



Maintain the mojo

Rob Broadfield

Comment

Restaurateur Gino Lamelza owns two restaurants on the Albany Highway strip, L'Enoteca and Zucchero.

He worries that the rising popularity of Victoria Park as a dining destination could see the precinct lose the very thing people like about it.

Victoria Park has so far not become a coffee shop "theme park" in the way that other popular Perth cafe strips have. Subiaco is a case in point.

As its retail offering became narrower and its rents increased dramatically in recent years, the vibrancy and diversity people enjoyed in Subiaco turned into a retail monoculture. Subi lost its mojo.

Albany Highway is the last proper "high street" in inner-city Perth with an enviable diversity of retail and housing, and a gritty buzz reminiscent of Melbourne's Fitzroy or Sydney's Surry Hills.

Victoria Park local member of Parliament Ben Wyatt says there is a risk that Vic Park will follow other precincts and become a victim of its own success.

He offers a solution. Allow for higher-density living along the Albany Highway strip, maintain a diverse residential mix and get the trams running down Albany Highway. These initiatives, he believes, will maintain a balance between gentrification of the neighbourhood and the diversity of its shopping and eating.

We agree.

WHAT WE LOVE



Kira McNeil and Melissa Hesford
Office workers
'We work in Vic Park and love the variety, lots of good Italian restaurants and good coffee.'



Vijay Thomas **Visitor**
'I'm here on holiday. I had amazingly tender lamb at The Precinct.'



Joe Algieri
Business owner
'There's a buzz about the place and the food is exciting.'



Jonathon Ng
University student
'I like the great variety of food, reasonable prices and great cafes.'



Jane Matthews
Resident
'It's so close to the city and the river and there's great coffee and a park for my dog William.'



Sally Okoye **Resident**
'I love that it is vibrant and different and not pretentious. I come from the western suburbs and I'd never go back.'