-based research.

As a collaborative organisation, we engage with our members in over 40 sectors to develop actionable recommendations to ensure Perth is renowned as a global city of choice to live, work, invest, study and visit.

More information about the Committee for Perth and our work, including our knowledge bank of more than 150 pieces of research can be found at www.committeeforperth.com.au.

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Foreword



The 'What We Thought Would Kill Us' series examines some of Perth's most controversial developments – things that have generated large amounts of community opposition either during the developmental and/or approval stages.

In undertaking retrospective analyses, the Committee aims to provide case studies that not only document history but also seek to serve as reminders of key points in Perth's growth and development over time.

This case study, is the eighth in the series and examines the introduction of alfresco dining, which was banned in the Greater Perth region by overzealous regulations. With an enviable outdoor lifestyle and 300 days of sunshine each year, one wonders why it was such a hard-fought battle.

What We Thought Would Kill Us: Alfresco Dining looks back on the region to its humble colonial beginnings. The case study is as nostalgic as it is cringeworthy documenting the ideas of newcomers challenging the status quo and change resistant governments.

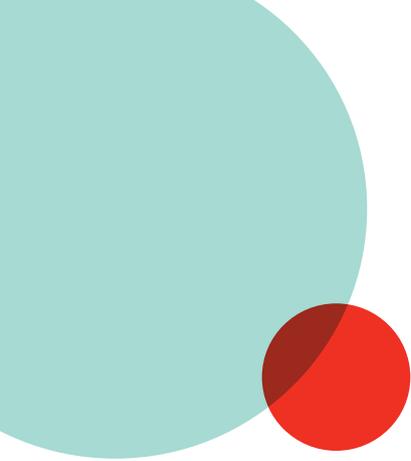
With alfresco dining a norm of life in Perth today, we have the then New Australians to thank for sustaining a campaign to liberate us from our traditional ways.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Fulker'.

Marion Fulker AM

CEO, Committee for Perth
Project Director, *What We Thought Would Kill Us*
Adjunct Associate Professor, UWA

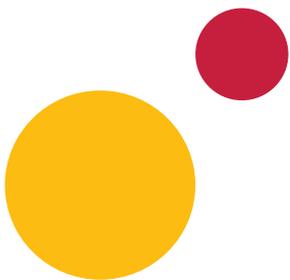
Our previous *What We Thought Would Kill Us* reports on Hillary's Boat Harbour, The Evolution of Perth's Passenger Rail, The Bell Tower, Perth Arena, the Raffles Waterfront Development, the Graham Farmer Freeway and Northbridge Tunnel and Learnings and Recommendations are available on our website at <https://www.committeeforperth.com.au/research-advocacy/projects/what-we-thought-would-kill-us>



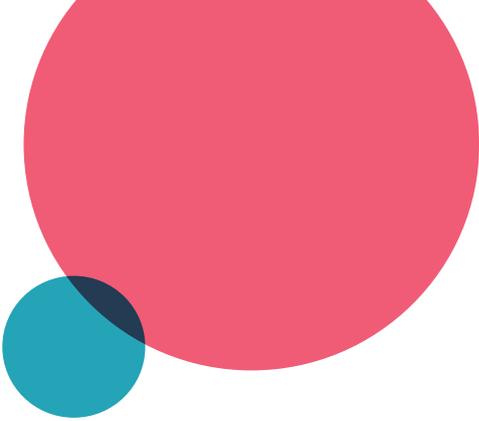
Research Report: 'What We Thought Would Kill Us' Case Study 8: Alfresco Dining

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The report finds
that the future of
urban vibrancy is
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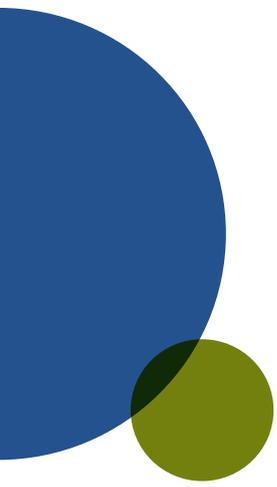
Introduction



What We Thought Would Kill Us is a series of landmark case studies from Perth's recent development history chosen by the Committee for Perth research team for the studies' controversial nature throughout their development process and early life. This case study joins seven others: *the Perth Bell Tower*; *Perth's Passenger Rail*; *Hillary's Boat Harbour*; *Perth Arena*; *the Raffles Waterfront Development*; *the Graham Farmer Freeway and Northbridge Tunnel*; and *the Old Swan Brewery*.

This case study presents the story of Greater Perth's pathway to alfresco dining. On the surface, it is a story of a campaign for innovation and business freedoms versus outdated and overzealous regulations. Yet, it is also a tale of Greater Perth's transformation from a small post-colonial outpost into a culturally diverse and outwardly focused region; of the challenges faced; of the mistakes made and wrongs committed; and of the tenacious individuals who, in the face of hardship, made positive change happen.

The report finds that the future of urban vibrancy is about more than just cutting costs and red tape. It could also ensure that regulations are designed to support entrepreneurial people with good ideas and to keep pace with, rather than hinder, change. It is also about learning from the past, building community, and supporting innovative, community-centred ideas to generate vibrancy and address problems of marginalisation and inequality.



Opportunities for outdoor living and alfresco entertainment in Perth, enabled by its Mediterranean climate and natural landscape, were recognised by residents and visitors early in the region's history.





Greater Perth — Alfresco heaven?

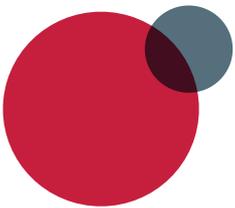
Opportunities for outdoor living and alfresco entertainment in Perth, enabled by its Mediterranean climate and natural landscape, were recognised by residents and visitors early in the region's history. A 1896 feature article on Perth, published in *The Sydney Mail* and *New South Wales Advertiser*, described a whimsical vision for the city's future as a lifestyle destination and culture akin to the towns and cities of Southern Europe, inspired by the region's climate:

The climate is bracing and full of sunshine, and even on the hottest day it is an exception not to get a cool breeze towards evening. Life is alfresco, and in days to come, when a distinctive type will be generated, it is probable that West Australians will have many of the characteristics of the Southern races of Europe. If bright fine skies, sweet rural prospects, luscious fruits and wines, and an easy working day go for anything, this will assuredly be so. (Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, 1896 pp. 73)

This was not the only time, or era, that Western Australia was compared to Mediterranean Europe or that the appeal of outdoor dining was recognised as a potential attractor for the region. Almost 50 years later, in 1944, as World War II continued to rage, a small group of Western Australian citizens and parliamentarians were actively thinking about the future of the State. Then Member of Parliament Mr Charles North, outlined a vision to establish Perth and Western Australia as a tourism destination after the conclusion of the war (North, 1944). Echoing previous idealist visions for the region as a European paradise, he said,

A few weeks ago the suggestion was made that Perth should be the Paris of the Southern Seas. We might refer to Bunbury as the Brighton of Western Australia and to Albany as the Riviera, and Esperance is not without its attractions. I hope the Government will make provision for the tourist traffic as soon as the war is over. The tourist trade represents the one asset that we can sell and at the same time keep.

Mr North (1944) also promoted 'ideas of beautifying the Swan River and providing alfresco fish suppers on the river of a summer's evening'. Moreover, 'the fulfilment of these ideas', he said 'will cost the State very little' (North, 1944 pp. 1727).



Flies, Filth and Disease

Despite these glowing and Euro-centric ideas for Perth's future, in the half-century from the 1890s to the end of World War II, Western Australia was in the relatively early phases of its post-colonial development, and life was not defined by 'luscious fruits and wine', or 'easy working days'.

Colonised in 1829, the Swan River Colony only began to achieve sustained economic development and population growth from the 1850s, and this was only realised as a result of the arrival of convict labour. By 1868, 18,400 Europeans lived in the south-west portion of the colony, and 9,700 of these were male convicts (Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004). These convicts were put to work on public works projects, including the construction of roads, railways, water, sewerage and telegraph lines, which enabled the development of agriculture, forestry and minerals export industries in the colony (Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004).

