City Views

Spring 2026

YOUR FREE CAPE TOWN CBD NEWSPAPER



IT'S A WRAP!

Trees in town splash out

CCID 24-HOUR EMERGENCY NUMBER
082 415 7127

03 Mantra Living opens in town

04 The ultimate sando crawl

08 What's on in the CBD

Cape Town CCID

www.capetownccid.org

Published by the Cape Town Central City Improvement District (CCID)



FROM THE CEO

It's been a long time coming, but spring is finally here, so put a literal spring in your step and enjoy this season of renewal in town.

You will notice our teams out and about, from our 345-strong contingent of safety officers – who patrol the streets 24/7 in shifts and in mobile units – to our dedicated cleaners who, by sweeping around the clock, ensure you can enjoy a clean, safe and welcoming inner city. Whether it's in the early morning as you arrive, or walking to a mid-morning meeting, or coming into our urban and cultural hub at dusk to catch a show or enjoy a cocktail or dinner ... we're here for you. At the CCID, we take our job very seriously in creating the best canvas for people to work, live, visit, invest and enjoy the Cape Town CBD.

In this issue, we highlight the events you shouldn't miss (p. 8), and the new places you need to gather with friends and family (p.3). We also pay tribute to c.d. fox, the stalwart family packaging and rope business that is leaving town after decades of doing business in Hout Street (p. 6).

If you live or work in town, you'll appreciate our take on the ultimate CBD sandwich crawl (pp. 4-5), and the impressive urban gardening initiative of The Mission for Inner City Cape Town through its green programme (p. 7). Enjoy the fresh opportunities this season offers.

Tasso Evangelinos
CEO of the CCID

RAINBOW TREES

Hundreds of trees across the CBD have been fabric-wrapped in an array of beautiful colours creating a vibrant display.

An annual beautification project of CCID Urban Management, over 600 trees have been spruced up to uplift the public realm as spring arrives in town and the CBD prepares to welcome visitors over the festive season.

"This project creates a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere, and adds a touch of magic, making the CBD more joyful," says Kally Benito, manager of the department.

In support of Breast Cancer Awareness month, certain trees have pink wraps while others on Thibault Sqaure, North Wharf, Pier Place, St Georges Mall, Heerengracht, the Buitengracht Street median, Waterkant and Bree Streets, Hertzog Boulevard and Walter Sisulu Avenue are awash with rainbow colours.



Numbers THE CCID AT WORK FROM MAY – JULY 2026

URBAN MANAGEMENT

313.5 Removed **313.5** tonnes of litter and illegally dumped waste to landfill

Cleaned municipal drains **1 996** times & cleaned **670** storm water drains

Cleared **11 681 kg** of waste from municipal and storm water drains

512 Removed **512** incidents of graffiti

189 Undertook **189** road maintenance repairs

Maintained **157** tree wells and removed a total of **1 008 kg** of debris

Cleaned **34** channels and removed **1 212 kg** of waste

Removed **979** strings & stickers

Removed **2 226 kg** of cigarette butts from ciggie bins

Collected **30 096** litter bags during the night for the City's waste truck to pick up

52 Planted **52** new trees

SAFETY & SECURITY

Secured **267** arrests with City Law Enforcement agencies

Conducted **1 168** crime-prevention initiatives

21 Dealt with **21** illegal trading offences

CCID-funded Law Enforcement Officers issued **1 086** fines for non-moving traffic violations to the value of **R1 053 800** & **147** fines for bylaw and moving traffic violations to the value of **R 85 400**

Rendered public assistance **135** times

CCID-funded Traffic Wardens issued **3 762** fines to a total of **R2 552 400**

66 Responded to **66** medical & rescue callouts

14 Responded to **14** alarm activations and secured **13** premises and vehicles

197 Assisted at the scene of **197** motor vehicle accidents

COMMUNICATIONS

129 Generated **129** media clips to an advertising value equivalent (AVE) of **R4 179 223** with a potential reach of **220 561 559** people

Produced, published & distributed ***City Views Winter 2026***

Produced, published & distributed ***State of Cape Town Central City Report 2025 - A year in review (SCCR 25)***

Organised & hosted the **CCID's annual Business Breakfast to launch SCCR 25**

164 Wrote **164** posts on **3** Facebook pages, **28** posts on LinkedIn & **20** on Instagram

Produced **2** Newsletters which each reached **11 174** subscribers

Facilitated the conception, production & launch of CCID Social Development's video campaign **"This Is Not My Forever"**

