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City of Melbourne

Submission: Melbourne City Council Draft Annual Plan and Budget 2017-2018

Southbank Residents Association (SRA) is pleased with the detail of the Melbourne City Council Draft Annual Plan and Budget 2017-2018. We would like to commend the responsible officers for their report. Overall it is generally positive and shows a clear commitment to maintenance and improvements for the City of Melbourne (CoM) but more importantly some significant and overdue investment in Southbank.

Allow us to address some points in the report. We are pleased the Council has decided not to increase the cost of street parking. New residential developments in Southbank have fewer internal car parks and as a consequence, street parking is in greater demand for many residents and their visitors. The decision not to increase the cost of street parking goes some way to placating locals but does nothing to address the shortage of parking spaces in the suburb. Southbank residents want their visitors to be able to visit by motor vehicle attractive and keeping parking costs affordable is a key factor.

No new borrowings are comforting but we are not sure how long this can be maintained in light of the need for residential amenity, particularly given the massive population growth of Southbank.

SRA is elated to see significant investment in public realm works in Southbank. Of particular note is the substantial funding from the public open space reserves for projects in Southbank, notably Boyd Park, Southbank Boulevard and Dodds Street (\$11 million). In the past, we have expressed our disappointment with the failure of previous budgets to adequately address the needs of Southbank. Our suburb continues to be one of the largest contributors to council revenues so we are heartened to see a better balance struck in this year's budget.

SRA also notes a further \$2.9 million will be allocated to Southbank Promenade for landscape upgrades. Is this the upgrade of the paving to blue stone? We are not clear what this entails and would like to request clarification. We are aware of a plan to install a floating pontoon for use as a bicycle lane, is this included in the \$2.9M? We see no mention of this project in the current budget or future plan.

Boyd Park is a sensitive issue to SRA and we know the residents are equally passionate about it after running our campaign. We are excited to see \$1.7 million allocated to this much anticipated project and remain anxious for its commencement.

SRA notes the investment Council will be making to the new waste compactor bins. Overflowing waste in bins along the Southbank Promenade is a regular problem and SRA has raised this with

Council in the past. We hope that some of this investment will be made to improving waste levels in rubbish bins along the Promenade. We are aware some of these bins have been trialed in Queensbridge square and look forward to improved results.

SRA is happy to see Council advocating for new city schools, particularly Fishermans Bend. We assume that any available schooling in Fishermans Bend will be accessible to the residents of Southbank. Southbank, as are other parts of the municipality, has its own problems with access to schools for a neighbourhood that is becoming increasingly attractive to families.


SRA welcomes the initiative for looking into other methods for capturing input for Council meetings. On the odd occasion when it has been difficult for SRA to attend a FMC meeting in person to make a verbal submission we have been advised Skype facilities were available. Hopefully this change in process and technology will help to advance Council further into the digital age.

SRA is disappointed and confused to see that further works on the City Road upgrade project have not been budgeted for. Does this mean this project is not proceeding any further during the 2017/18 financial year? The City Road Upgrade would have a significant impact in Southbank and we would like to see it make progress or receive advice if the project has been set aside.

In the Southbank Plan of 2007 an opportunity was identified to retrieve land from the Citylink interchange to provide open space. This was 10 years ago. To date SRA is not aware of any research findings to the viability of this initiative or even any costings. Disappointingly, it appears this is also not part of the Council Plan for the next 4 years. SRA would like to know if this initiative is ever going to be costed and considered.

We thank Council for the opportunity to make a submission on this important report.

Regards



Tony Penna
President
Southbank Residents Association