A turning point for the colony came with the discovery of gold in Halls Creek in the Kimberley region in 1885. News of the discovery travelled through Australia and worldwide, and although the Halls Creek gold rush was short-lived, it was followed less than a decade later by the discovery of large deposits of alluvial and reef gold near Kalgoorlie (Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004).

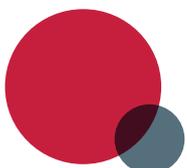
The gold rush era was fundamental in shaping the economic and social landscape of the colony. Men flocked to Western Australia during the 1890s gold rush, many of them from eastern Australia, particularly Melbourne, which was in the grip of a severe economic depression. The fortune seekers arrived in the colony by ship, many of which docked in Fremantle, and would travel through Perth on their way to seek riches in the goldfields (Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004).

The small colony was ill prepared for the rapid influx of people, and rather than finding a land of sweet rural prospects, for many of the new arrivals the colony was a place of sin, sand, sorrow, sickness and shilling drinks (Delroy, 2011 pp.1). With limited infrastructure or housing, overcrowding, poor sanitation and acute water shortages were huge problems for the burgeoning population, and diseases such as dysentery and typhoid were rife, spreading rapidly with devastating impacts (Western Australian Museum, 2022).

Outbreaks of disease struck Perth soon after the gold rush began. In the early years, very little was done to address the epidemic. This was partly due to a lack of medical knowledge about disease transmission, with popular theories abounding within the colony that the disease was spread through infected air.

An 1895 article in Perth's *Western Mail* said of the outbreak at that time,

There is no use in railing at the sanitary authorities and blaming them for all the present ills of the community, for if they were the most perfect sanitary arrangements they could not entirely prevent typhoid, unless the people themselves were equally careful. The germ of typhoid—which is a filth disease—may exist in water, milk, raw oysters (a recent outbreak of typhoid in London has been attributed directly to infected oysters), fruit or vegetables, and it is doubtless even in the air. (*Western Mail*, 1895 pp.19)





Inaction was also due to difficulties finding a viable drainage and sewerage solution for Perth, higher than expected costs and political conflict about who should pay for the public works needed to improve sanitation—the local authority or the State Government. There was also disagreement about whether drainage and sewerage improvements in the city should be prioritised ahead of infrastructure to support mining and agriculture projects in the regions.

Consequently, by 1897, money that parliament had voted to allocate towards a sewerage and drainage project for Perth and Fremantle had been reappropriated towards other projects, including the development of coal mines in Collie and the Donnybrook to Bridgetown railway. Concern about this reappropriation and lack of government action was illustrated in parliamentary proceedings at that time. In 1897, in the midst of the outbreak, Member of the Legislative Council of Western Australia Hon. A. B. Kidson (1897) pleaded for the government not to progress with this spending and, instead, to allocate the investment towards developing a deep sewerage and drainage system for Perth and Fremantle: 'Because it is an absolute necessity, in the first place. The people here have been dying like flies from typhoid fever'. As Kidson (1897) elaborated:

They have been dying in hundreds. The percentage last year or two has increased at an alarming rate, and yet the Government sit down and do nothing. We know perfectly well that Perth is the most unhealthy city in the Australian colonies, and therefore the Government, knowing that the city cannot afford to carry out the work, should undertake to do it (pp. 598).

Yet a lack of medical and epidemiological knowledge meant that there was uncertainty and disagreement about the action that needed to be taken, with some politicians at the time shifting the focus away from infrastructure and towards living conditions and personal hygiene. Member of the Legislative Council the Hon. G. Randell (1897) said of the typhoid situation in Perth at the time:

Large numbers of deaths have taken place here from fever, but there is no satisfactory reason given by the medical profession for the outbreak of fever here. I believe in the old country typhoid fever used to be reckoned as a rich man's disease, due to defective drainage in houses and hotels. Here, I take it, the disease, as far as a layman can judge from observations, arises from many causes. One of the most potent is the abnormal conditions in which numbers of the population are living. They are crowded into lodging houses with a small amount of air space in the rooms. Many people perhaps are not careful enough in their own personal cleanliness (pp. 600).

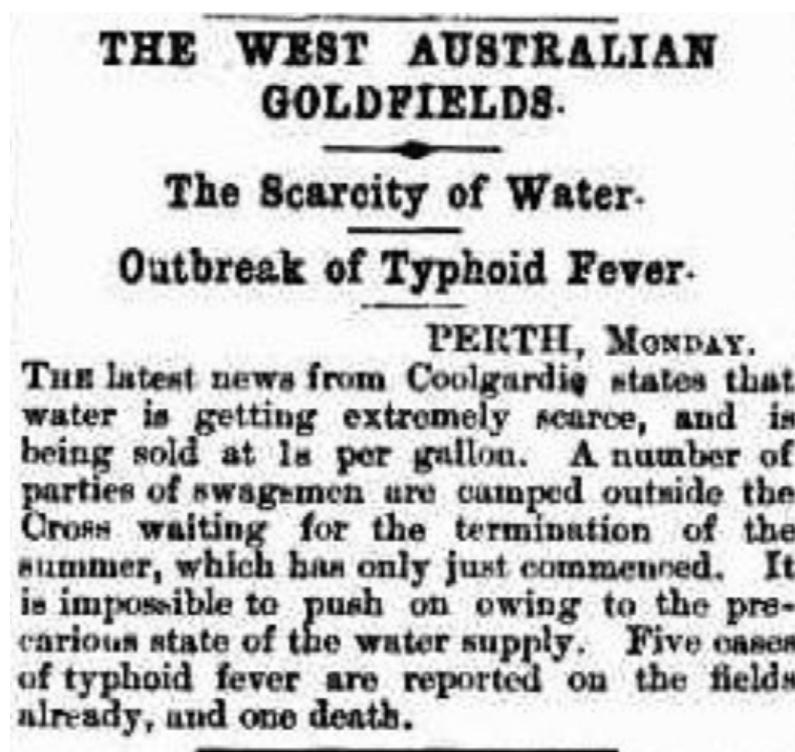
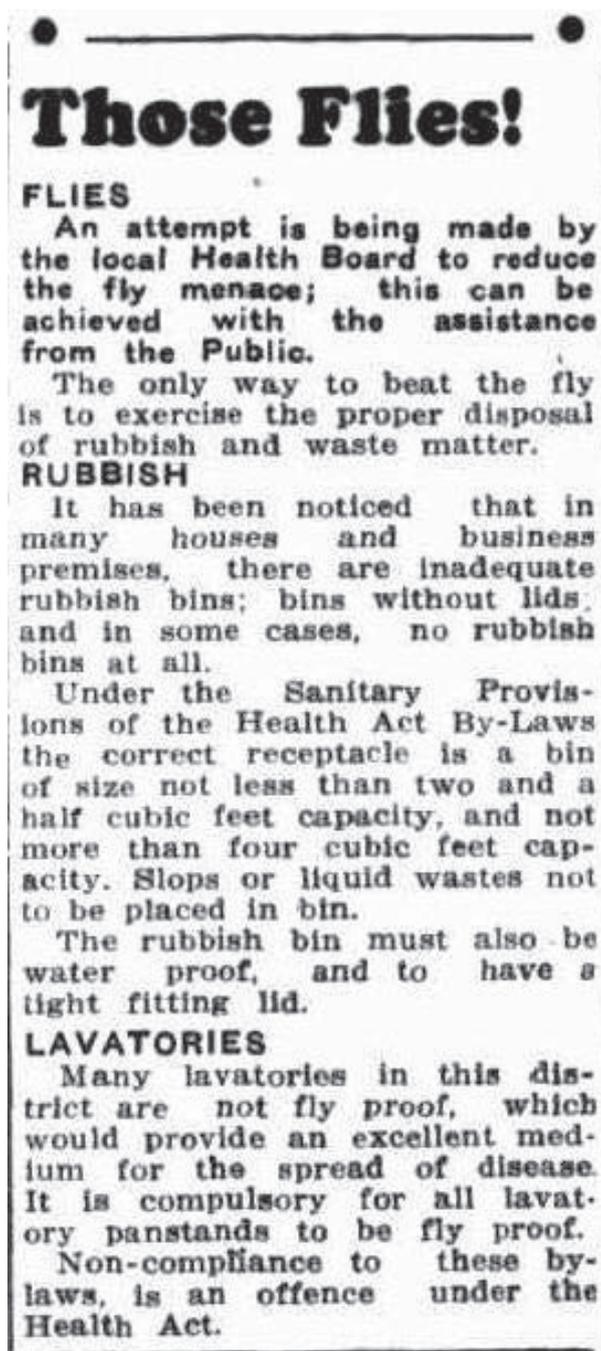


Image: Typhoid fever in the goldfields

Source: 'The West Australian goldfields' (1893) pp.39

By 1917, there was an international viewpoint that a doctor who 'did not know the habits of the housefly, the flea, the cockroach, the mosquito, the body louse, and numerous other disease carrying insects would be helpless in diagnosing disease' (Rogers, 1989 pp.1).