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Interacted with **770** homeless people

76 Placed **76** adults in shelters in the CBD

Referred **70** people for interventions & support

21 Assisted **21** adults to get back home

Assisted **10** clients with Government applications

CCID peer field workers interacted with clients **333** times

260 Facilitated the completion of **260** mental surveys among clients

Received donations from **Hotel Sky**, **Mount Nelson**, **A Belmond Hotel**, **StayEasy Cape Town City Bowl**, **SunSquare Cape Town City Bowl**, **Cape Pod Hotel** & **The Square Apartments**

CityViews

is a free Cape Town Central City community newspaper published by the Cape Town Central City Improvement District (CCID), a non-profit company. We work tirelessly in town to create and maintain a safe, welcoming, vibrant, clean and attractive CBD for visitors, workers, residents, business owners and investors.

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The Cape Town Central City Improvement District (CCID) 13th floor, One Thibault, Cnr Long St & Hans Strijdom Ave, Cape Town, 8001
www.capetownccid.org
www.facebook.com/CapeTownCCID
021 286 0830
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EDITORIAL (CCID)
Communications manager: Sharon Sorour-Morris
Editor: Sharon Sorour-Morris
Managing editor: Aziza Patandin
Online coordinator: Scott Arendse
Designer: Sean Robertson
Proofreader: Renee Moodie
Printer: CTP Printers Cape Town

CONTRIBUTORS
Editorial: Justine Drake
Photographs: Scott Arendse, Sharon Sorour-Morris, Artscape, Iziko Museums of South Africa, The Mission for Inner City Cape Town, Aperitif, Bennetts Deli, Clarke's bar & dining room, The Foccacia Bar

For more Central City news, subscribe to the CCID newsletter.
Go to www.capetownccid.org

Cape Town CCID

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OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The CCID welcomes these new business owners to town.



Co-owners of Mantra Living, from left: Ben Steven and Olivia van Hoogstraten.

Q&A WITH OLIVIA VAN HOOGSTRATEN & BEN STEVEN
CO-OWNERS OF MANTRA LIVING

Welcome to the CBD! What prompted you to open in Watson Street?
For quite some time we've been looking for a second space. Our original Camps Bay store is quite small, so we've been wanting a bigger space where we can bring our vision for Mantra Living to life, with homeware, furniture, interiors and lifestyle all under one roof. There's a great mix of independent businesses, restaurants and creative energy in the area, and we love being part of it.

Have you been in the business of lifestyle retail for a long time?
Mantra Living started quite organically. Olivia, our founder, has been operating the store in Camps Bay since 2022, but the official Mantra Living brand launched in 2024 alongside our online store.

Describe your store in 50 words ... Go!
It's a curated collection of beautiful, considered pieces for your home, your everyday and all the moments that make life special. We choose timeless, characterful pieces from local makers and global sources, bringing together statement pieces and everyday essentials. It's all about creating a home, and life, filled with beautiful things, made well, that you love.

What holds everything together so beautifully when it comes to curating your collection?
We believe the timelessness and sense of craft in what we choose creates a thread that connects our whole collection. We're drawn to things with character that can live in your home for years. We believe that when you buy good pieces, they naturally work together. They complement each other and can sit beautifully alongside things you already own.

We hear there's a cute coffee courtyard ... tell us more?
Yes! Our courtyard café sits within the store and we will be launching it soon, so stay tuned! It's such a beautiful courtyard and we want people to be able to enjoy it, not just walk through it. The idea is to create a relaxed extension of the store where you can grab a coffee, take a break, meet someone and then wander back in to shop.

8 Watson St
@mantraliving.za
www.mantraliving.co.za

For more Central City news and views, subscribe to the CCID's Newsletter. Go to **www.capetownccid.org** and fill in the pop-up window.

NEW VENUES

DRINK
Bootlegger XS Jetty Quarter
A branch of this popular chain is now serving its signature speciality coffee and all-day fare at Jetty Quarter next to Checkers Foods. It's light and inviting.
23 Lower Long St
@bootleggercoffee company

RETAIL
CRÉMA
This high-end showroom with its world-class collection of designer furniture, lighting, rugs and accessories is a joy to behold. Brands include Ligne Roset, LIVING, Cherner, Muuto, Bocci and more.
19 Buitenkant St
@crema.design

CAR HIRE
Jimmy's Car Hire
This rental company has opened a small-but-stylish CBD office and pick-up point. It's car hire "without the queue, deposit or paperwork". The fleet is an array of snazzy, snappy Suzuki Jimnys, with names like Harper and Bella.
17 Bree St | 068 653 2778
@jimmyscarhire
www.jimmyscarhire.com

REFRAMING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH A POWERFUL CAMPAIGN

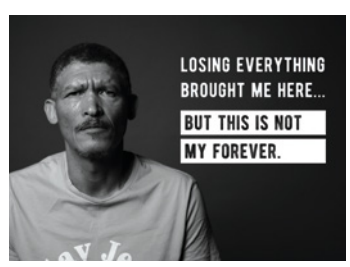
There are real people behind homelessness. Their stories deserve to be heard. And the CCID Social Development department is doing just that through a powerful new campaign, "This Is Not My Forever".

The goal is to shift the conversation around homeless individuals living in the CBD and aims to change public perception through personal stories – while highlighting the work of the CCID and its NGO partners in bringing about meaningful change.

The campaign centres on a series of video interviews with homeless individuals, including a CCID peer field worker who was once living on the streets but now supports others on the same journey.

Tara Gerardy-Bissolati, manager of CCID Social Development, says homelessness is not a life sentence, nor is it something one organisation can solve on its own. "We need businesses and the public to partner with us to help create conditions for real, lasting change."

Learn more about how you can help here: **www.capetownccid.org/campaigns/not-forever**



USEFUL CONTACTS

Emergency

CCID 24-HOUR EMERGENCY
(Available via cell phone or WhatsApp)
082 415 7127
(Cape Town CBD only)

AMBULANCE, HEALTH, NOISE & FIRE
107 / 021 480 7700
(24 hours)
107 from landlines only

SAPS CENTRAL CITY
021 467 8001/2
(24 hours)

CITY OF CAPE TOWN SERVICES

INCIDENT REPORTING & ENQUIRIES
Refuse collection, water issues, street lights and electricity faults
0860 103 089

Traffic signal faults
0800 656 463

Reporting illegal dumping
021 444 6223/4
021 480 7700 (a/h)

Cable theft
0800 222 771

Disaster Risk Management
080 911 4357
021 597 6000 (24 hours)

SOCIAL CONCERNS
CT Drug Counselling Centre
021 447 8026
073 755 1913 (WhatsApp)

Childline Western Cape
021 762 8198

WC Social Development
0800 220 250

CCID Social Development
021 286 0836

BYLAW & TRAFFIC INFRINGEMENTS
Law Enforcement
021 596 1999 (24 hours)

Traffic Police
0860 765 423

Metro Police
0860 765 423

BREAD WINNERS

We have the Earl of Sandwich's gambling habit to thank for the ingenious invention of the sandwich. When he couldn't bear to be torn away from the gaming table, he called for his meat to be conveniently inserted between two slices of bread. From the humble sarmie to sophisticated sandos, the sandwich is coming into its own. We present the ultimate CBD sandwich crawl.

By Justine Drake

BENNETTS

This is the new kid on the block. Wildly popular in Constantia, Bennetts recently opened in Lower Bree Street to satisfy the demand from Atlantic seaboard customers and office workers in town who have long asked them to move a little closer.

The second store, in what was formerly Cookie Co., opened in July and delivers the same consistent quality for which they are so loved and respected.

Oddly, there is no Mr or Mrs Bennett. Eight years ago, owner David Large was looking for a strong, catchy name in the vein of NYC delis like Katz's or Frankel's. He liked the sound of Bennetts and, being a man of strong faith, when he realised it meant "blessed" and is etymologically linked to Saint Benedict, it was a no-brainer.

Bennetts' regulars know that here the focaccia steals the show. Baked daily, using imported Italian 00 flour and extra virgin olive oil, it's deservedly the only bread on offer. Light and airy with a subtle chewiness and a distinct olive oil flavour, it's the kind of bread you dream about long after eating. Most of the deli meats are supplied by charcuterie master Richard Bosman, while all the sauces are freshly made in-house every day.

Curated by well-known Cape Town caterer Annalize Buchanan and business partner, the gregarious Chef Ollie (who is also her son-in-law!), the sandwich fillings are a foodies' delight.

Popular choices include The Bennett, a hearty gourmet sarmie of grass-fed smoked brisket, mustard, caramelised onions, pickles, rocket and Parmesan. Another generous offering is the Rueben, their take on the American classic of pastrami, sauerkraut, pickles and Emmenthal.