Those Flies!

FLIES
An attempt is being made by the local Health Board to reduce the fly menace; this can be achieved with the assistance from the Public.

The only way to beat the fly is to exercise the proper disposal of rubbish and waste matter.

RUBBISH
It has been noticed that in many houses and business premises, there are inadequate rubbish bins; bins without lids, and in some cases, no rubbish bins at all.

Under the Sanitary Provisions of the Health Act By-Laws the correct receptacle is a bin of size not less than two and a half cubic feet capacity, and not more than four cubic feet capacity. Slops or liquid wastes not to be placed in bin.

The rubbish bin must also be water proof, and to have a tight fitting lid.

LAVATORIES
Many lavatories in this district are not fly proof, which would provide an excellent medium for the spread of disease. It is compulsory for all lavatory panstands to be fly proof.

Non-compliance to these by-laws, is an offence under the Health Act.

Image: Those flies!

Source: Midlands Advocate Perth (1953) pp.3



While the impacts of the typhoid epidemic were distressing in Perth, they were most overwhelming in the goldfields and in the temporary townships that sprang up on the roads to outback mining destinations. The lack of even basic sewerage or sanitation in these locations was compounded by the arid climate, precarious water supply and a lack of knowledge about the causes of disease (Western Australian Museum, 2022).

An 1895 Commonwealth of Australia Department of Health Service publication described the situation on the ground:

Round every little clump of scrub in the hills, you may see a collection of faecal deposits, and the drainage from this is collected by residents lower down. The prevalence of fever, and the disastrous results to the community were not sufficient to deter people from drinking this unappetising beverage... partly... due to the fact that an idea was encouraged by the medical men first on the fields that the epidemic was some peculiar local disease altogether unconnected with the quality of the water supply. (National Trust, 2022 par.7)

Western Australia's typhoid epidemic did not end quickly. It continued to rage into the early twentieth century, and over this period the community also contended with severe outbreaks of gastroenteritis and dysentery. Yet, because disease transmission was better understood, improving water and sewerage infrastructure and sanitation practices in homes and businesses and reducing vectors of disease became a focus of public health initiatives (National Trust, 2022). This included actions to reduce numbers of the much maligned and almost ever-present fly. Australia was a land abundant in species of fly, and in the early years of the Swan River Colony the spring and summer months brought with them hordes of flies, sandflies and mosquitoes.

For early European arrivals in Western Australia, the flies could be unbearable. Austrian nobleman and plant collector Baron Carl von Hügel (1994) said of the flies during a visit to the Swan River Colony in 1833, 'Moses could have visited them upon Pharaoh with the greatest success' (pp.14). In these early years of the colony, insects were mostly regarded as a nuisance, and the role they could play in spreading disease was not widely known. However, advances in medical science meant that by the last decade of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth century, insects were increasingly being linked to the spread of disease, and entomology became an important part of medicine. During this period, international researchers discovered and demonstrated the role of the mosquito in spreading diseases such as malaria and yellow fever, the rat flea in spreading bubonic plague, and the body louse in spreading typhoid fever.

By 1917, there was an international viewpoint that a doctor who 'did not know the habits of the housefly, the flea, the cockroach, the mosquito, the body louse, and numerous other disease carrying insects would be helpless in diagnosing disease' (Rogers, 1989 pp.1). These ideas were widely disseminated, and in Western Australia insects like flies and fleas began to be viewed as carriers of disease. In response, Western Australia's first public health Act — the *Health Act 1898* (WA) — focused on improving sanitation and reducing potential for insects like flies to breed. This also became a core responsibility of newly established public health boards who could prepare by-laws to enforce sanitation requirements.

The *Health Act 1898* states:

Every Local Board may, in the by-laws to be so made, provide for the removal by the occupier or owner, or in case of his default by the Local Board, of dust, mud, ashes, rubbish, filth, blood, offal, manure, dung, or soil collected, placed, or found in or about any house, stable, cow-house, pig-sty, lane, yard, street, or place whatsoever, and preventing the placing or depositing thereof in any place. (Government of Western Australia, 1898, Clause 38).

Public education was also a key early strategy for combatting the risk of insects as vectors of disease and was a core strategy throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Central government, along with local health boards, commonly prepared newspaper articles and advertisements warning the community about the dangers of disease vectors like flies, and educating them about ways to manage 'the fly menace' (Legislative Assembly, 1907).

Community awareness of the dangers of insects as disease vectors was also heightened when insecticide and antiseptic companies entered the Australian market in the early 1900s. These companies promoted the role of insects in disease transmission by, at times, producing graphic and emotive images and advertisements depicting flies as dirty disease vectors and even as killers. Australia's most famous example was the 'Louie the Fly' advertising campaign, which began in 1957 and cemented the role of flies in 'spreading disease' within the Australian psyche (Browne, 2011).



Image: Cover of Australian Disinfectant Company (c1911) booklet on the role of flies in disseminating disease
Source: City of Melbourne (2022)



Image: Louie the fly, Australian Mortein advertisement
Source: Browne (2011)

For Western Australia's State Government, controlling the breeding of flies remained an important objective of health and agricultural departments throughout the twentieth century, even as sanitation practices, water and sewerage infrastructure and waste management services improved. This is illustrated in a 1967 paper by Clee Jenkins and published by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development:

The house fly exemplifies one of the simplest types of disease transmission by insects, the role of the fly being merely that of a mechanical carrier. As already stated, flies infest and breed in all manner of refuse such as garbage, damp lawn clipping, human excreta, and various types of manure. Under such circumstances they have every opportunity of coming in contact with disease-contaminated material, tiny portions of which may either be swallowed or carried about adhering to the hairs of the legs and body. Bearing in mind the house flies' liking for sugar, milk and other foodstuffs, it is not difficult to understand how easily even a single fly can contaminate food and drink by merely settling on them.

The first essential for fly control is strict sanitation. This applies not only to the immediate vicinity of dwellings, stables and dairies but to the disposal of garbage, lawn clippings, fowl manure and other organic matter which only too often is piled in some out of the way corner or shovelled into a shallow pit. If garbage is buried it should be treated with an insecticide if already fly struck and covered with at least a foot of compacted soil (Jenkins, 1967 p. 504).

No doubt one of the reasons that flies remained top of mind for government authorities was that fly numbers in the South-West remained high, particularly during the spring and summer months. Significant progress to reduce fly numbers was not made until the CSIRO Dung Beetle Program oversaw the introduction of new, exotic species of dung beetle into Western Australia in the 1970s and 1980s (Steinbauer & Wardhaugh, 1992). The dung beetles were effective at clearing manure from agricultural land and in reducing breeding of the bush fly. Consequently, in the 1980s, fly numbers began to decrease, first in summer and then in spring, leading to a re-think of public health requirements (Steinbauer & Wardhaugh, 1992).

Image: Mortein plus advertisement

Source: Australian Woman's Mirror (1950) pp.13

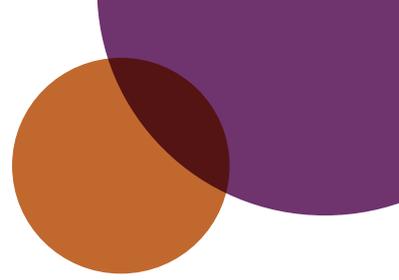
Mortein plus
protects your child
from a deadly
enemy
the disease-carrying
fly!