Café staples-with-a-twist include *fior de latte* and tomato caprese with basil/pistachio pesto and local smoked trout with cream cheese, capers, rocket and pickled onion.

Prices are fair given the top-notch quality of the ingredients and size of the sarmies – they're big!

The light and airy space offers sit-down or take-out options – complete with a semi-private boardroom for diligent teams or group lunches.

Bennetts also caters to inner city dwellers looking for quality frozen meals to eat at home. Supplied weekly by popular KZN company, We Are Food, offers include faves like lamb moussaka, chicken Parmigiana and, of course, the super-popular Durban curry. Dinner sorted! If you're keen on a more hands-on approach, high-end gourmet grocery items including pestos, sauces, pastas and grass-fed frozen beef cuts abound for a little inspired home cooking.

As with their Constantia branch, staff are friendly and seating is ample, making this the perfect spot to pop in, tuck in and chill out. And don't even get us started on their vanilla gelato and pistachio affogato ... don't take our word for it – just try it.

Bennetts | 16 Bree St | 071 179 3929
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 08h00-17h00; Saturday 08h00-15h00. Closed Sundays
@bennettsdeli

SUUR.

What this teeny-weeny bakery-cum-café lacks in size, it makes up for in the friendliness of its owners and staff. That and the next-level deliciousness of its baked goods, which happily deliver on their core philosophy: making people feel welcome and at home.





ABOVE The signature Bennett sandwich from Bennetts in Bree Street is a meaty, gourmet delight served on fresh focaccia. **LEFT** The delectable egg, pastrami, cheese, rocket & tomato bagel sando from SUUR. bakery.







FAR LEFT At The Focaccia Bar in Loop Street, the Calabrese sando features a generous filling.
ABOVE The Sando Platter at Aperitif. The sandos are made from slow-ferment "bread" fashioned from Neapolitan pizza dough.
LEFT The famous pulled pork sandwich from Clarke's bar & dining room, the OG of the CBD sandwich scene.

In case you missed it, the name SUUR. comes from the Afrikaans word “suur” (sour) and alludes to the artisanal sourdough which forms the base of many of their savoury bakes. All the bread is made using stoneground flour which they believe, along with time, to be the key ingredient to making the very best sourdough. And that they do.

Filled focaccia (chewy, light and flavourful), sourdough and bagels make up the sandwich offer, while their brioche-wrapped jalapeño or coriander-flavoured sausages, known as “Briller”, provide a gourmet breakfast solution on the go.

Crowd favourites include their smoked brisket, Cheddar and pickled red onion and the ever-popular roast chicken mayo with rocket.

If you have a sweet tooth, the almond croissants, banana loaf and *pain au chocolat* have your name on them.

Don’t miss the famous cinnabuns. If you get there early on Friday, you’ll get one free with any hot drink between 06h00 and 08h00. It’s a small (and sweet) “thank you” from the team for your support.

SUUR. | 42 Hans Strijdom Ave |
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 06h00-16h00; Saturday 07h00-14h00. Closed Sunday.
hello@suur.co.za
@suurbakery

THE FOCACCIA BAR

First time café owners, Chris Woole and his partners, brother Mathew, and business partner, Thomas Bailey, set up shop at 113 Loop Street in January. With their shared background in hospitality, and their obsession with quality and customer service, they were an instant hit with locals.

It’s not surprising as they really do take their focaccia – made using a 24-hour fermentation process – and their quality, mostly imported, sandwich ingredients, very seriously. Think traditional Italian: prosciutto crudo, mortadella, salami Calabrese ... and add the twist of a warm and welcoming Cape Town vibe.

Topping the list in popularity is the *Prosciutto Crudo* Caprese Sandwich: buffalo mozzarella, tomato, prosciutto, sundried tomato pesto, rocket and balsamic. What’s not to love? Second up is the Calabrese: mozzarella, basil pesto, Calabrese salami and *capocollo* (a dry cured pork cut), and who could resist the rich, salty, creamy combo of mortadella, pistachio pesto and stracciatella?

The buzz and energy of town, the hissing, frothing coffee machine and smiling staff all combine to make this spot well worth a visit, whether you’re enjoying your made-to-order sandwich, relaxing at one of the café tables or on the run.

The Focaccia Bar | 113 Loop St |
Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday 08h00-16h00; Saturday & Sunday 08h00 -15h00. Closed on Monday.
chris@thefocacciabar.co.za
@the_focacciabar

CLARKE’S BAR & DINING ROOM

Clarke’s bar & dining room, one of the coolest venues in town, is the OG of the CBD when it comes to sandwiches, and its 16 year-and-counting lifespan is testament to the quality of its food and constant, happy buzz.

The sourdough and 100 % rye hail from the fabulous Woodstock Bakery. The rest of the baked goods – including the nutty gluten-free seed loaf and the homestyle farm loaf, which are both used for their toasties – are baked inhouse. Converts come from far and wide to enjoy the Toasted Cheese, often served with a bowl of soup in winter.

All the fare at this destination eatery is worth trying. The Chicken Salad sando, a heavenly concoction of chicken and creamy, buttermilk coleslaw, is a hands-down winner and the Pulled Pork, Homemade Kimchi and Mozzarella combo is bang on trend.

Regardless of the time of day, a visit to Clarke's bar & dining room never fails to spark joy.

Clarke’s bar & dining room | 133 Bree St | 021 003 8113
Opening hours: Monday 07h00-16h00; Tuesday to Friday 07h00-22h00; Saturday 08h00-22h00; Sunday 08h00-15h00
@clarkescapetown

APERITIF SANDWICH BAR

Tucked around the corner from the main Aperitif restaurant/bar, this little café is a hug of continental loveliness. Quieter and more grown-up, it offers a slight respite from the bustle of the fit and fabulous who hang out on the main drag in Upper Bree.

Their take on sandwiches is entirely unique – their slow ferment “bread” is fashioned from traditional Neapolitan pizza dough and served as a sort of open pocket. Made to order, and served straight from the pizza oven, these sandos are a thing of piping hot beauty.

The Steak Sando caught my eye: free-range rump steak from Frankie Fenner Meat Merchants, cooked in butter, garlic and thyme, is served with roasted cherry tomatoes, rocket, Parmesan, homemade aioli and chimichurri. It’s deliciously good value.

Even the legendary Anthony Bourdain’s fave gets a look-in: Fried Mortadella, Provolone, Aioli and Dijon mustard.

Happily, the same sandwiches are also served at the aperitivo bar on the Bree Street side, so you can munch away while sipping on a classy cocktail and watch the world go by.

Aperitif | 227 Bree St | 076 249 6328
Opening hours: Monday to Thursday 12h00-22h00; Friday & Saturday 12h00-00h00; Sunday 12h00-21h00
@aperififonbree



Celebrated cook, food writer, author, MasterChef South Africa judge and all-round food enthusiast, **Justine Drake** has shaped the way we eat and cook.

END OF AN ERA

After four decades of trading in town, c.d. fox aka the "rope shop" — one of the CBD's iconic speciality stores and a three-generation business — is moving on.

By Sharon Sorour-Morris

There's one word that sums up c.d. fox: "authentic". Characterful, with an eclectic shop floor, the store in Hout Street has no airs and graces.

When you ring the big brass bell at the shop door, you enter a business with a 109-year history spanning three generations of the Fox family.

There are handsome hammocks hanging from the ceiling amid cheerful bunting, strung up during the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup. Bales of rope are on the floor. Bulk rolls of stripey gift wrap line up in front of a counter. On the walls, several framed newspaper cuttings display the provenance of this renowned business.

Now, after many decades, c.d. fox is moving to Paarden Eiland to start a new chapter. The decision wasn't taken lightly, says current owner Stephen Fox. Declining foot traffic, the changing face of retail in town, the logistics of operating a packaging supply business in a narrow street, and the right offer at the right time all led to the decision to leave town.

He says: "It's a wonderful space, and we have always valued the presence of the CCID, but this is a traditional store and retail has changed. Customers who are in town now are not our core business. For a speciality store like ours, there are no feet on the ground. Plus, we operate our business from this building, and getting big trucks up narrow Hout Street has always been a problem."

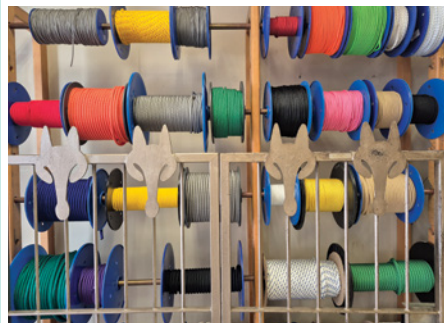
It's a wrench for sure. Fox has worked in town for most of his life. "I am very sad to be leaving. I started working for Jack Lemkus Sports in 1972 and I joined my dad, Albert Emanuel Fox, at c.d. fox in 1973."