Dangerous illnesses such as gastro-
enteritis, dysentery, typhoid and
even infantile paralysis may be
carried into your home by flies.
Children, especially, are defenceless
against attack. Your strongest ally
against disease-carrying flies and all other
insect pests is Mortein Plus. **MORTEIN
PLUS** knocks them down instantly
and kills them before they can do
any damage. **MORTEIN PLUS** will make
your home a death-trap for insects . . .
and safe for you and your children.

Mortein spells certain and sudden death
to flies and all insect pests!

Mortein plus
WHEN YOU'RE ON A GOOD THING - STICK TO IT!

Page 13 January 11, 1950
The Australian WOMAN'S MIRROR



While Australia is an increasingly diverse and multicultural society today, its postcolonial history is marred by dispossession, violence, racism and oppression.



'White Australia' to Diverse Australia

While Australia is an increasingly diverse and multicultural society today, its postcolonial history is marred by dispossession, violence, racism and oppression. Following the establishment of the Swan River Colony, the Noongar people, Indigenous to Western Australia's South-West, and other Indigenous Western Australians, were dispossessed of their land and subjected to the contempt, brutality and tyranny of the settlers. For subsequent decades, Indigenous people throughout the State were forced to occupy the lowest rungs of post-colonial society (SWALSC, Host, & Owen, 2009). Racism was also evident towards minority migrant groups, and non-British migrants suffered from formal and informal discrimination, which afforded them a social status that was above that of Aboriginal people, yet below the dominant Anglo-Celts (Peters, 2009; Western Australian Museum, 2022).

Hostilities towards ethnic minorities were evident in the early years post-colonisation, yet it was the arrival of Chinese labourers and miners in the mid to late 1800s that fuelled social unrest among the dominant Anglo-Celtic population and resulted in new discriminatory migration and employment legislation being enacted (Peters, 2009). For example, in 1886, legislation was introduced to regulate and restrict the immigration of Chinese people by introducing a poll tax, resulting in restrictions on the number of Chinese migrants by linking the number of arrivals to the weight of cargo carried by the ships they arrived on. The *Goldfields Act 1886 (WA)* also curbed Chinese migration to Western Australia and ensured that miner's rights could not be issued to people of Asiatic or African origin (Yong & Vosslamber, 2018).

By 1901 the Federal Government had also passed legislation specifically designed to limit non-British migration to Australia. It represented the formal establishment of the White Australia policy. Then Attorney-General Alfred Deakin stated at the time:

That end, put in plain and unequivocal terms ... means the prohibition of all alien coloured immigration, and more, it means at the earliest time, by reasonable and just means, the deportation or reduction of the number of aliens now in our midst. The two things go hand in hand, and are the necessary complement of a single policy – the policy of securing a 'white Australia'. (Kendall, 2007, p. 17)

In Western Australia, objections to the employment of non-white immigrants were made in the Legislative Assembly and were led by the union movement who, in the early 1900s, were vocal in opposing businesses that were known to employ non-British migrants. In 1901, a motion was moved by William D. Johnson (1901), Member for Kalgoorlie, proposing that businesses supplying police and other government uniforms should be required to employ union labour, pointing out that the firm contracted to supply police uniforms at that time 'whilst dismissing certain members of the Tailors' and Tailoresses' Unions, employed Hindoos' (p. 1126).

While positioned, at least in part, as activism to ensure worker rights and rates of pay, it was noted by John Forrest (1901), the Premier of the time, that arguments of immigrants' exploitation were unfounded:

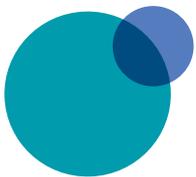
I do not see that it matters to us whether any particular individual in this State employs a pious Hindoo or any other person. It is not compulsory on anyone to employ Hindoo labour, neither is it compulsory to employ any particular form of labour. The information which came to me on this subject, and on which I based my answer to a certain question on this matter of tailoring, is to the effect that the Hindoo referred to was receiving the same rate of wages as any ordinary workman. (p. 1128)

Yet, despite the views of the then Premier, opposition to non-British workers and immigrants and the virtue of a White Australia policy became firmly ingrained, and white Australia remained the foundation of Australia's immigration policy for the first half of the twentieth century. However, the near invasion of Australia by the Japanese during World War II caused the Federal Government to re-think its immigration strategy. Prime Minister of Australia at the time, Ben Chifley, summarised the government's concerns stating, 'We must populate Australia as rapidly as we can before someone else decides to populate it for us' (Migration Heritage Centre, 2022).

It was evident at the time that migration from Britain alone would not be sufficient to achieve the rapid population growth the Federal Government desired, and as a result, Australia agreed first to accept refugees from Eastern Europe, followed by migrants from Southern European nations (Caunt, 2007). This policy shift coincided with increasing calls, particularly in the eastern states, to abolish the White Australia policy or allow 'quotas' of non-British migrants to enter the country annually (Styants, 1949). However, in Western Australia, this activism was commonly dismissed as attempts to obtain cheap labour from overseas, and fears remained that allowing non-British migrants to settle in the State would generate animosity among existing residents (Styants, 1949). Then Member of Parliament Mr Herbert Styants expressed these concerns while addressing the Legislative Assembly on migration in 1949:

We have had many such people in years gone by and we know that they created a lot of racial animosity and hatred on the Goldfields, and much trouble in the timber industry and in connection with clearing contracts in the agricultural areas. Whether it would be fair to bring that type of migrant here in large numbers, to a country which has not been particularly anxious to receive them and has not extended to them any very cordial welcome, is very doubtful.

I believe they are coming here now in greater numbers than is advisable. It is not fair to the people themselves that they should be encouraged to migrate to a country where they will not receive any appreciable welcome. It is not fair to the people who are already here and many would resent their arriving in large numbers. The main trouble respecting these Southern Europeans is that they tend to concentrate in small cantons or communities. They do not mix freely with Australians, which is not always the fault of the people themselves. The fault is largely that of Australians who have been exceedingly slow to fraternise with them, and this has more or less driven the newcomers into small colonies. (Styants, 1949 p. 1291).



Implicit within these attitudes were ideals of racial assimilation and a general expectation that migrants arriving in Australia from outside Britain should leave their culture, language and traditions behind to become 'good Australians':

On the Eastern Goldfields we find that the Australian-born children of Southern Europeans are indistinguishable from Australians. When such children are born here, go to school locally and learn the Australian customs and ways of life, they are indistinguishable from the ordinary Australian child born of British parents, and were it not for their surnames it would not be known that they were of foreign origin. They could only be regarded as good Australians. They are in fact good Australians and very estimable citizens and compare well with Australians born of English parents (Styants, 1949 p. 1291).

Preferences to retain a white Australia remained politically and culturally prominent in Australia throughout the 1950s, and significant steps towards abolishing the policy were not taken until a formal review of migration law in 1966 (Department of Immigration, Central Office, 1968). Subsequent to the review, new legislation was introduced by the Federal Government, which required all potential migrants to be subject to the same rules and restrictions regarding the acquisition of visas and be eligible to become Australian citizens after a waiting period of five years.

The Commonwealth *Migration Act 1966* passed with bipartisan support and was promoted by the Federal Government with a particular aim to boost the Nation's relationship with its Asian neighbours. However, despite passing the new migration law, there was no attempt to establish Australian migration offices in Asian countries or offer assistance to Asian migrants (National Museum Australia, 2022).

The Australian Labor Party retained its preference for a white Australian ideal until 1971, and when racially discriminatory immigration policy was formally rejected, it was not without opposition or controversy. The Premier of New South Wales at that time, Mr Robert Askin, was quoted asking whether restrictive immigration could be an election winner in 1972, while then Minister for Housing, Mr Kevin Cairns, told the House of Representatives:

No matter how often it is contended that this policy would not 'open the flood gates', the fact remains that, without any change in principle, these could be 'ripped open' in a moment ... Uncontrolled migration clearly threatens a homogeneous community ... could sacrifice the Australian people and, in particular, Australian working men. (as cited in McQueen, 1972 p. 1).



In a society that actively discriminated against them, early non-British migrants in Western Australia needed to be entrepreneurial, hardworking and innovative to get ahead.



Image: Chinese arch 1901, St Georges Terrace, Perth. Constructed by the Chinese community to welcome the Duke and Duchess of York in celebration of Australia's federation

Source: State Library of Western Australia (2022)

Marginalisation Drives Entrepreneurialism

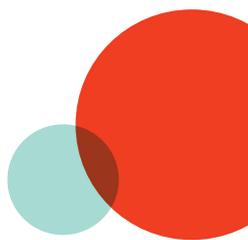
In a society that actively discriminated against them, early non-British migrants in Western Australia needed to be entrepreneurial, hardworking and innovative to get ahead. While early Chinese migrants to Perth came as contract labourers and farm hands, legislative restrictions on their employment ensured that many of those who remained after federation started their own businesses in industries such as furniture making, laundries, trading companies and market gardens to earn a living (Peters, 2009).

Leaders of Australia's Chinese community protested and sought to overcome discriminatory legislation and attitudes (La Trobe University, 2022). This was illustrated by the fact that, despite the passing of the Commonwealth *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, Perth's Chinese community participated in community events when possible, including in parades and celebrations of Australia's federation and the visit of the then Duke and Duchess of York, when the community constructed a Chinese Arch on St Georges Terrace.

Despite these attempts, paid employment and business opportunities for Chinese immigrants continued to be severely hampered by discriminatory legislation—specifically the *Factories Act 1904* (WA), which restricted working hours between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, and forced Chinese people to pay twice as much as locals for factory registration. Other business owners also actively agitated to reduce Chinese competition, resulting in discriminatory policies that required Western Australia Chinese furniture makers, for example, to stamp 'made by Asian labour' on any item they produced. Despite this, some factories flourished because locals judged their product superior (Peters, 2009). Migrants from Southern Europe also suffered from discrimination within the predominately Anglo-Celtic population in the first half of the twentieth century.

The early part of the twentieth century attracted new male populations to Western Australia from Italy, as well as from the former Yugoslavia and Greece. Most early arrivals were 'sojourners' because they intended to stay only as long as it would take them to make enough money to improve their family's lifestyle in their homeland. However, after the United States closed its doors to immigrants in the 1920s, the number of people arriving from Southern and Eastern Europe seeking a new life in Western Australia increased (May, 1999).

Many initially sought work in the goldfields, but discriminatory practices and attitudes that had limited employment options for Chinese people also greatly restricted the job choices of other non-British immigrants (May, 1999; Western Australian Museum, 2022). This generated high unemployment levels and ultimately pushed more and more immigrants into either self-employment or exploitation (May, 1999). In response, immigrants tended to gather in cultural groups to support each other socially and economically. While these cultural groupings fostered and supported the needs of individuals, they attracted disdain from many Anglo-Celts.



Northbridge was the heartland of immigrant Western Australia. Chinese groceries, produce and hardware merchants emerged in Murray, James and Williams Streets in the late nineteenth century, and by 1910, the *Chung Wah* community centre had been established in James Street (Peters, 2009). The Northbridge area also became an important hub for Greek immigrants, who were pioneers in Western Australia's fishing and oyster industries (Collins, Krivokapic-Skoko, Jordan, Babacan, & Gopalkrishnan, 2020). In the early 1900s, the number of Greek immigrants in Western Australia was relatively small, and the community therefore established businesses that targeted mainstream consumers, including oyster bars; fish mongers; fish and chip shops; fruit and vegetable retailers; and Australia's third largest tobacco and cigarette manufacturer, Michelides, situated on the corner of Lake and Roe Street (Peters, 2009; Wynne, 2020). Yet, as more Greek immigrants arrived in Western Australia, often alone and to a hostile reception, cultural, employment and practical support from other Perth Greeks was critical (Collins et al., 2020).



Image: Fresh fish cart owned by P. Auguste situated outside Michelides Cigarette Factory in Northbridge.

Source: State Library of Western Australia (2022)

Northbridge was the heartland of immigrant Western Australia. Chinese groceries, produce and hardware merchants emerged in Murray, James and Williams Streets in the late nineteenth century.

In 1912, the Castellorizian Association of Western Australia was founded, the first regional Greek organisation to be established in Australia, and the second ethnic association to be founded in the State (Peters, 2009). Membership of the organisation was open only to Greek immigrants originating from the small Greek island of Castellorizo, reflecting the fact that a third of the 335 Greek people living in Western Australia at that time were Castellorizian (Collins et al., 2020; Neos Kosmos, 2022). The organisation acted as a staging post for people migrating to Australia who needed to learn where they could seek work, make connections and understand local laws (Neos Kosmos, 2022).

In the early decades of the 1900s, a modest Greek residential settlement evolved in the Lake Street area and soon expanded northwards from the newly built Greek Orthodox church. By the 1930s, Northbridge also boasted a Jewish Synagogue; a Muslim Mosque; St Brigid's Catholic church; and Slav, Afghan, Chinese and Macedonian boarding houses. Enzo Luisini, the first Italian credited with setting up in business in Northbridge, also established a wine saloon and clothing store in Northbridge during this era (Peters, 2009).

Fremantle was also an important immigrant hub. The port city was the first point of landfall for many migrants travelling to Australia, and arrivals from Southern Europe and China had been living in the area since the first years of settlement. These migrants came to the New World seeking financial betterment, and cultural groups, such as the Greeks and Italians, worked hard to establish new industries, for example, Fremantle's fishing industry, to achieve their economic goals (May, 1999). By 1904, it was noted by the Fremantle fisheries inspector that:

The number of licences issued has been 354 men and 124 boats, about 10 boats being engaged chiefly in cray fishing. I regret to say that the industry is chiefly in the hands of the Greeks and Italians, both afloat and ashore. (as cited by May, 1999 para. 31).

Difficulties obtaining employment outside their own community groups meant that some non-British immigrants established businesses specifically to meet the needs of their community. According to May (1999), in the early part the twentieth century there were only three trades in which Fremantle 'Italians' could be employed—tailoring, boot making or barbering—and that this was only because Italians owned and operated some of these businesses and were prepared to employ other Italians. Italians in Fremantle also reportedly turned to fishing for no reason other than they would not, or could not, be employed anywhere else because they were regarded as 'inferior people' and so 'had to stick together' (May, 1999 para. 24).

However, these adventurous immigrants were often highly educated and skilled and were nothing if not resilient and entrepreneurial. Therefore, as the population of different ethnic groups increased, so did the number of ethno-specific products and services. The rise in Italian businesses in Northbridge, including self-employed grocers; fruit sellers; fish wholesalers; food manufacturers; restaurant keepers; fish hawkers; tailors; butchers; and clothing, footwear and hardware merchants meant that by the 1940s and 1950s, the area was firmly established as Greater Perth's 'Little Italy'. Legendary, long-standing Italian enterprises, including the Re Store and Sorrento restaurant, were established during this era (Peters, 2009).

Fremantle was also a hub of Italian enterprise and witnessed the establishment of new businesses including restaurants such as The Capri and The Roma, which were to become regionally renowned (Stott, 2017; Tyrrell, 2016). In the 1950s, Italian businesses mostly catered for the Italian community, although by the 1960s some ethnic eateries, like The Roma, were attracting a growing non-Italian clientele as the population became more connected and worldly and sought out the restaurants' exotic signature dishes, such as The Roma's famous 'chicken and spaghetti' (May, 1999). Similar dishes remain on the menu today.

This trend continued into the 1970s as Australia started to develop its own food culture, and eating out and trying new, international cuisine gained popularity (Symons, 2014). In Greater Perth, the increased prosperity associated with the mining boom of the 1960s helped to fuel growth of the restaurant sector.