ABOVE The eclectic shop in Hout Street is closing and will move to Paarden Eiland. **TOP RIGHT** It's the end of an era for Stephen Fox, who has always worked in town. **RIGHT** Long-time c.d. fox employee Sakeena Gill in front of rolls of wallpaper. **BOTTOM RIGHT** Rolls of rope form a colourful display. **LEFT** A framed photograph of the shop in Long Street.

INNER CITY INSTITUTION

A stalwart of the CBD since 1917, c.d. fox has distributed packing material from this building for decades. Its inventory includes rope, cords, twines, webbing, threads, adhesive tapes, and items under "miscellaneous" such as raffia, mutton cloth, bubble wrap, cardboard boxes, hook and loop tape …

The business began when Fox's grandfather, Charles Davis Fox, set up shop in the YMCA building in Long Street. He sold bits and bobs, from cigars, tobacco and pipes to "pieces of twine and cord". The store had to move and found a home in Hout Street.

To this day, it remains his grandfather's vision. An immigrant from Warsaw, Poland, the old man was something of a *smous* (peddler). "He was a tobacconist who started to sell twine, paper, this and that … He used to bugger off for months and then send my dad a telegram: 'All well. Send Money.'"

Fox was eight when his grandfather died. His father took over and the business evolved. "When I was 34, with a young family of two children, my dad died and I was left with an ailing business. My mother became my partner, and we grew the business to what it is today."

PAPER & PACKAGING

In time, c.d. fox moved into the packaging industry and supplied paper to pattern makers before diversifying into bubble wrap, boxes and systems for people who were moving.

Today it supplies to big business and industry, but individual customers rely on it for supplies for boating, climbing, abseiling, home industries and hobbies "as well as everything you need for moving house or packaging for transport or storage".

In Fox's office are memorabilia of the family and the business, including framed photographs, title deeds, newspaper articles, and sketches of his father and grandfather. Encapsulating the secret of the c.d. fox story, Fox says: "My staff give every customer personal attention. If someone takes the trouble to enter our shop, we react immediately. I hate it when shop assistants pretend you are invisible."

It's this attentive customer service plus a can-do attitude ("whatever a customer needs, we can get it") that has enabled it to stand the test of time. "People come in and they usually have a problem that needs solving. They often have no idea of what to buy. We always give honest advice. It's the good old-fashioned way of treating people with respect."

A NEW ERA

Rest assured, Fox will attempt to recreate the character and charm of his shop in the single-storey Paarden Eiland premises. "I will recreate its *gees* (spirit) … We plan to feed off the new environment, and I will try to make a splash there!"

It's an exciting opportunity for renewal and reinvention, too. An online store is in the offing "finally", and the new building will have a dispatch area that will facilitate business operations.

"We will remain a good source for people who can't find the things they are looking for anywhere else." Authentic. Service-oriented. With its Hout Street character, as well as its spirit, intact. Go well, c.d. fox.

c.d. fox | 11 Amphion St, Paarden Eiland
www.cdfox.co.za

GREENING GURUS

A community of urban gardeners is on a mission to green the inner city, making it more welcoming, more walkable and "more human".

By Sharon Sorour-Morris

The light in the Company's Garden is soft, and slowly fading. It's that lovely word, "dappled". The garden's only Champion Tree, *Ficus elastica*, stands sentry, a gentle giant casting its impressive 38.4-metre canopy over us.

The man standing next to me in a fern-green, knee-length apron is talking about the contemplative landscape design of the Japanese Garden, and the shifting patterns of light filtering through the branches. "It's called *komorebi* in Japanese," he explains. "Your line of sight is not broken by the blueness of the sky … and sunlight leaks through the leaves."

The Japanese Lantern Monument, which was gifted to the city by the Japanese Government in 1932, shelters beneath the elegant wooden Japanese pergola. It's an appropriate backdrop. The rejuvenation of the garden is being supported by this Japanophile with a deep connection to the soil and an affinity to the Land of the Rising Sun.

"The planting concept is 'Afrinese', a balanced fusion of African flora and Japanese design." He singles out the star of the show, a petite yellowwood tree, the national tree of South Africa. Donated by Trees SA and being shaped by the Bonsai Society, it stands on a mound of rich soil soon to be planted with indigenous groundcover.

"Do you speak Japanese," I ask. "*Ryokucha wa doko desu ka*!" he replies, laughing. His eyes are twinkling. "I am not fluent. I understand the basics. I can say: 'Where is the green tea!'".



Urban garden expert Vincent Truter in the Company's Garden.

GURU OF GARDENS

Meet Vincent Truter, passionate guru of gardens. A cross-disciplinary experience designer and urban placemaker, he is the Green Lead at The Mission for Inner City Cape Town, a new non-profit entity set up to promote and reimagine the inner city alongside the CCID by bringing people together to revive the public realm.



Green Squad volunteers fill planters in Bree Street with indigenous plants.

Armed with the belief that people have an instinct to commune with nature, Truter has established a flourishing community of urban gardeners through a greening programme. The aim is to improve public spaces, encourage community participation and enhance the inner city through targeted greening interventions.

And it all started here, in the Company's Garden, the focal point for community greening activities through a monthly gardening programme that includes guided walks and wellbeing experiences such as forest bathing.

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

For Truter, greening is about connection. "Trees and gardens create opportunities for people to connect with one another, to make streets more inviting and to help soften the harsh urban landscape we navigate every day."

His motto is simple: "Real impact happens when people, place and nature connect meaningfully, and communities stop being observers and start becoming custodians."

Integral to Truter's greening programme is the Green Squad, a posse of dedicated volunteers, all nature lovers keen to plantify the concrete jungle. Apart from physical greening work, there is also a social programme, Green Squad Connect, which brings together nature enthusiasts, gardeners and stakeholders for bi-weekly sessions.

Since the launch of the initiative more than 18 months ago, the number of green-fingered gardeners has grown from about 50 to over 140. "Many of them are not passive supporters. They show up, roll up their sleeves, plant, water, chat to curious passers-by, recruit other people …"

A PLETHORA OF PLANTS

Today, The Mission has planted 2 100 plants, including 35 trees and 600+ succulents, in the CBD.

The impact can be seen in Bree Street at the Bree Street Gallery and the section from Wale to Shortmarket Streets where the street-narrowing Bree Street Experiment, in partnership with Young Urbanists and the City of Cape Town, has seen a softening of the corridor through the introduction of 18 new trees and 48 planters.

"Greening does not fall short by design, but by maintenance," Truter explains earnestly. All planting done under his watch is supported by data gleaned by The Mission on weather patterns, urban heat maps and pedestrian patterns. About 80 % of the planting has been indigenous, water-wise and climate-resilient.

Truter points out that urban gardening is unique, affected by harsh elements, foot traffic, and limited water. It demands resilience and creativity. By nature, urban gardeners are problem solvers. To combat a myriad challenges, The Mission has introduced an Urban Gardener pilot in partnership with the City of Cape Town and the government-led Expanded Public Works Programme. The first incumbent, David Moses, tends planters using an innovative mobile watering unit, WaterDROP, which distributes 150 litres per trip.

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

With an MA in Narrative Environments, Truter understands how space can deliver immersive experiences. Projects that are on the (green) cards are a therapeutic garden, focusing on reflection, wellbeing, and connection with nature, and other new visitor experiences in the Company's Garden; a Pocket Park in Lower Long Street; and a Pocket Forest Parklet Programme.

Truter adjusts his apron. "These are all designed to spark joy, plant by plant."



The Mission's greening programme is growing in collaboration with the City of Cape Town's Parks and Recreation Department, Young Urbanists, the CCID, SDI Trust, Happy By Nature, Greenpop, Just Trees, Burro, Friends of the Company's Garden, Treekeepers and a growing network of plant donors, volunteers and civic organisations.

To join Green Connect or the Green Squad, email Truter at vincent@missionforinnercity.org. For more information on The Mission's Greening, Sustainability and Climate Resilience Fund, go to www.missionforinnercity.org
@missionforinnercityct

WHAT'S ON IN TOWN

For more event info, visit *City Views* on Facebook at **www.facebook.com/CityViewsCapeTown.**

Spring has sprung! There's a plethora of events to enjoy in town, from theatre performances to thought-provoking art exhibitions and being a flâneur in your own city.

OLIVER!