Image: Frank and Nella Abrugiato with Sam Caniglia (holding a sign painted by Alan Bond) in The Roma, High Street, Fremantle, 1993



Image: Chicken parmigiana from the reopened Roma Italian Restaurant, 2022

Yet the hospitality industry remained small, and eating out was primarily a casual and inside affair, with the most popular cuisines being seafood, Italian, home-style and French (Thompson, 1979). Chinese restaurants, in particular, boomed during this period (Cai, 1999). Despite this, eating outside or 'alfresco' remained the remit of the backyard BBQ or beachside fish 'n' chips. However, drinking outdoors in beer gardens had been an important part of local culture for decades, the virtues of which were elaborately espoused in a 1955 *Sunday Times* advertorial:

PERTH'S climate is the envy of the rest of Australia. By day warm sunshine and blue skies. At evening the lingering warmth tempered by a gentle breeze. And on these long, warm summer evenings many thousands of Perth people find easy, pleasant relaxation in the many fine beer gardens almost unique to this State.

Dotted throughout the suburbs are to be found these delightful adjuncts to civilised living. Many as gay and colourful as some of the side-walk cafés of European capitals, they provide us with the means to enjoy friendly companionship in charming surroundings. To be able to sit for hours, under the stars, listening to music and enjoying drinks in comfort is something that no other State in Australia enjoys to the same extent. And the popularity of outdoor drinking in Perth is rapidly increasing. ('Open air refreshment', 1955 pp.26).

The first steps towards realising the potential for outdoor dining in Greater Perth were taken via a tenacious and community-minded Italian migrant, Nunzio Gumina, and started with just three tables outside on the footpath of his small Italian café, Papa Luigi's, on South Terrace, Fremantle.



Images: The Sunday Times advertorial

Source: 'Open air refreshment' (1955) pp.26

Case study: Papa Luigi's and the path towards alfresco dining on Fremantle's Cappuccino Strip.

Source: Gumina (2006)

The tale of Papa Luigi's pathway to outdoor dining is a colourful one.

Nunzio Gumina purchased Papa Luigi's café in 1977. His interest in coffee shops had been piqued following a conversation with the leading Italian chef who worked at what was the top hotel restaurant in Perth at that time.

The chef told Gumina that the most important thing he serves in the restaurant is the coffee, because it is the last thing that a customer consumes before they leave. Gumina quoted the chef advising him, 'If the coffee isn't good, my food that would be the best in all of Australia... doesn't mean anything'.

Gumina's decision to purchase the café was almost spur of the moment, but he proceeded, with the backing of his father and uncle. However, he ran into almost immediate problems. At the time, Papa Luigi's was both a café and a gambling lounge, with a games room where cards and machines were played. It was not legal, according to Gumina, but was generally tolerated.

Papa Luigi's customers were mainly Italian, and the core clientele would arrive at 9:00 am for coffee and would then sit for three to four hours chatting, but not consuming anything else. In the evenings, groups of young Italian men would arrive to play the gambling machines, staying until 10:00 pm or 11:00 pm at night. According to Gumina, these young men were not well liked and often engaged in antisocial behaviour: 'If someone passed they would play tricks or spit on him', Gumina said.

This behaviour drew complaints and criticism from Fremantle residents, and soon after purchasing the business Gumina was threatened with closure: 'After a week of opening I received a letter from council saying that they had received so many complaints from residents saying that the café's customers who came to me were not that good [decent people]' The letter said, 'if things don't improve the place closes'. In response, Gumina sought advice from Councillor John Cattalini, then the only Italian Councillor in the City of Fremantle, and reached out to local people to help and encourage the young men to improve and change their behaviour.

It wasn't easy. According to Gumina, Fremantle was a different place in those days: 'In '77 Fremantle was a typical port, like all ports in the world, it was not a quiet place ... In those days, no one walked the streets of Fremantle, particularly in the evening'. Nightclubs were often places for fights and the young men who frequented his café were 'a bit delinquent'.

Gumina decided to close the café early in the evenings and would go to the nightclubs and other places with an aim to keep the young men from getting into trouble with the police or ending up in jail for the night. According to Gumina, the key to changing the behaviour of these young men was not the law or the police but appealing to their community, family values and ties:

These guys weren't afraid of anything, neither the law, nor the police. They were afraid only of their parents. Growing up in Fremantle, I already knew most of the parents and some relatives, so if they made any mistakes, I would say, 'look, now I'm calling your mother'. They would say, 'no, no, please, please', so I would tell them, 'then be good'.

The issue came to a head for Gumina when a rival gang of young men from Coolbellup arrived to fight the Fremantle gang.

I stood in the middle of the street and said, 'Okay, stop'. I told them if you want to fight, then come back tomorrow night. Underneath the café, I have a place (which was just perfect) to box. The best will get a medal. Ten Coolbellup boys and ten Fremantle boys, and the best will get a trophy. I don't know what happened, but surely God got in the way that night, but they said 'Okay, let's come back tomorrow night'.

The next evening there were more than 120 boys, and I had to close the place above. At that time what I did was against the law, but in short, the boys boxed and hugged afterwards, those from Coolbellup with those of Fremantle. I said, 'Okay, no more boxing, we are now friends'. It finished there.

Six months later, Gumina sought the help of a young, scruffy, yet polite Australian architect who had begun to frequent Papa Luigi's ordering cappuccino and had reminisced with Gumina that the café 'reminded him of cafés in Italy'. Gumina, who had not been to Italy since he had left as a six-year-old, asked if the cafés in Italy still had tables and umbrellas on the sidewalks and shared his dream to turn Papa Luigi's into a café just like the cafés in Italy.

Together they made an application to the council to put three tables on the sidewalk with chairs and umbrellas. According to Gumina, at the first meeting to consider the application, there was uproar, with arguing breaking out amongst councillors who questioned not only the reputation of the business but also the legal ability for business owners to occupy the pavement: 'The argument went that the footpath was public property and was for the people, not for anyone else or for the businesses'.

Yet, Gumina was in luck, because it came to pass that the person responsible for making a decision on his application was also in charge of youth workers in the city and was aware of Gumina's work to help clean up the streets and to improve the behaviour of the city's youth. Gumina explained:

After three to four months of arguing, I received a phone call from the municipality. The officer said, 'Do you know what a pain you have given to the Council of Fremantle? Do you know that there is no permit... for this alfresco you want to do in Fremantle?'



Image: Papa Luigi's Coffee House circa 1977

Source: Fremantle Stuff (2022)

However, the officer had decided to give Gumina a three month alfresco trial. Gumina commenced the trial, placing just three tables outside on the footpath. After three months the trial was deemed a success, and he received the first alfresco permit.

This was the start of Fremantle's 'Cappucino Strip', although the transformation was relatively slow. According to Gumina, 'It was not the "heart" of Fremantle in those days ... there was a butcher, shoemaker, travel agent, bookstore and a pizza parlour'.

Papa Luigi's originally served coffee and sweets, and it was a couple of years before other businesses began to seek permits for alfresco tables for dining and new hospitality businesses moved in. This was at least partly because, at first, other businesses assumed Gumina had paid someone to be allowed to place tables outside. Gumina described this development:

There was someone who had a pizzeria before me. After four to five years he couldn't take it anymore... he saw that my business was doing very well... indeed too well. One day he arrived, and he said to me, 'look I can't take it anymore, who do I have to pay in the council to have tables and chairs outside?'

Gumina helped the business owner prepare an application to the council for an alfresco permit. Other businesses soon followed, and South Terrace emerged as Perth's first 'alfresco' street. People of Perth from all backgrounds and ethnicities loved alfresco dining, and the more alfresco on offer, the more popular the area became. Gumina said:

'When I started this alfresco thing they came in all nationalities and colours ... all of them', 'In the early '80s, when I was the only one, I was almost always full. When the others arrived, there was a line'.

Yet the popularity of alfresco dining was not enough ultimately to save the area from decline. According to Gumina, South Terrace began to change when large business franchises started to move into the street:

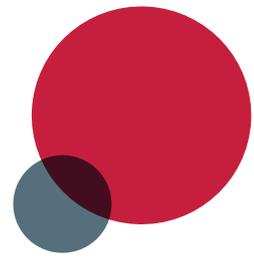
At the beginning, everything we did was always for the Fremantle community, but then it became a business. When big firms like Hungry Jacks and [the] Dome moved in... the concept was never the same... Nowadays the old customers, apart from those who work nearby, don't go there. Now they go to South Fremantle.



Image: The 'Cappucino Strip' on Fremantle's South Terrace

Source: Saggin (2011)

America's Cup Challenges the Status Quo



The popularity and success of Fremantle's alfresco cafés paved the way for outdoor dining elsewhere in Greater Perth and Western Australia. Restaurateurs around the region began to place pressure on local councils to allow outdoor dining and community members enamoured with the atmosphere and charm of South Terrace, began to push for similar types of facilities (Knowsley, 1985).

Yet Fremantle's progressive approach had not been widely duplicated, and in the early 1980s public health and food hygiene regulations and local government by-laws remained barriers to enabling alfresco dining. Trepidation remained about the potential negative health impacts of flies on food served outdoors. There was also concern about the potential for outdoor dining to cause problems, including the consumption of alcohol within outdoor dining areas and obstructions to pedestrian movements.

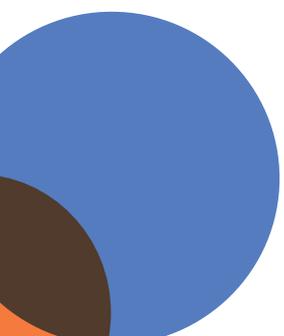
However, public demand and a burgeoning food scene provided the impetus for change, and in 1985 amendments to state legislation and food hygiene regulations were introduced to enable local authorities to approve outdoor dining. These changes were generally supported across the political spectrum. Member of Parliament James Clarko (1985) said of proposed alfresco amendments to be proposed as part of the *Local Government Amendment Act* in 1985:

I am sure that Western Australia's Mediterranean climate is an appropriate place for these facilities. I think that dining alfresco in the beautiful parts of Western Australia for so much of the year is appropriate. I think this clause will be warmly welcomed by large sections of our community. I understand that, in most Mediterranean climates throughout the world, people eat out this way. Restaurants in Perth for a long time have moved people out of buildings and into their backyards. (p. 2436)

Nonetheless, nervousness about the changes were evident in comments by Member for the Opposition Anthony Trethowan 1985):

The people who seek to operate these public eating places may well seek a change in the provision of the licensing Act in relation to the licensing of these premises. Whereas I support fully the outlining of the amendment before us and the effect it will have to allow greater flexibility in the operation of sidewalk cafes, it is a different matter when considering the licensing Act. Important legal arguments make it extremely difficult to licence businesses on public streets. (p. 2436)

A Health Department review of fly numbers was a crucial component of obtaining State and Local Government support for the changes. As part of this review, community members reported a significant decline in the number of flies in Perth over the preceding years, something the department accredited to better public knowledge and action to control fly breeding (Wainwright, 1985 p.1). Health Department representative, Dr Richard Lugg said: 'We didn't do a head count of flies but 52 per cent of people questioned in a recent survey said that they thought that there were fewer flies than in past years'. He said, 'People are more aware of the problem because of our fly control campaign and 90 per cent of people said they were doing as much or more to control flies in their own home' (Wainwright, 1985 p.1).



Dr Lugg conceded that while the department still had concerns about outdoor eating, they were prepared to accommodate the shift in community preferences:

We have accepted the fact that the public want outdoor eating facilities, though we are still concerned with the standard of food being served... But once the food has been served it is up to the individual where and how he wants to eat it. (as cited in Wainwright, 1985 p. 1)

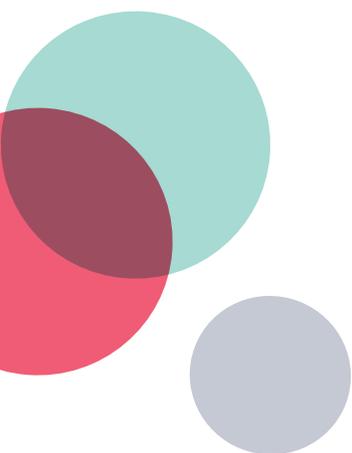
The City of Perth welcomed the changes and passed a new by-law enabling outdoor seating, which according to then Councillor Ron Stone, had been a long time coming: 'It is long overdue, and it is all part of getting people back into the city', he said (as cited in Wainwright, 1985 p. 1). The outcome was the ability for local authorities to approve alfresco dining and outdoor eating in Greater Perth, including in Northbridge and some beachfront locations; however, the service of alcohol initially remained off-limits (Knowsley, 1985 p. 3).

This was an issue of concern for then Mayor of Fremantle, John Cattalini, who said that pavement cafés created a good atmosphere in the city, but that diners should also have the legal right to be served alcohol when dining: 'It's a bit ridiculous having alfresco dining if you can't have a glass of wine with your meal', he said (as cited in Knowsley, 1985 p. 3).

While the potential for changes to liquor licensing laws to enable the alfresco service of alcohol had previously been flatly refused, the upcoming 1987 Americas Cup was shifting political attitudes on the issue. Then owner of The Mexican Kitchen, a licensed restaurant in Fremantle, explained that just three years prior he had approached the licensing court about alfresco dining and was told that it would never be allowed; but in 1985 he was advised that it could be legalised in time for the America's Cup defence in 1987 (as cited in Knowsley, 1985).

The proposed changes to liquor licensing requirements being debated in the Western Australian Parliament at that time were part of the *Acts Amendment (Americas Cup and Special Events) Bill 1985 (WA)*. Amongst other special powers, the Bill proposed to provide the minister with the ability to approve extensions to the hours during which premises could sell alcohol, to exempt premises from restrictions regarding the circumstances and places where alcohol could be consumed, and to permit the sale, supply and consumption of liquor in areas or places that were not licensed premises. While this could include the sale and consumption of alcohol within alfresco areas, the Bill proposed to allow for these changes for a period of only 18 months (up to June 1987), after which existing liquor licensing requirements would once again apply.

The impetus for these temporary amendments was an anticipated influx of international tourists for the America's Cup defence, who were expected to bring with them demand for more liberal liquor licensing laws than those that were in place in the State at that time. The need for changes to licensing laws to meet these requirements appeared to be generally accepted across the political spectrum. Less accepted was the need for these 'relaxed' laws to be applied to meet the lifestyle preferences of the local community, and there was therefore consternation regarding the potential for these changes to lead to long-term amendments to liquor licensing after the America's Cup.



Then Member of the Opposition Des Dans (1985) said of the Bill during parliamentary debate:

the Bill is directed at ... what we all anticipate, to be the very special needs in the community created as a result of the world 12-metre championships and the America's Cup defence. The Minister indicated that over the period of those two events WA could expect to receive more than one million visitors. It is fair to say that people coming from many parts of the world, people who enjoy a Mediterranean climate similar to our own, and a relaxed lifestyle similar to our own, will expect similar arrangements to their own to be current in WA. I guess the Minister is seeking to meet those requirements.

So many people are saying, 'Why close the door after June 1987? If the laws are to be relaxed why don't we carry on with that arrangement?' It might be that the Minister thinks it is a good idea. It might be that the Government's proposed changes to the Liquor Act will be introduced next year. It could be that the Government of the day is looking forward to these arrangements continuing. In other words, the Minister is looking forward to a more relaxed style in the use of liquor and in the serving of liquor at restaurants and the like. It is a dangerous area to tread as the Minister knows only too well, to my horror. (p. 3388)

The temporary provisions were provided for the America's Cup. Subsequent to this, new liquor licensing legislation was prepared that enabled alcohol to be served at dining tables within an alfresco area, but only when sold and consumed ancillary to a meal.



Image: Alfresco dining at Old Papas, South Terrace, Fremantle circa 1993

Source: State Library of Western Australia (2002)

Fees and Red Tape Threaten Progress

Even after the introduction and widespread adoption of alfresco dining across Perth, the implementation of Local Government alfresco by-laws and policies was not always smooth sailing. As the popularity of alfresco dining increased, fees for outdoor dining started to become an issue of conflict between local authorities and restaurateurs.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the number of restaurants with alfresco areas had substantially grown, and during this period councils started to increase the fees for the use of these outdoor seating areas, generating the ire of businesses. By 2002, businesses in the City of Perth were faced with a fee increase for alfresco dining, which in some cases more than doubled fees compared with those of the previous year (Sprague, 2002).

According to comments by then Restaurant and Catering Association President Harry Ferrante, the fee increase brought the rate for leasing alfresco areas up to \$150 per square metre, rendering the city the most expensive place to lease alfresco space in Australia, where the average square metre rate was reportedly \$45 (Sprague, 2002 p. 24).