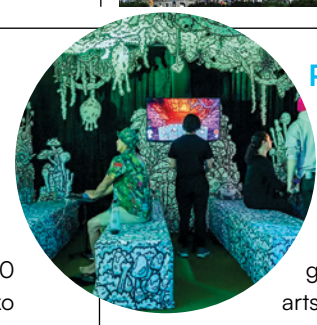
Pieter Toerien and Cape Town Opera bring Cameron Mackintosh's award-winning *Oliver!* to Cape Town in December. The musical, based on Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist* and featuring a score by West End composer Lionel Bart, tells the timeless story of the orphan Oliver searching for hope in the grimy streets of Victorian London. Characters include the cunning criminal Fagin, kind-hearted Nancy and pickpocket The Artful Dodger. Expect feel-good family entertainment. (Note: no under-fives, though.) Book early for the festive season.
Where: Artscape Theatre Centre, D.F. Malan St
When: 11 December 2026-17 January 2027
www.artscape.co.za/event/oliver-cpt/



FESTIVE LIGHTS SWITCH-ON

The festive season in Cape Town has started in the same way for 57 years: the switching on of thousands of festive lights in the CBD. This year's evening of entertainment, community and festive cheer is themed "Beacon of Hope". Gather your family and friends to make some memories — or start a new holiday tradition as town is transformed into a dazzling festive wonderland.
Where: Grand Parade, Darling St
When: 29 November 2026
Time: 16h00 to 22h00
www.eventsincapetown.com/events/festive-lights-switch-on-2026/

MATEREALITY V2



Beyond oil and canvas lies *Matereality V2*, a major 10-month exhibition in which artworks are encountered first through the materials that they are made of. Featuring 70 creators and over 100 works across five rooms at the Iziko SA National Gallery, this showcase brings together leading continental voices. Experience how everyday and industrial materials, from soil and timber to sugar, wire, and salvaged consumer goods, are transformed into profound statements on identity, memory, and culture.
Where: Iziko South African National Gallery, Government Ave
When: Until 30 June 2027
www.iziko.org.za/exhibitions/matereality-v2/

PLAYTOPIA — A FESTIVAL FOR CREATORS

Playtopia is Africa's first annual indie games and immersive arts festival and conference. It is a gathering of local and global creators and players, a place for people to come together to share ideas, connect across continents and disciplines, and to exhibit their work. *Playtopia* is the festival component of the Playtopia Foundation, a non-profit which aims to generate opportunities in game development in South Africa.
Where: District Six Homecoming Centre
When: 3-5 December 2026
www.homecomingcentre.co.za/events

THE NUTCRACKER

Another festive season event to get in your diary early! *The Nutcracker* is a much-loved classical ballet, set to the music of Tchaikovsky, that tells the story of a young girl named Clara who takes a magical journey to a land of sweets where she meets the Sugar Plum Fairy, the Nutcracker Prince, and other whimsical characters. This Cape Town City Ballet version of *The Nutcracker* is choreographed by Veronica Paeper, with sets and costumes by Peter Cazalet. It's the ultimate festive season outing for young and old.
Where: Artscape Theatre Centre, D.F. Malan St
When: 11-30 December 2026
www.artscape.co.za/event/the-nutcracker-3/

REFLECTIONS



The *Reflections* exhibition celebrates the past and present of the Iziko Old Town House Museum, formerly the City Hall and built in 1755. Three interrelated exhibitions — The Michaelis Collection, Woodcuts Across the World and Trade Ceramics and Circles of Influence — reflect Iziko's historical collections and contemporary acquisitions. Together, these works explore intersections between past and present, local and global, and art and history.
Where: Iziko Old Town House, Greenmarket Square
When: Ongoing
www.iziko.org.za/exhibitions/reflections/



FROM HANOVER STREET

Following a sold-out season at the Artscape in February 2026, *From Hanover Street* returns to the stage. Commemorating 60 years since the forced removals from District Six, this concert pays tribute to the music, memories and stories of a community whose spirit still lives on. Whether you missed it the first time or are returning, expect a moving evening of remembrance, reflection and celebration.
Where: Artscape Theatre Centre, D.F. Malan St
When: 24-29 November 2026
www.artscape.co.za/event/from-hanover-street-a-concert-commemorating-60-years-2/

INNER CITY SATURDAYS

Inner City Saturdays is an invitation to explore the best of Cape Town's inner city on the last Saturday morning of the month. The programme is an initiative of The Mission for Inner City Cape Town, a non-profit that aims to enhance and promote Cape Town's inner city. Each month, The Mission recommends urban walking tours that take locals and visiting flâneurs to the best shops, galleries and cafés across precincts. Pick one and make a morning of it — family friendly and welcome to all.
Where: Explore a recommended route at your own pace
When: Last Saturday of every month
@innercitysaturdays