In comments to the *Business News*, Mr Ferrante said that charges to lease alfresco dining areas in the City of Perth were on par with prices to lease inside building space and that restaurants could not see where this money was being spent because it was not being allocated towards improving the local area. He remarked, 'What does the council contribute? Where does the revenue go? If they used those funds to reduce crime and to promote the area, then I would probably have no exception to it' (as cited in Sprague, 2002).



Fee increases proposed by the City of Fremantle were greeted with similar fury by industry. In 2002, the City proposed to double alfresco fees from \$135 to \$270 per table, generating strong backlash from businesses and the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce and resulting in council rescinding the plan and working with industry groups to establish a fair and sustainable fee structure for the long term (Sprague, 2002a). Differences across councils in conditions of approval for individual businesses were also cause for dismay. The Beaches Café in Cottesloe was a publicised example when, in 2003, its permit for alfresco dining prohibited diners from sitting outside on Mondays and Tuesdays to give local residents ‘a break from the hustle and bustle of café lifestyle’ (Franklin, 2003 p. 15).

The reported result was confusion among patrons, who could sometimes sit at a table on the lawn and have a coffee and at other times could not. The problem was further exacerbated by other cafés close by being permitted to serve customers alfresco every day. Then Beaches Café owner Helen Burke said it was ‘a crazy situation’; however, the CEO of the Town of Cottesloe defended the decision, explaining that council was required to consider the needs of residents as well as businesses (Franklin, 2003 p. 15). More than ten years later, alfresco red tape was also blamed for limiting the ability of restaurants within the City of Perth to keep up with dining trends driven by the arrival of food truck and pop-up outdoor dining and bar areas in preceding years (Wynne, 2016).

Alfresco restaurants and bars had sought to expand their outdoor operations and to provide services such as the mixing and service of drinks outdoors with an aim to compete with pop-up vendors and activate street spaces on a long-term basis. At that time, restaurateurs said that the lack of a level playing field meant that they were missing out on the benefits of innovations and developments in central Perth. They also questioned State and Local Government decisions to support pop-up enterprises to activate public spaces rather than spaces populated by brick and mortar businesses (Wynne, 2016). Despite these concerns, in 2016 City of Perth Councillors voted not to support a proposed trial expansion of alfresco areas for the 2016–17 summer, opting instead for a review of local alfresco laws, which commenced the following year (Wynne, 2016).

The review process confirmed the almost overwhelming support for alfresco dining. For example, a survey conducted by the City of Perth found that alfresco dining was perceived to generate urban vibrancy and atmosphere, increase safety and amenity and provide an efficient use of public space. Most notably, 79% of respondents also believed that there was not sufficient alfresco dining in the city; 91% said that they were more likely to visit a business with alfresco dining; and Melbourne was most likely to be identified as the city that ‘does alfresco dining the best’ (City of Perth, 2017 p.3).

Ultimately, the review resulted in the preparation of a new Outdoor Dining Local Law (2019) and associated guidelines, which paved the way for a more permissive approach to outdoor dining in the city. However, these changes were not passed into law until 2019, almost two-and-a-half years after businesses had sought the amendments, and less than one year before another unforeseen blow was set to hit the hospitality sector, the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the popularity of alfresco dining increased, fees for outdoor dining started to become an issue of conflict between local authorities and restaurateurs.

Alfresco Dining and COVID-19

Over the past 40 years, alfresco dining in Greater Perth has been transformed from one man's vision to bring a slice of Italian café culture to Fremantle, to an essential ingredient for urban and city vibrancy. What's more, in what has been an unexpected twist, the COVID-19 pandemic has most recently heightened recognition of the advantages of alfresco dining, with public health added to the list of potential benefits.

Globally, a mass transition to alfresco dining occurred in 2020 as cities and businesses shifted their activities outdoors to reduce the risk of virus transmission. In many places, during the initial phases of the pandemic, restaurants and other dining facilities were shut down to contain the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. However, when lockdowns lifted and indoor dining once again became an option for many restaurant-goers, evidence indicated that diners were less likely to transmit the virus outdoors, and alfresco dining was encouraged (Marks, 2021).

The vibrancy this created, along with public health benefits, generated a strong impetus for more permissive approaches towards alfresco dining to be retained. In cities from Los Angeles to Sydney, strategies and support packages to enhance urban vibrancy and enable hospitality businesses and districts to survive were centred on enabling and supporting alfresco dining (New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment, 2022).

In Western Australia, the State Government announced a \$5 million COVID-19 Activating Alfresco Rebate Program as part of the \$67 million Level 1 COVID-19 Business Assistance Package. The purpose of the program was to provide small business grants to reimburse the cost of creating or expanding alfresco spaces (Government of Western Australia, 2022).

This renewed recognition and support for alfresco dining has come at a time when in many inner urban areas, including the city, customers have been fewer on the ground as workers increase the hours that they spend working from home and socialising in the suburbs; major events are cancelled or scaled back; and more people are choosing to stay safe by staying at home. It has also arrived during a period when centres are facing renewed, highly publicised challenges of antisocial behaviour, and a regional homelessness crisis has negatively affected the reputations of centres, including Fremantle and Perth.

These problems have directly affected hospitality businesses and contributed to the recent closure of iconic family-run restaurants in the heart of Northbridge, which were living elements of the area's Italian heritage and vital contributors to its alfresco, cosmopolitan atmosphere and broad community appeal (Hutchison, 2021). Therefore, while vibrant hospitality areas incorporating alfresco dining have been given a higher priority than ever before, in some localities they are also facing new and exceptional challenges.

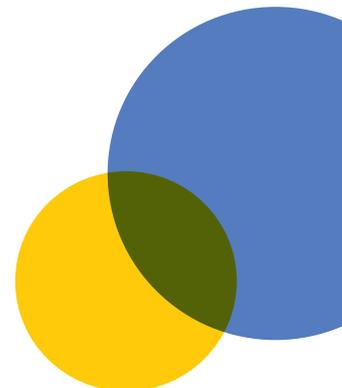
What Can We Learn?

The story of alfresco dining is one of change and adaptation. It is also a story of innovation in the face of adversity, of grass roots community-led transformation, of the benefits of community and ethnic diversity, and of enabling new ideas and enterprises to thrive, even when they challenge the status quo. Greater Perth has arguably learned the lessons of past alfresco controversy. Attitudes towards alfresco have shifted 360 degrees: from threat, to public health and safety that needed to be strictly controlled, to an opportunity to improve public health and safety and revive community spaces.

If this attitude continues to be applied to new urban innovation, there is potential for new ideas to help Perth's city and urban centres thrive. The evolution from alfresco controversy to alfresco promotion occurred over 50 years, and required the region to overcome major fears; be open to change and difference; look outwards; and see the value in enabling, rather than stifling, innovation.

Today, the region is facing new urban challenges, and the need to revive and revitalise inner urban spaces, improve safety and reputation, and support the hospitality industry is perhaps more pressing than ever before. It is therefore critical that time is taken to learn from the past in order to plan for the future. Six key lessons have been identified from this historical review:

1. Regulations need to evolve with the times and keep up with economic and environmental change, new ideas, technology, industry trends and social preferences.
2. Initiatives for urban revitalisation, safety and social cohesion can be founded and delivered from the bottom up rather than the top down. It is therefore important to work with and empower individuals and communities to identify local solutions for local problems.
3. Small innovations and ideas can deliver big impacts.
4. Differences in local authority by-laws and policies can mean that, for enterprises, the playing field is not always even across the region, and for communities, urban outcomes can be disparate.
5. Diversity and entrepreneurialism have been central ingredients of enterprise, innovation and urban vibrancy over time. It is therefore important to encourage and enable a wide range of people with new ideas to start up new enterprises in the region.
6. Innovation and change can be borne of hardship and crisis, and the current challenges facing Greater Perth, particularly within inner urban areas, provide opportunities to re-think the status quo and support new ideas.



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With alfresco dining a norm of life in Perth today, we have the then New Australians to thank for sustaining a campaign to liberate us from our traditional ways.

